



**May 20, 2026 at 1PM  
Open Session Minutes**

**Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA)  
Advisory Board Meeting  
Taunton City Hall  
Silver City Conference Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
15 Summer Street, Taunton, MA 02780  
and  
Zoom**

**1. Open Session Convenes**

Chair Mayor Shaunna O'Connell, Taunton called the meeting to order at 1:03PM. A roll call vote was taken.

The following board members were present:

Bellingham (2.62), Josie Dutil (remote)  
Carver (1.63), Connie Kelly (remote)  
Dighton (1.16), Anabela Powell (remote)  
Duxbury (2.28), Joanne Moore (remote)  
Franklin (3.62), Morena Zelaya (remote)  
Hanover (1.98), Tammy Murray (remote)  
Kingston (2.00), Patti Waitkevich (remote)  
Lakeville (1.60), Lori Fahey (remote)  
Mansfield (2.84), Josh Reinke (remote)  
Norfolk (2.27), Karen Edwards (remote)

Pembroke (2.56), Diane Picot (remote)  
Plainville (1.30), Brenda Watkinson  
Plymouth (5.42), Lindsay Reik (remote)  
Plympton (1.24), Colleen Thompson  
(remote)  
Raynham (2.08), Erin Medeiros (remote)  
Taunton (5.58), Mayor Shaunna O'Connell  
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond  
(remote)

The following board members were absent:

Attleboro (5.49), Mayor Cathleen DeSimone  
Berkley (1.39), Mark Horsfall  
Foxborough (2.38), Catherine Feerick  
Halifax (1.35), Bill Smith  
Marshfield (3.09), Greg Guimond  
Medway (1.98), Cathy Cebrowski  
Middleboro (2.83), Mark Germain

North Attleboro (3.30), Tony Morabito  
Norton (2.13), Alec Rich  
Rehoboth (1.21), Elizabeth Doyle  
Scituate (2.35), Linda Hayes  
Seekonk (2.13), Brittney Faria  
Wareham (3.25), Alan Slavin  
Wrentham (1.94), Janet Angelico

Also present:

Mary Ellen DeFrias (Remote), Dan Burgess, Kylie Araujo

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## 2. March 18, 2026 Open Session Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve March 18, 2026 Open Session Minutes. A roll call vote was taken.

Bellingham (2.62), Josie Dutil - aye  
Carver (1.63), Connie Kelly - aye  
Dighton (1.16), Anabela Powell - aye  
Duxbury (2.28), Joanne Moore - aye  
Franklin (3.62), Morena Zelaya - aye  
Hanover (1.98), Tammy Murray - aye  
Kingston (2.00), Patti Waitkevich - aye  
Lakeville (1.60), Lori Fahey - aye  
Mansfield (2.84), Josh Reinke - aye  
Norfolk (2.27), Karen Edwards - aye

Pembroke (2.56), Diane Picot - aye  
Plainville (1.30), Brenda Watkinson - aye  
Plymouth (5.42), Lindsay Reik - aye  
Plympton (1.24), Colleen Thompson - aye  
Raynham (2.08), Erin Medeiros - abstain  
Taunton (5.58), Mayor Shaunna O'Connell - aye  
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond - aye

**Motion to approve March 18, 2026 Open Session Minutes passed.**

## 3. Administrator Report & Financial Report

Mary Ellen DeFrias reviewed the May 2026 Administrator's Report. She noted that the Authority continues to make progress on staffing for drivers, though work remains to be done in that area. She announced that Sunday fixed route service is planned to launch on June 7<sup>h</sup>, 2026 in Taunton/Attleboro. Later in the summer, Plymouth/Wareham Sunday service will be launched.

Mary Ellen DeFrias also reported that she is actively preparing for the FIFA World Cup at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro. She noted that she recently attended a national conference in Salt Lake City, where she presented and discussed opportunities for improved interconnectivity between GATRA and western Massachusetts, with a focus on connecting Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) across regional boundaries.

She also reported that construction of the East Maintenance Facility in Wareham is progressing well and is currently 96% complete.

Regarding the budget, Mary Ellen noted that expanded Sunday service and increased operating costs will result in a significant budget increase. However, she expressed confidence that available state funding for the current fiscal year will offset this increase. She stated that she will be monitoring the situation carefully as the Authority prepares for next year's budget cycle.

Dan Burgess reviewed the May 2026 Financial Report. He noted that Fixed Route and Demand Response expenditures have continued to trend higher than budgeted, a variance that will be addressed through a budget amendment next month.

Dan Burgess clarified that while special services such as intercity service and the airport shuttle may appear to be over budget, those expenditures are fully offset by corresponding increases in

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revenue and are entirely self-funded. He also noted that the decline in fare revenues is expected, as the Authority is currently operating fare-free.

Additionally, Dan noted that non-federal transit grants are actively being utilized, and that these funds should be incorporated into the adopted budget so that the variance does not appear as large as it currently does. This will be addressed in the next budget amendment. He also reported that draws on Federal Section 5307 funds are coming in below budget projections, which is a positive indicator.

He confirmed that the net cost of service remains stable. With respect to brokerage operations, while expenses have increased, there has been a corresponding supplemental increase in revenue, resulting in a net zero impact.

There were no questions on either report.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the above-stated reports. A roll call vote was taken.

Bellingham (2.62), Josie Dutil - aye  
Carver (1.63), Connie Kelly - aye  
Dighton (1.16), Anabela Powell - aye  
Duxbury (2.28), Joanne Moore - aye  
Franklin (3.62), Morena Zelaya - aye  
Hanover (1.98), Tammy Murray - aye  
Kingston (2.00), Patti Waitkevich - aye  
Lakeville (1.60), Lori Fahey - aye  
Mansfield (2.84), Josh Reinke - aye  
Norfolk (2.27), Karen Edwards - aye

Pembroke (2.56), Diane Picot - aye  
Plainville (1.30), Brenda Watkinson - aye  
Plymouth (5.42), Lindsay Reik - aye  
Plympton (1.24), Colleen Thompson - aye  
Raynham (2.08), Erin Medeiros - aye  
Taunton (5.58), Mayor Shaunna O'Connell - aye  
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond - aye

#### **Motion to approve the above-stated reports passed.**

#### **4. Fiscal Year (FY) 27 Draft Budget Review**

Dan Burgess reviewed the FY27 Draft Budget. He began with the brokerage portion of the budget, noting that the revenue figure will be increased from \$70 million to \$80 million, which he believes will more accurately reflect projected activity in FY27. He then moved to the contract COA budget, where he noted that the Taunton and Wareham facilities have been broken out into separate line items for greater clarity.

Returning to the cover sheet, Dan Burgess noted an approximately 7% increase in demand response costs, attributable to the previously discussed rise in operating costs and expanded service levels. He also noted that the MedWheels portion of COA revenue has been moved to its own separate line item to allow for more detailed analysis in FY27. Federal Section 5307



funding has been increased slightly. Contract and brokerage numbers are both tracking in line with expectations.

Patti Waitkevich, Kingston inquired whether ADA complementary service will continue to be fare-free through January. Kylie Araujo responded that fare-free service will continue at least through September 30<sup>th</sup> 2026, but that any extension of fare-free fixed route and complementary ADA service beyond that date will be contingent upon the Governor's budget.

Mayor Shaunna O'Connell, Taunton asked whether Dan had a total percentage increase for the overall budget. Dan indicated that the increase is approximately 5%. He noted that the final total will depend on several factors, including the continuation of fare-free service and ridership growth on fixed routes, both of which will have an impact on how the final numbers end up.

### **5. Executive Compensation Committee Recommendation**

Mayor O'Connell presented the findings of the Executive Compensation Committee, which convened on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 to evaluate Administrator Mary Ellen DeFrias's compensation. The Committee first met with Mary Ellen and reviewed the materials she provided to the Committee. After a discussion, Mary Ellen left the room and the matter was further discussed. The Committee is recommending to the Board a 6% increase to Mary Ellen's annual salary.

Mayor O'Connell stated that this recommendation is based on Mary Ellen DeFrias's performance, achievements, management capabilities, and leadership skills not only within GATRA, but in her broader role among regional transit authorities across the state. She has distinguished herself as a leader in the RTA community, including through trips to Washington, D.C. and her active involvement in coordinating transportation for the FIFA World Cup, through which she has cultivated valuable connections. This increase will bring her compensation more in line with that of her comparable RTA Administrator peers.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Executive Compensation Recommendation as outlined above. A roll call vote was taken.

Bellingham (2.62), Josie Dutil - aye  
Carver (1.63), Connie Kelly - aye  
Dighton (1.16), Anabela Powell - aye  
Duxbury (2.28), Joanne Moore - aye  
Franklin (3.62), Morena Zelaya - aye  
Hanover (1.98), Tammy Murray - aye  
Kingston (2.00), Patti Waitkevich - aye  
Lakeville (1.60), Lori Fahey - aye  
Mansfield (2.84), Josh Reinke - aye  
Norfolk (2.27), Karen Edwards - aye

Pembroke (2.56), Diane Picot - aye  
Plainville (1.30), Brenda Watkinson - aye  
Plymouth (5.42), Lindsay Reik - aye  
Plympton (1.24), Colleen Thompson - aye  
Raynham (2.08), Erin Medeiros - aye  
Taunton (5.58), Mayor Shaunna O'Connell - aye  
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond - aye



**Motion to approve the Executive Compensation Recommendation passed.**

## **6. Adjournment**

**A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. Motion to adjourn passed without objection.**  
The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:21PM.

### **Documents & Exhibits Discussed in this Meeting:**

- 5.20.26 GATRA Advisory Board Meeting Agenda
- 3.18.26 GATRA Advisory Board Open Session Minutes
- May 2026 Administrator's Report
- May 2026 Financial Report
- FY27 Draft Budget

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