June 17, 2026 at 1PM
Open Session Minutes

Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA)
Advisory Board Meeting
Taunton City Hall
Silver City Conference Room, 2nd 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 1:01PM. A roll call vote was taken.

The following board members were present:

Attleboro (5.49), Gary Aryassian (remote)
Carver (1.63), Connie Kelly (remote)
Duxbury (2.28), Joanne Moore (remote)
Foxborough (2.38), Catherine Feerick (remote)
Franklin (3.62), Morena Zelaya (remote)
Kingston (2.00), Patti Waitkevich
Lakeville (1.60), Lori Fahey (remote)
Mansfield (2.84), Josh Reinke (remote)
Medway (1.98), Cathy Cebrowski (remote)
Norfolk (2.27), Karen Edwards (remote)
Norton (2.13), Kevin O'Neil (remote)
Plainville (1.30), Brenda Watkinson
Plymouth (5.42), Lindsay Reik (remote)
Raynham (2.08), Erin Medeiros (remote)
Rehoboth (1.21), Elizabeth Doyle (remote)
Seekonk (2.13), Brittney Faria (remote)
Taunton (5.58), Mayor Shaunna O'Connell
Wareham (3.25), Alan Slavin (remote)

The following board members were absent:

Bellingham (2.62), Josie Dutil
Berkley (1.39), Mark Horsfall
Dighton (1.16), Anabela Powell
Halifax (1.35), Bill Smith
Hanover (1.98), Tammy Murray
Marshfield (3.09), Greg Guimond
Middleboro (2.83), Mark Germain
Pembroke (2.56), Diane Picot
Plympton (1.24), Colleen Thompson
North Attleboro (3.30), Tony Morabito
Scituate (2.35), Linda Hayes
Wrentham (1.94), Janet Angelico
ADA Advocate (1.00), Michael Raymond

Also present:
Mary Ellen DeFrias (remote), Dan Burgess, Kylie Araujo

2. **May 20, 2026 Open Session Minutes**

A motion was made and seconded to approve May 20, 2026 Open Session Minutes. A roll call vote was taken.

Attleboro (5.49), Gary Aryassian- abstain
Carver (1.63), Connie Kelly- aye
Duxbury (2.28), Joanne Moore- aye
Foxborough (2.38), Catherine Feerick- aye
Franklin (3.62), Morena Zelaya- aye
Kingston (2.00), Patti Waitkevich- aye
Lakeville (1.60), Lori Fahey- aye
Mansfield (2.84), Josh Reinke- aye
Medway (1.98), Cathy Cebrowski- aye
Norfolk (2.27), Karen Edwards- aye
Plainville (1.30), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.42), Lindsay Reik- aye
Raynham (2.08), Erin Medeiros- aye
Rehoboth (1.21), Elizabeth Doyle- aye
Seekonk (2.13), Brittney Faria- aye
Taunton (5.58), Mayor Shaunna O'Connell- aye
Wareham (3.25), Alan Slavin- aye

Motion to approve the May 20, 2026, Open Session Minutes passed.

3. **Administrator Report & Financial Report**

Mary Ellen DeFrias reviewed the June 2026 Administrator's Report. She noted that Fixed Route and Demand Response ridership numbers continue to trend in line with regular monthly patterns. She highlighted strong growth in Gateway Link ridership, noting that the service has now surpassed 5,000 riders per month, which she stated demonstrates significant need for the service among Gateway communities.

Mary Ellen DeFrias reported that Sunday fixed route service has been successfully launched in the Taunton/Attleboro area. She noted that the rollout of Sunday service in Plymouth/Wareham remains underway, with the delay attributable to ongoing driver staffing shortages. She also noted that GATRA is currently out to bid for a contract covering fixed route, demand response, and microtransit oversight.

Mary Ellen DeFrias also reported that she continues to actively prepare for the FIFA World Cup at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro. She stated that GATRA will be managing hotel shuttle loops to and from the games, but noted that the Authority will not be operating microtransit service during the event, as it would be overwhelmed by demand.

Mary Ellen DeFrias recognized GATRA employees who have been with the Authority for over 15 years. She also noted that GATRA currently has a strong mix of both long-tenured and newer employees, representing a healthy balance across the organization.

She also reported that construction of the East Maintenance Facility in Wareham is complete and that GATRA is now awaiting the final certificate of occupancy before staff can relocate from the temporary facility into the new one.

Alan Slavin, Wareham, asked whether there is a fixed date for vacating the old Wareham building, noting that the Town is looking to issue an RFP for the property. Mary Ellen DeFrias responded that she has been in discussions regarding vacating the building, but that GATRA must wait for the occupancy order before a date can be set.

Mayor Shaunna O'Connell, Taunton, noted the importance of having a balance of new and long-tenured employees.

Dan Burgess reviewed the June 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 the budget amendment featured later in the meeting.

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 revenue and are entirely self-funded. He also noted that the decline in fare revenues is expected as GATRA continues to operate fare-free.

He further noted that while Brokerage expenses have risen, this has been matched by a corresponding increase in Brokerage revenue, and that this variance will be addressed in the upcoming budget amendment.

There were no questions on the Financial Report.

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

Attleboro (5.49), Gary Aryassian- aye
Carver (1.63), Connie Kelly- aye
Duxbury (2.28), Joanne Moore- aye
Foxborough (2.38), Catherine Feerick- aye
Franklin (3.62), Morena Zelaya- aye
Kingston (2.00), Patti Waitkevich- aye
Lakeville (1.60), Lori Fahey- aye
Mansfield (2.84), Josh Reinke- aye
Medway (1.98), Cathy Cebrowski- aye
Norfolk (2.27), Karen Edwards- aye
Norton (2.13), Kevin O'Neil- aye
Plainville (1.30), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.42), Lindsay Reik- aye
Raynham (2.08), Erin Medeiros- aye
Rehoboth (1.21), Elizabeth Doyle- aye
Seekonk (2.13), Brittney Faria- aye
Taunton (5.58), Mayor Shaunna O'Connell- aye
Wareham (3.25), Alan Slavin- aye

Motion to approve the above-stated reports passed.

4. **Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Budget Amendment**

Dan Burgess reviewed the FY26 Budget Amendment. He stated that nearly all categories reflect changes from the proposed budget. Expenses for Fixed Route and Demand Response have increased in the amendment, as has the special services budget, which follows a proportional increase in line with overall spending. He noted that Demand Response revenue projections are

down from the proposed budget, while there has been a significant increase in non-federal grant funding, primarily from state grants.

Dan Burgess also noted a decrease in federal funding for the airport shuttle, which has been offset through the airport shuttle program. State contract assistance has also been raised in line with actual need. With respect to the brokerage portion of the budget, Dan Burgess stated that both revenue and expenses for the program have increased significantly.

Mayor Shaunna O'Connell, Taunton asked whether anything in the amendment was concerning or out of the ordinary. Dan Burgess replied that nothing appeared to be, and that he believes GATRA is in good financial shape. He noted that while costs have increased, state funding has offset much of that increase.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the FY 2026 Budget Amendment. A roll call vote was taken.

Attleboro (5.49), Gary Aryassian- aye
Carver (1.63), Connie Kelly- aye
Duxbury (2.28), Joanne Moore- aye
Foxborough (2.38), Catherine Feerick- aye
Franklin (3.62), Morena Zelaya- aye
Kingston (2.00), Patti Waitkevich- aye
Lakeville (1.60), Lori Fahey- aye
Mansfield (2.84), Josh Reinke- aye
Medway (1.98), Cathy Cebrowski- aye
Norfolk (2.27), Karen Edwards- aye
Norton (2.13), Kevin O'Neil- aye
Plainville (1.30), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.42), Lindsay Reik- aye
Raynham (2.08), Erin Medeiros- aye
Rehoboth (1.21), Elizabeth Doyle- aye
Seekonk (2.13), Brittney Faria- aye
Taunton (5.58), Mayor Shaunna O'Connell- aye
Wareham (3.25), Alan Slavin- aye

Motion to approve the FY 2026 Budget Amendment passed.

5. **Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Budget Approval**

Dan Burgess reviewed the FY27 Budget Proposal. He noted that the budget includes a high-level overview along with more detailed breakdowns further within the document, and that these materials were provided at the previous meeting and remain unchanged. Dan Burgess explained that the large increase in administration costs is attributable to the shift of insurance costs from the operations budget to the administration budget.

He also addressed the increase in the building budget, noting that it reflects the addition of the second facility in Wareham. He stated that further changes may be necessary as additional information becomes available.

Mary Ellen DeFrias added that the budget now reflects seven-day-a-week service, with service running on every holiday except Christmas and Thanksgiving. She noted that this increase in service resulted from the recent Union negotiations and will come at a cost, as it requires additional drivers and increased vehicle service hours. She acknowledged that this substantially increases the budget but stated that this is the direction GATRA needs to move in going forward.

Alan Slavin, Wareham asked whether the increased usage of vehicles would result in an adjustment to replacement timeframes. Mary Ellen DeFrias responded that bus replacement is on a fixed 12-year schedule, but that this depends on the consistency of federal funding, which can result in buses remaining in service longer than intended. Alan Slavin noted that Wareham had previously overused its school buses, an issue that was resolved through a new replacement plan. Mary Ellen DeFrias responded that GATRA's replacement timeline similarly depends on federal funding, but that the Authority currently has buses on order through 2028.

Patti Waitkevich, Kingston asked whether GATRA is still purchasing electric vehicles. Mary Ellen DeFrias responded that it is not, as the Authority has lost significant federal funding for electric vehicles and is therefore purchasing more gas and diesel vehicles, though some vans remain electric. Patti Waitkevich followed up by asking whether the Wareham facility can accommodate diesel buses. Mary Ellen DeFrias responded that while the facility was built to be fully electric, it is capable of accommodating diesel buses, and that future decisions will depend on federal funding.

Alan Slavin, Wareham asked whether any electric buses or vans stationed at Wareham would be stored inside or outside the building. Mary Ellen DeFrias stated that they would most likely be stored outside, and that only vans, not buses, would be stationed at Wareham, and the supply of electric buses will depend on inventory.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Budget. A roll call vote was taken.

Attleboro (5.49), Gary Aryassian- aye
Carver (1.63), Connie Kelly- aye
Duxbury (2.28), Joanne Moore- aye
Foxborough (2.38), Catherine Feerick- aye
Franklin (3.62), Morena Zelaya- aye
Kingston (2.00), Patti Waitkevich- aye
Lakeville (1.60), Lori Fahey- aye
Mansfield (2.84), Josh Reinke- aye
Medway (1.98), Cathy Cebrowski- aye
Norfolk (2.27), Karen Edwards- aye
Norton (2.13), Kevin O'Neil- aye
Plainville (1.30), Brenda Watkinson- aye
Plymouth (5.42), Lindsay Reik- aye
Raynham (2.08), Erin Medeiros- aye
Rehoboth (1.21), Elizabeth Doyle- aye
Seekonk (2.13), Brittney Faria- aye
Taunton (5.58), Mayor Shaunna O'Connell- aye
Wareham (3.25), Alan Slavin- aye

Motion to approve the FY 2027 Budget passed.

6. **FY 2027 Meeting Dates and Orientation**

Mary Ellen DeFrias stated that the meeting dates shown in bold represent confirmed meeting dates, while the remaining dates are being held simply as backups. She noted that if the Board is comfortable, GATRA may shift to meeting on a bi-monthly basis next year.

7. **Adjournment**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. Motion to adjourn passed without objection.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:26PM.

Documents & Exhibits Discussed in this Meeting:

- 6.17.26 GATRA Advisory Board Meeting Agenda
- 5.20.26 GATRA Advisory Board Open Session Minutes
- June 2026 Administrator's Report
- June 2026 Financial Report
- FY26 Budget Amendment
- FY27 Budget
- FY27 Meeting Dates