Southeastern Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Meeting

Date: Thursday, January 18th, 2018

Location: Anthony S. Catojo Building, The New Bedford Art Museum

608 Pleasant Street, Second Floor

New Bedford, MA 02740

(1) Call to Order

**The Advisory Board Chair called the meeting to order at 5:04PM EST.**

(2) Roll Call

Present:

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| City of New Bedford | City of Fall River |
| Town of Fairhaven (Late Arrival) |  |

Absent:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Town of Acushnet | Town of Swansea |
| Town of Dartmouth | Town of Westport |
| Town of Freetown | Riders Representative |
| Town of Mattapoisett | ADA Representative |
| Town of Somerset |  |

Additional Attendees:

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| --- | --- |
| Erik Rousseau, SRTA | Shayne Trimbell, SRPEDD |
| John LeBert, SRTA |  |

(3) Approval of Minutes

**The motion was made (Fall River) and seconded (New Bedford) to approve the minutes from the previous November (11/16/2017) Advisory Board Meeting. So Voted.**

(4) Citizen’s Participation

No Citizen’s Participation.

(5) Service Report

Mr. Erik Rousseau (Administrator) informed the Board that from this point on, the Administrator will be providing a Service Report in lieu of the previous Operators Report. This transition have come about a result of the MassDOT Program Preview (to be discussed later on), in which MassDOT pointed out that is rather unusual for an Operator to report directly to the Board.

Continuing on, Mr. Rousseau noted the modest decrease (1.5%) in ridership when comparing the first half of FY18 to the same period in FY17. This decrease, however, is much lesser when compared to the negative impact on the other RTA’s in Massachusetts as well as when compared to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region 1—which encompasses most of New England—at a decrease of 9%.

The City of Fall River questioned the possible reasons behind said decline, in which Mr. Rousseau pointed at the reduction in unemployment as well as the reduction in gas prices as contributing factors, to go along with the Authority’s service hours not always aligning with gainful employment.

Furthermore, Mr. Rousseau praised the Operating Company and their ability to perform a level of service during the recent inclement weather events, highlighting the heightened dedication and communication as key factors during these happenings.

Lastly, Mr. Rousseau shared two (2) recent staffing changes at the Administrative Office; Mary Ellen Defrias (Grants Manager) has left employment as of October 31st while Shayne Trimbell (Director of Transit Planning) has joined as of January 1st. Part of Shayne’s body of work will be with future service developments as well as data analytics in the decision-making processes.

(6) Civil Rights Update

Title VI: The new Title VI Plan have been submitted and received approval. The new Plan is effective through 05/31/2019.

EEO: The new EEO Plan for South Coast Transit Management was submitted on August 19th, 2017 and is approved through April 30th, 2020. At this time, there is one pending EEO complaint that was filed through MCAD.

DBE: The SRTA DBE goals for Fiscal Year 2016 through Fiscal Year 2018 were submitted and have been approved through September 30th, 2018. SRTA achieved their DBE goal of 2.2% for Federal Fiscal Year 2017.

SRTA’s DBE goal for Federal Fiscal Year 2018 will be 4.7% participation. The first reporting period of this federal fiscal year is due on June 1st, 2018.

Environmental Justice: This is a requirement that SRTA has to engage the Public whenever there is a major project or route change. SRTA is constantly working to increase Public participation. If any Public input is needed, it will be reported to the Board as part of this report.

(7) Old Business

*Update on ADA Certification:*

SRTA continues to work with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and while there are no updates at this point, the Authority will continue to update the Board indefinitely.

The City of New Bedford questioned the Riders Representative seat as well as the ADA Representative seat for the SRTA Advisory Board. Mr. Erik Rousseau mentioned that the Authority has been contact with the AFL-CIO (Riders Representative) and the Fall River Disability Commission (ADA Representative) with regard to potential candidates for the respective seat(s).

The initial candidate provided by the AFL-CIO did not feel that they fit the need or overarching purpose of the Riders Representative and has respectfully declined the seat. The AFL-CIO remains responsible for filling this seat and continues to work to do so.

(8) New Business

*MassDOT Program Preview Recap:*

Approximately 10 years ago, MassDOT began this annual process of meeting with the Massachusetts RTA’s to discuss each agencies performance, planning, and allow the RTA’s a better opportunity to articulate their needs. Due to Administration changes and other unknown reasons, this process was discontinued for some time—only to be restarted this fiscal year (FY18).

The needs list (prepared by SRTA and SRPEDD) that was presented at the November SRTA Advisory Board Meeting—which included additional night service, more frequent intercity service, as well as the addition of Sunday service—was also presented to MassDOT during this Program Preview.

While MassDOT recognized SRTA’s turnaround in performance over the past few years (as evidence by the $2.08 Ridership-Per-Subsidy metric), the thought of additional funding was not executed as the Massachusetts RTA’s (including SRTA) were informed to budget the upcoming fiscal year (FY19) at fiscal year 2015 (FY15) levels—a practice frequently known as level-funding.

Mr. Rousseau shared that the Massachusetts RTA’s have banded together and asked that the funding levels for the RTA’s return to the previously decided upon methodology of 2.5% annual increases which at the FY19 point would be 88 million.

The Town of Fairhaven questioned the usefulness of including the Ridership-Per-Subsidy metric on the Performance Dashboard that is provided by the Authority to the Board. Mr. Rousseau noted that this metric could be included; however, it is more often a yearend calculation and not a metric that is commonly used to measure efficiency. Shayne Trimbell (Director of Transit Planning) shared that the Passengers-Per-Revenue Hour is a more commonly used performance metric that is, in fact, currently used by SRTA to track and analyze efficiency on a per-route basis.

9) Logistics for the Next Advisory Board Meeting

The next SRTA Advisory Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 15th at 5:00PM in Fall River; with the objective to reserve the first floor cafeteria.

(13) Adjournment

**The motion was made (Fall River) and seconded (Fairhaven) to adjourn the meeting at 5:39PM EST. So Voted.**