Southeastern Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Meeting

Date: Thursday, March 29th, 2018

Location: Fall River Government Center (First Floor Cafeteria)

 1 Government Center

 Fall River, MA 02721

(1) Call to Order

**The Advisory Board Chair called the meeting to order at 5:00PM EST.**

(2) Roll Call

Present:

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

Absent:

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

Additional Attendees:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Erik Rousseau, SRTA | Arthur Frank, Legal Counsel |
| Kristen Sniezek, SRTA | John LeBert, SRTA |
| Shayne Trimbell, SRTA |  |

(3) Approval of Minutes

**The motion was made (Fall River) and seconded (Somerset) to approve the minutes from the previous January (01/18/2018) Advisory Board Meeting. So Voted.**

(4) Citizen’s Participation

No Citizen’s Participation.

(5) Service Report

Mr. Erik Rousseau (Administrator) presented the SRTA Performance Dashboard Report to the Board – of which provides various Operational metrics for both modes of transportation (Fixed Route and Demand Response) on a month to month comparison.

As shown on the Performance Dashboard Report, Fixed Route ridership (as a whole) is displaying a slight decrease when compared to the same period of the prior fiscal year. This decrease, however, can be attributed to the fact of lesser service days, as pointed out by Mr. Rousseau.

On the other hand, Demand Response (paratransit) ridership is showing a reasonable increase when compared to the same period of the prior fiscal year. Keeping in mind, Mr. Rousseau communicated to the Board that this mode of transportation does carry a heightened variable cost (when compared to Fixed Route) on a per passenger or per trip level basis as it is an on-demand service.

The City of New Bedford expressed the hope that this increase in Demand Response ridership would translate to the funding or cost-offset portion for the Authority, over and above the increase in passenger revenues.

(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.

The City of New Bedford questioned the typical length of an MCAD complaint, in which Mr. Rousseau noted the variability. The hearing for this particular complaint occurred during the summer of 2017, while the complaint itself did not come onto the Authority’s radar until January of 2018.

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.

The City of New Bedford questioned the public requirements related to a temporary route change, in which Mr. Rousseau shared the Authority’s policy for such changes – Public participation (or input) is not required for temporary route changes or any route changes that have less than a 25% impact on the applicable route’s mileage.

(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.

(8) New Business

*FY19 Draft Budget:*

Mr. Erik Rousseau presented the FY19 Draft Budget along with supporting documentation, highlighting numerous areas such as staffing, labor costs, attendance, pension, insurance, and funding. Overall, the FY19 draft budget displays a modest increase of 3.0% over the approved FY18 budget figures.

The Operating company (South Coast Transit Management) is requesting 4 additional full time employees as well as 4 additional part time employees (at 30 hours versus the customary 20 hours), of which is to be split amongst the two facilities – New Bedford and Fall River. The Authority has requested that the Operator (SCTM) provide additional documentation (and / or analysis) to support the desire for an increased work force, while still maintaining the 6% overtime allocation.

In doing so, Mr. Rousseau pointed to the Performance Dashboard Report metric of Passengers Per Revenue Hour measure for Demand Response. Currently through FY18, the Operator is performing at a Passengers Per Revenue Hour rate of 2.13 – which when compared against the industry standard benchmark of 1.8 Passengers Per Revenue Hour, shows the level of effort being put forth by the Operator at the current staffing levels.

Two (2) noteworthy reductions worth mentioning were found on the Medical Insurance line – due to a “good” experience modification rating – as well as the Pension line – due to the market performance in the prior valuation period. While these reductions have a positive impact on this budgeting period, Mr. Rousseau reminded the Board that these reductions are likely one-time cost savings.

The City of New Bedford questioned the utility of the Purchased ADA line – which is programmed to allow the Authority the ability to seek services outside of the Authority—Operator partnership in the event that the Operating company is unable to meet the demand of Demand Response (paratransit).

Lastly, the Federal Assistance (Federal Grants) for Operating figure was brought to the attention of the Board as this line is exhibiting a sizable increase when compared against the prior fiscal year. At this point, the Authority is allocating more Federal dollars into the Operating budget than the Authority is in fact receiving on an annual basis, according to Mr. Rousseau. This increased reliance on Federal Operating dollars is as a direct result of the State continually – over the past 5 years – level funding the Massachusetts Regional Transit Authorities (RTA). As mentioned in prior Board meetings, the level of State funding had been previously agreed upon to increase to a total of 88 million, however, that number remains at 80 million.

The Town of Fairhaven questioned how the communities could assist in securing the additional funding from the State, which Mr. Rousseau expressed the greatest assistance is simply in the form of showing support when speaking with their respective legislative delegation.

In speaking of future years and potential service adjustments, Mr. Rousseau hinted toward the number of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) that are to be deployed by the Authority within the next year; as these systems will provide more in-depth data and analysis (on a per route-level), which in turn will allow for much more strategic decision-making.

The City of New Bedford questioned the next steps with regard to the budget process, which the Authority noted could the next action item potentially happen for the April Board meeting, however, this typically happens with the May Board meeting. The City of New Bedford requests that if there are no action items in April, than the budget be forwarded to the Board prior to the May Board meeting for review.

9) Logistics for the Next Advisory Board Meeting

The next SRTA Advisory Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 19th at 5:00PM in New Bedford; with the objective to reserve the Department of Planning, Housing and Community Development conference room – located diagonally across from City Hall, on the second floor of the Art Museum.

(13) Adjournment

**The meeting was adjourned at 5:26PM EST.**