Southeastern Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Meeting

Date: Thursday, September 28th, 2017

Location: New Bedford City Hall (Ashley Room)

133 William Street

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:

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

(3) Approval of Minutes

**The motion was made (Fall River) and seconded (Somerset) to approve the minutes from the previous April (04/27/2017) Advisory Board Meeting. So Voted.**

**The motion was made (Fall River) and seconded (Somerset) to approve the minutes from the previous June (06/22/2017) Advisory Board Meeting. So Voted.**

(4) Citizen’s Participation

A resident of New Bedford (Bus Riders United) presented 1,500 postcards petitioning for Sunday fixed route service. In addition to the post cards, the resident of New Bedford asks that SRTA utilize the former Operator settlement funds to establish a pilot service.

A resident of New Bedford (Bus Riders United) petitioned for the addition of Sunday fixed route services stating that, amongst many other riders, Amazon employees are reluctantly being forced to take alternate means of transportation as shifts can be variable (i.e. not always coinciding with the hours of service), including all of Sunday shifts.

A resident of Fall River (Bus Riders United) echoed the petition for Sunday fixed route service.

A resident of New Bedford questioned the status of the Rider Representative seat on the SRTA Advisory Board, of which the Advisory Board Chair indicated has been filled by Corrinne Williams.

A resident of New Bedford read aloud a letter composed by a resident of Fall River commending the addition of night service, while also echoing the petition for Sunday fixed route service.

**The motion was made (Fall River) and seconded (Somerset) to approve and accept the resident of Fall River letter to the Advisory Board. So Voted.**

Mr. Erik Rousseau (Administrator) reminded the Board that the budget that was approved / passed in May has been reduced by roughly $128,000 due to State budget cuts. Mr. Rousseau expressed the challenge in adding Sunday Fixed Route service that existed prior to this reduction, has grown to be even more difficult with the aforementioned cuts.

The City of New Bedford questioned the idea of corporate / private contributions in order to help bridge the funding – cost gap. Mr. Rousseau noted the historical low success rate with this type of partnership, however, also pointed out the greater challenge in that in order to effectively service any given area, full service would have to be added — which comes at a much larger price tag.

Currently, the full range of Saturday fixed route service generates an estimated cost of $1.4 million.

The City of Fall River questioned the use of the aforementioned former Operator settlement funds ($688,000). To date, the Authority has received an average of $42.00 per month over the past 14 months. Mr. Rousseau recapped to the Board that the Federal Government could have preference on how this funding were to be utilized by the Authority, given that it was determined to have been Capital funds.

Highlighted once more was the fact of matter that these funds would be one-time only.

(5) Operator’s Report

Ms. Karen Walton (General Manager) noted the seamless start of the school year, of which resulted in the successful meeting of the increased service needs. Ms. Walton noted the 100% staffing numbers as well as related staffing / personnel matters such as the outreach to local school systems in hopes of developing a partnership that would establish internship-like programs in the Garage (Mechanics) as well as Information Technology (IT) areas. In completing the latter, SCTM would be more well equipped to replace any potential future retirements.

In addition to the above, the Human Resource Training Officer of South Couth Transit Management (SCTM) is in the process of revamping the driver-training curriculum with a focus on making certain each is current.

Lastly, Ms. Walton shared that SCTM staff has completed the construction of the satellite office at the Fall River Maintenance Garage, of which is currently being used on a rotating basis by the Assistant General Manager of Operations, Human Resource Manager, and herself.

(6) Civil Rights Update

Title VI: The new Title VI Plan have been submitted and received approval. The new Plan is effective through 05/31/2022. At this time, there is one pending MCAD complaint. This has the potential to also be a Title VI complaint. This determination will be made after the MCAD hearing.

EEO: The new EEO Plan for South Coast Transit Management was submitted on August 19th, 2017 and is approved through April 30th, 2020. To date there have been no EEO complaints.

DBE: The SRTA DBE goals for Fiscal Year 2016 through Fiscal Year 2018 were submitted and have been approved. SRTA achieved their DBE goal for Federal Fiscal Year 2016. SRTA’s DBE goal for Federal Fiscal Year 2017 will be 2.2% participation. The first reporting period of this year (June 1st, 2017) SRTA achieved 1.51% participation. The second reporting period is due December 1st.

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 received feedback from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), being the feedback in omitting various questions from the proposed application. SRTA will make these changes and present the revised application once completed.

(8) New Business

*Audit and Finance Committee – FY17 Audit:*

The Advisory Board Chair (City of New Bedford) presented the Committee Report completed by the SRTA Audit and Finance Committee Chair (City of New Bedford) regarding the Fiscal Year 2017 audit. As outlined in the Committee Report, the audit was performed by Hague & Sahady and concluded with positive results.

**The motion was made (Fall River) and seconded (Somerset) to accept the SRTA Audit and Finance Committee Report regarding the Fiscal Year 2017 Financial Statements Audit. So Voted.**

(9) Logistics for the Next Advisory Board Meeting

The next SRTA Advisory Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 19th at 5:00PM in Fall River; with the objective to reserve the first floor cafeteria.

The City of New Bedford noted their absence from this scheduled (October 19th) meeting.

(10) Executive Session pursuant G.L. c. 30A & 21 (a)(2): To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for contract negotiations with non-union personnel (Erik Rousseau, Administrator).

**A motion was made (Fall River) and seconded (Somerset) to suspend the Open Session, go into Executive Session, and then return to the remainder of the Public Meeting (Open Session). So voted.**

(11) Return to Open Session

The Advisory Board Chair noted the return to Open Session at 5:43PM; thanking the public and other members / attendees for their cooperation.

**A motion was made (Fall River) and seconded (Fairhaven) to notify Erik Rousseau (Executive Director of SRTA) of the SRTA Advisory Board’s intention to negotiate the renewal / extension of Mr. Rousseau’s employment dated December 23rd, 2014. So voted.**

**A motion was made (Fall River) and seconded (Somerset) to authorize and direct the SRTA Executive Compensation Committee – with the assistance of SRTA’s General Counsel and any other consultants deemed necessary and proper – to negotiate the extension / renewal of the Executive Director’s employment agreement.**

(12) Other Business

The Town of Somerset questioned how seniors located in suburban areas whom are not handicap but have forfeited their license may be able to utilized SRTA services — particularly the Demand Response service.

Mr. Rousseau explained that Demand Response service is restricted to ADA customers and that the Authority does not currently offer strictly senior transportation. Mr. Rousseau also recommended that any senior seeking transportation assistance (that does not qualify for ADA service) should reach out to their local Council on Aging (COA).

The Authority currently offers support to the local Council on Aging’s by way of helping to provide vans (where applicable / if attainable) and providing maintenance tasks (oil changes) at no charge.

(13) Adjournment

**A motion was made (Fall River) and seconded (Somerset) to adjourn the meeting at 5:48PM EST. So Voted.**