Southeastern Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Meeting

Date: Thursday, November 16th, 2017

Location: Fall River Government Center (Cafeteria)

 1 Government Center

 Fall River, MA 02721

Amendment: The Advisory Board Chair informed the Board of an item (8 - Unanticipated Influx of Families and Students to SRTA’s Region) for which the agenda has been amended due to unforeseen circumstances, as this item could not be reasonably anticipated.

(1) Call to Order

**The Advisory Board Chair called the meeting to order at 5:09PM EST.**

(2) Roll Call

Present:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| City of New Bedford | City of Fall River |
| Town of Swansea |  |

Absent:

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

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 (Swansea) to approve the minutes from the previous September (09/28/2017) Advisory Board Meeting. So Voted.**

(4) Citizen’s Participation

No Citizen’s Participation.

(5) Operator’s Report

Ms. Karen Walton (General Manager) expressed the uninterrupted Operations at both facilities while highlighting that labor relations continues to succeed, as evidence by zero (0) grievances being filed with the past five (5) months.

The SRTA Legal Counsel offered compliments while the City of New Bedford (in addition to compliments) questioned the comparison to the same period of the prior year. Ms. Walton stated that she would look into this inquiry.

Ms. Walton noted the sustained full staffing numbers with the addition of hiring of two (2) part-time drivers. As mentioned in previous meetings, SCTM has continued 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.

Additionally, Ms. Walton shared that the Fall River Union and Non-Union Employees have been jointly seeking and collecting various donations (such as clothing, food, and toys) for both the Salvation Army and YMCA.

The City of New Bedford questioned the lack of involvement from New Bedford Union and Non-Union Employees in such offerings, which Ms. Walton explained is due to the New Bedford (Local) Union leadership experiencing personal issues.

(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 through September 30th, 2018. 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.

The City of New Bedford questioned the aforementioned MCAD hearing, in which Mr. Rousseau and Mr. Frank noted a prescreening is set to take place the upcoming Monday (November 20th).

(7) Old Business

*Update on ADA Certification:*

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Representative whom had been providing feedback to the Authority has moved on (to the U.S. Treasury Department). Due to the move, the original ADA Representative for FTA Region 1 has since been reassigned. Since the reassignment, SRTA has not made any further progress and this remains and ongoing, continuous item.

(8) New Business

*Update on Funding and Service Needs:*

SRTA presented the 2.5 year summary / report (Service Planning Initiatives and Concepts—meeting attachment) that was generated with the assistance of the Authority’s planning agency; Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD).

Including in this report are various service-planning proposals—that have (at some point) been discussed with the Authority—accompanied by the potential cost of each possible service proposal.

Mr. Rousseau shared the Authority’s characteristic funding structure whereas for—for example—the Authority would be looking for the State to assume half of the cost of associated with Sunday service, with the Local Communities also assuming their shares as well.

The Town of Swansea expressed the concern of lack of transportation within the Towns of SRTA’s service area and the possibility of private partnerships (i.e. businesses / corporations) to aide in bridging any funding gaps. This is something the Authority has looked at and will continue to assess in the future.

Also mentioned was the possible Fall River to Providence connection that has been on the Authority’s service planning radar. While not yet complete, the Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority (RIPTA) has shown motivation to accomplish this service.

The City of Fall River conveyed the significance of the intercity transport for jobs—such Amazon, Stop and Shop Warehouse—to enable those employers to draw from wider areas (i.e. surrounding Cities and Towns). Mr. Rousseau reiterated that the Authority is currently serving Amazon and has been evaluating service to the Stop and Shop Warehouse (Freetown).

The City of New Bedford noted the essential role of public transportation in helping people (namely elders) stay in their housing longer as this means allows for prolonged retention of one’s independence. In relation to this matter, the Authority has seen a significant increase in Demand Response ridership that has been matched with increased efficiency due to the implementation of a new scheduling software combined with the keen efforts of the Management Team.

*Unanticipated Influx of Families and Students to SRTA’s Region:*

Mr. Rousseau pointed toward the unusually large number of displaced families from Puerto Rico to the New Bedford area and the need for a collaborative effort to support all of those affected individuals. Due to the unique and extraordinary nature of these events, the Authority would (ideally) be included in that combined effort, in conjunction with the City of New Bedford.

The City of New Bedford shared the City’s current workings with the United Way and Community Foundations, however, pointed to the heightened importance of this interim transportation need.

The Town of Swansea questioned the Authority’s plan of action in responding to this type of event and request for assistance. Mr. Rousseau communicated to the Board that the Authority would be providing passes to both students (school) and adults (work), with the anticipation of this lasting (at least) a few months.

(9) Logistics for the Next Advisory Board Meeting

The next SRTA Advisory Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 18th 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

**A motion was made (Fall River) and seconded (Swansea) to adjourn the meeting at 5:32PM EST. So Voted.**