



**Southeastern Regional Transit Authority Advisory Board Meeting**

**Date:** Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020  
**Location:** Virtual Meeting via SRTA Cisco WebEx (1:00PM)  
Call in Number: +1-408-418-9388; Access Code: 793 839 378  
**Purpose:** FY20 SRTA Advisory Board

(1) Call to Order

**The Advisory Board Chair called the meeting to order at 1:10PM EST.**

(2) Roll Call

Present:

City of New Bedford (Tabitha Harkin)	City of Fall River (John Perry & Mayor Paul Coogan)
Town of Fairhaven (Paul Foley)	Town of Dartmouth (Deborah Melino-Wender)
	Riders Representative (Dan Robillard)

Absent:

Town of Acushnet	Town of Swansea
Town of Freetown	Town of Westport
Town of Mattapoisett	ADA Representative
Town of Somerset	

Additional Attendees:

Erik Rousseau, SRTA	Arthur Frank, General Counsel (SRTA)
Kristen Sniezek, SRTA	Paul Mission, SRPEDD
John LeBert, SRTA	Angela Constantino, SRPEDD
Shayne Trimbell, SRTA	Lilia Cabral, SPREDD

(3) Approval of Minutes

**The motion was made (Fall River) and seconded (New Bedford) to approve the minutes from the previous February (02/27/2020) SRTA Advisory Board Meeting. Abstained / Recused – Dartmouth. So Voted.**

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(4) Citizen's Participation

No Citizen's Participation.

(5) Civil Rights Update

Title VI:

SRTA's Title VI Plan has been submitted and is under FTA review and awaiting concurrence.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO):

The EEO Plan for South Coast Transit Management (SCTM) is in place through April 30, 2020.

The updated EEO Plan for South Coast Transit Management (SCTM) has been submitted and is under FTA review and awaiting concurrence.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE):

SRTA's DBE goals for FFY19-FFY21 has been submitted and is under FTA review and awaiting concurrence.

SRTA's DBE Program Plan received concurrence in September 2017.

The next semi-annual report is due June 1, 2020.

Environmental Justice:

Environmental justice is a requirement that SRTA must engage the public whenever there is a major project or route change.

SRTA is constantly working to increase public participation, and if any public input is needed, it will be conveyed to the Board as part of this report.

(6) New Business

*COVID-19 Response:*

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Erik Rousseau (Administrator) highlighted a number of key elements that the SRTA has introduced since March 2<sup>nd</sup> including, but not limited to, the issuance of Standard Operator Procedures (SOP) for the nightly cleaning and sanitizing of vehicles and facilities; the installation of hand sanitizer dispensers at both the New Bedford terminal and Fall River Terminals; as well as the creation of a COVID-19 News and FAQ landing page on the SRTA website (<http://www.srtabus.com/covid19>).

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In order to uphold the safety of both the Operators and Passengers, and as outlined in recent press releases, rear-door boarding and the discontinuation of fare enforcement was enacted on March 21, while service was reduced to a Saturday-level schedule on March 25.

*FY20 Budget Update & Preliminary FY21 Budget Outlook:*

Included with the meeting materials, Mr. Rousseau presented the SRTA's FY20 Year-End Budget Projection as well as the SRTA's FY21 Draft Budget, highlighting the utilization of the recently apportioned Federal funds of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

The Authority will receive approximately \$20 million in CARES Act Funding of which will be used for various Operating and Capital purposes. CARES Act Funding will be used in part to help fill the gap that has resulted from the discontinuation of fare enforcement. In addition, these funds will also be used to fund the added expenses related to the sanitizing and cleaning of Authority vehicles and facilities – of which such sanitation procedures are predicted to become part of the normal maintenance plan as we move into the future.

Note: Associated with the previously mentioned service reductions, the Operations workforce has adopted a rotating 2-week schedule in order to limit exposures. CARES Act Funding will also effectively be used to cover the wages of the off-week (or on-call) Operators.

Ultimately, at this time, the Authority is estimating that the aforementioned CARES Act Funds will take approximately 2-3 years to fully expend.

The City of Fall River questioned if there is a limit or cap associated with the CARES Act Funds. The Authority is in the process of discussing the language and potential strategies with peers (RTA's) across the Commonwealth. While the guidance from State Partners (MassDOT) has been to spend conservatively, the Federal language and guidance from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has been to spend more rapidly.

As questioned by the Riders Representative, it is worth noting that the CARES Act Funds do not currently have an expiration of funding sunset.

Lastly, regarding the CARES Act Funds, the City of New Bedford made note of the gratefulness and appreciation of being a recipient of such funds.

What's more, as outlined in the FY20 Year-End Budget Projection and FY21 Draft Budget presentation, the discontinuation of fare enforcement is slated to remain in effect throughout the end of FY20, with the present-day objective of resuming fare enforcement by the second quarter of FY21 (October 1).

As illustrated in the meeting materials, the discretionary funding of the pilot for night service on the New Bedford Route 8, New Bedford Route 11, and Fall River Route 5 will be expiring at the end of FY20. Given that these pilot services were suspended with the recent service reductions, the Authority will be seeking an extension with MassDOT, to extend later into FY21. Additionally, the pilot for Fixed Route Service on Sunday has been postponed due to bandwidth concerns, however, the Authority is working closely with MassDOT regarding the use of these funds, with the hope of pivoting to a pilot for Express Service between New Bedford and Fall River.

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The City of Fall River questioned the increase in Advertising Revenue from the FY20 projected budget to FY21 proposed budget. Said increase is as a result of the recent procurement for advertising services, of which was awarded to a new Contractor. Given the current climate, Mr. Rousseau shared that ad partners were not billed for the month of April.

*Other Business:*

The Riders Representative questioned if they Boston Hospital Trips are still being scheduled, in which the Board was informed that these trips are not currently being provided.

(7) Logistics for the Next Advisory Board Meeting

The next SRTA Advisory Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 28<sup>th</sup> at 10:30AM. Given the current circumstances, this meeting is presently scheduled to take place as a remote / WebEx meeting.

The May 2020 meeting will be largely focused on the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Budget as well as any subsequent updates or amendments to the Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) Budget.

(8) Adjournment

**The motion was made (Fall River) and seconded (Ridership Representative) to adjourn the meeting at 1:42PM EST.**

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