

## Regional Transit Advisory Committee – July 20, 2023 – 6:30 PM

### Minutes

Present: Tate Coleman, Bill Cooke (Great Barrington), Deb Phillips (Great Barrington), Jamie Minacci (Stockbridge), George McGurn (Egremont), Hannah Walton (Great Barrington, PR officer), Ben Elliott (GB Selectboard), Lin Saberski (potential Monterey rep), Bill Barth (West Stockbridge)

#### I. Board positions (review/discussion) (6:40)

- Committee position elections
- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer - Open position
- New BRTA and Selectboard Representative – Ben Elliott

Tate will send out the positions and descriptions so we can elect officers at our August meeting

- Unrepresented towns: Lee, Monterey, Sandisfield and New Marlborough

Monterey has been using GB senior transportation and would like to participate in microtransit program – got a grant from the state to increase hours with the TriTown Connector

Lin has requested to be accepted to represent Monterey on this committee

Bill Cooke moved to recommend Lin Saberski to represent Monterey

George McGurn seconded

Unanimous approval

Tate will forward her name to the Town Manager for appointment

#### II. Tri-Town Microtransit Pilot update (6:50)

- Update on progress, ridership report – it has been very positive

Mostly fully staffed – could use one more part time driver

Ridership at 467 for the month of May, 589 for June

Weekends are lower usage with lower staffing

30-40 rides/day with a high of 46 last Thursday

GB – 91 rides

Stockbridge double ridership 34 in May to 60 in June

First 2 weeks in July up 28% from June

See attached reports

Do we track why people are using this program?

Incomplete data for May, full data for June

General sense – new rides are not all seniors – now @ 75% down from 85%-90%

Now getting more work force trips, particularly early morning

Evening ridership picking up in the evenings – work force and seniors shopping and social

Medical has remained steady

30 Saturday trips, up from @ 15

Data will be aggregated and reported more completely – hiring staff to do this

Awarded a grant for a dedicated senior van driver 8-4 Monday thru Friday – hope to increase attendance at GB Senior Center activities

Has been difficult to get weekend dispatch

Working on getting the app working and hope to have it in place by the end of summer

- Free Sunday fixed route report – started in response to lack of dispatcher on Sundays 9 AM-3 PM serving 5-6 housing developments including senior and affordable housing, Simon's Rock, Housatonic, stores and downtown; this is a short term solution until we have on-line booking in place
- Fairview Hospital (FVH) has recurring issue of getting some people home from the emergency room – how can we respond to this? Have been in contact with FVH and will be developing community partners and will continue that conversation in the fall. Program just became fully staffed with drivers. Have responded to calls from the FVH ED and have been able to get some patients home.
- Next Steps

Partnerships – Simon's Rock – will purchase tickets to distribute to students –  
major need is evenings and weekends

Fairview Hospital

On-line booking

Many communities have reached out about expanding or replicating this service

Submitted an application for FY2025 – will not have a response until at least the fall and hopefully by the end of the year, but the state is being encouraging; current grant runs through June 2024

\$215,000 in local match for Year 2 – significant increase

\$40,000 anticipated in fare revenue anticipated for the first year – this is not counted on, but could allow us to expand hours/service.

Different levels of service for different communities:

GB, Stockbridge, Egremont – first towns to join, full service

Monterey and New Marlborough belonged to senior ride service – M-F 8-4 and that has not changed

Monterey will receive limited additional service – 10-4 on weekends, 8-6 weekdays

Sheffield and West Stockbridge are slated for FY 2025 (beginning July 1 2024) – both have committed match funding; will receive slightly different services. Increase in driver hours, plus fifth vehicle from West Stockbridge.

### III. Update on social media – Hannah Walton

Needs to get into the FaceBook account

Has updated links for website

Looking for ideas for posts – direct people to website, advertise Sunday fixed route, hours of operation, quotes, video clips of riders, introduce the drivers and dispatchers. Submit photos and contacts to Hannah –

Tate will ask the Senior Center to see if riders want to talk

Ben Elliott and Bill Cooke can do statements

Use social media to advertise committee openings

IV. Treasurer's report (7:30)

- FY2024 Budget: \$1,000

Request to allocate \$500 for advertising initiatives and materials for Tri Town Connector

Motion by Bill Cooke

Second by Ben Elliott

Discussion: plan to do some printing of flyers including Spanish language, Shopper's Guide ads

What about using VIM to help non-English speakers book rides? Bill will follow up

Unanimous agreement

V. New or Old Business

Bus stop accessibility update: is in the hands of the DPW for the first 10 stops – challenging to get contracts to lay concrete

Have applied for an extension for the remaining stops

Hiccups with the two downtown stops – contracts have fallen through and is out to rebid

VI. Citizen Speak

Next meeting time: Thursday August 31 at 6:30

Motion to adjourn by Bill Cooke at 7:36

Second by Jamie Minacci

Unanimous agreement

Submitted by Deborah Phillips