

Regional Transportation Advisory Committee

Town of Great Barrington, Massachusetts

Wednesday, October 25, 2023 6:30 PM

Meeting called to order at 6:38 PM

Present:

Tate Coleman (GB), Bill Cooke (citizen at large), Ben Eliot (GB), Lyn Saberski (Monterey)
George McGurn (Egremont), Hannah Walton(GB), Deb Phillips (citizen at large)

Absent: Bill Barth (West Stockbridge), Justin Wald (Sheffield), Gabrielle Brusseau (citizen at large, Jennifer Nacht(Lenox)

Guests: Eileen Mooney

1. Board positions (review/discussion)

- Treasurer - Open position -

2. Unrepresented towns:

Lee, Sandisfield and New Marlborough – Tri-town connector provides services for New Marlborough

3. Tri-Town Micro-transit Pilot update

- We will find out if we receive next FY funding before the end of November.
- Update - Tate will forward the ridership report.
 - Increase in riders to 1,259 up from 1,036.
 - Gains were in shopping trips.
 - Staffing was best in September.
 - Still cannot accommodate all ride requests.
 - Updates are sent to the towns.
 - Deb requested a dashboard on the website to view data – Deb and Bill will work with the data manager to get the data on the website.
 - Still do not have a full-time operations manager; we do have a dispatcher and reporting coordinator.
 - Deb suggested we look at how to distribute the work on this project.
 - George recommended we get the transportation director in Egremont involved; plan a meeting to discuss better collaboration. Egremont has made their van available for Tri-town; we have not needed it yet.

- Jamie – Stockbridge could get more ridership; can we use HR in another town to support hiring? Can we put this on a different plate? Drivers are GB employees, are there other components that can be shifted? Melanie from Egremont, etc. Other towns can help with advertising. Advertising has been in the Shopper's Guide – reasonable effective, Indeed has not been so effective.
- How to engage other towns in recruitment? Post openings on town websites – yes from George, Lyn and Jamie to do this.
- Drug testing finding marijuana has also limited hiring.
- Could the Connector become a separate municipal entity like the water district in the future? This may be too much – insurance, etc. It may be helpful to explore staff to assist in HR functions to expedite processes.
- We are in dire need of a manager!! Low to mid \$50,000s for salary.
- Community partnerships – met with RSYF – would like someone to speak with the YOB – Ben will do this.
- FVH ED bought \$100 of tickets for people who need rides home – we receive calls from them, mostly for seniors. All hospital staff have been briefed and it is on the resource list. Hospital and patients are grateful.
- A lot of calls after 4 PM when other transportation has ceased.
- Construct purchasing \$200 of tickets.
- Simon's Rock has strong ridership – grouping students together very flexible around accommodating. Often used to get to service industry jobs – GB and Stockbridge.
- Hours of operation reduced as of October 15 in anticipation of losing drivers; onboarding new drivers now, but still have vacancies. Starting an hour later, ending an hour earlier. Have helped people needing rides to work use the BRTA fixed route service.
- Micro transit can offer scheduled shopping trips for seniors from any of the participating towns
- Sheffield connector service and Monterey, New Marlborough and West Stockbridge service resumed after stopping for equipment problems.

4. Compliance review update -from DOT –we did well.

Tate was asked to provide the review to the whole committee when the final report is received.

- Recommended obtaining fare boxes for the vehicle.

5. Future/structure of the micro transit program

Tate has been managing it this semester; will not be as available in the spring and should be working on community relations, grant applications, data.

It is critical that we hire a full-time manager before the first of the year.

6. Bus shelter art contest - discussion

We have 2 new bus shelters in downtown GB, fully ADA accessible; we will have 6-8 more by the end of FY 2024. These shelters will be depots for downtown calls except for those with mobility issues. We are hoping to install solar lights and make them welcoming spaces.

Do we want to use RTAC funds for a shelter art competition? To pay for the supplies to create it? Would BRTA be interested in supporting this project?

What kind of decoration? Painting? Like the generator boxes?

It will be good publicity. It would make the spaces more inviting. Promote engagement with public transportation? High school students/RSYP?

What about using the spaces for local organizations to put posters for events?

We can pursue this at our next meeting.

7. Treasurer's report

- FY2024 Budget: \$1,000

- Expenses – no new expenses beyond the advertising; we had brochures made, but the hours have been decreased so we are waiting to distribute them until we can increase hours again. We are also close to having a Spanish language version.
- Anticipated costs – none identified.

8. New & old business - nothing raised.

9. Citizens speak – request for a copy of ridership report

Next meeting date: Wednesday, November 15 at 6:30

Adjourn meeting at 7:45

Motion Bill Cooke

Second Jamie Minacci

Unanimous vote

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Phillips