

Regional Transportation Advisory Committee

Town of Great Barrington, Massachusetts

Minutes for the RTAC board meeting of Wednesday, December 20, 2023 at 6:30PM

Present: Bill Cooke (GB), Deb Phillips(at-large), Jamie Minacci (Stockbridge), George McGurn (Egremot), Hannah Walton (GB)

Guest: Chris Rembold, GB Asst Town Manager/Town Planner

Meeting called to order at 6:32 PM

Announcement

We have a backlog of meeting minutes to review – Deb will share draft minutes prior to our January meeting.

Board positions (review/discussion)

- Treasurer - Open position
- Unrepresented towns: Lee, Sandisfield and New Marlborough

Tri-Town Micro transit Pilot update

- Presentation by Chris Rembold
Connector continues to get busier.
Partnering with local businesses, expanding to other towns – W Stockbridge, expanding Sheffield connector,
Had to reduce some service hours last month due to staffing and vehicle constraints – all vehicles back in service and service back to normal
Great core team of drivers and new drivers coming on; hiring to management positions
We were successful in getting funded for future - \$200,000 for operations, \$20,000 for software to better schedule and track rides
Grants in progress – grant for 2 vehicles, applying for funds for FY '25 and beyond
FY '24 funding? DOT funds should take us through the fiscal year along with rider fares
State budget woes may impact state funding for this program but are optimistic about the applications we are submitting; DOT is an advocate for this programming
Things that can strengthen the program – vehicles from other towns ready and waiting; working with other towns that might have BRTA vehicles that would allow us to use those vehicles – need to have written agreements; asking towns to consider this program in their upcoming budgets.
The towns that need to be better represented: Monterey, New Marlboro, West Stockbridge, Sheffield
Should this be written into the intermunicipal agreement? Should we be

structured as more of an oversight board? Should this RTAC morph into that?

We may want to review the existing agreement as we grow, but right now the system seems to be working.

Tate will be working on sustainability and funding structures for the long term this spring

Bus shelters are going up – working on crosswalks at bus stops; getting solar lighting

Reminder: Be sure your town budgets include funding for Micro-transit

- Update on progress, ridership report

2 downtown GB bus shelters – will enforce fixed stops in GB at these two sites except for seniors or people with disabilities; there will be signage at these shelters

No ridership report from last month prepared – will be sent out before the new year – aggregate # 1,113 rides (down from October because of lack of accessible vehicles); still had more requests than we can handle.

January 2 will be expanding back to normal service hours – til 9 PM on weekdays, 8-8 on weekends.

Hired two dispatchers and an assistant manager – Deb Style – will be working full time at the dispatcher office.

Service to Sheffield will start in January due to receipt of funds – 2 runs, fixed times, but will do door-to door within a mile of Rte. 7. Will bring Sheffield seniors to lunches at the Senior Center, and grocery shopping for everyone. Do not have the resources to do a full expansion.

New software starting tomorrow – may be a few rough days getting used to it, but it is better than what we have.

Will have a kiosk at the GB Senior Center for booking rides in advance to take the burden off dispatch; software will help with scheduling.

Coop will start selling tickets in the new year – looking for RTAC members to table there to provide information.

- Compliance review update

Still tasks to be completed – deadline will be February, and this will be a January project

Presently installing cash boxes to comply with DOT requirements – will be completed by January 1 when fares resume.

- Future/structure of the micro transit program – see above discussion with Chris Rembold

- Bus shelter art contest – discussion – tabled for now

- Faces of the Tri-Town connector – interviews and photographs from riders

- Can there be a spot on the website where riders can add material? Bill and Hannah to work on this.

- Website migrating to a free host that provides technical assistance – that will happen between Christmas and New Years

- Looking for stories from drivers to add to the mix – Hannah will work on that.

- Newsletter in the future for regular riders? How often and who will take this on? Hannah? Mailing list embedded in Wix – can we use this?
- Will our email transfer with the new site?

Treasurer's report

- Expenses - \$745 in Shopper's Guide ads – successful in attracting staff – we only authorized \$500.

Motion to authorize \$300 to reimburse GB and have a cushion for future advertising – Deb Phillips

Second – George McGurn

Roll call vote - Unanimous

- Anticipated costs – using the remaining \$200 to promote the Connector next year – to be discussed at a future meeting.

New & old business

Next meeting January 24 at 6:30

Citizen's Speak

None

Adjourn meeting at 7:26

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Phillips