

Meeting of the Board of Directors  
August 22, 2019  
**Meeting Minutes**

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Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of Thursday, Thursday, August 22, 2019 held at 4:00 p.m. in the Greater Portland Transit District's conference room, 114 Valley Street, Portland, Maine.

**Board Members Present:**

Belinda Ray – Board President  
Hope Cahan – Vice President  
Paul Bradbury – Treasurer  
Mike Foley  
Pious Ali  
Ed Suslovic

**Staff and Others Present:**

Greg Jordan  
Denise Beck  
Ellen Sanborn  
Lauren Shaw

**Board Members Absent:**

Jeff Levine  
John Thompson - Secretary  
Jim Violette  
Merrill Barter

**Public:**

George Rheault  
Chris O'Neil  
Kristin Racine, Curtis Thaxter, Counsel for  
Maine Mall

1. **The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. by Belinda Ray, President of the Board.**
2. **Public comment: (Comments will be paraphrased in the meeting minutes)**

**Kristin Racine, Esq., from the law firm of Curtis, Thaxter and counsel for Maine Mall delivered a prepared statement regarding the lease agreement between Rock Row and Greater Portland METRO. This statement is attached in toto to these minutes.**

**George Rheault, West Bayside, Portland:**

Has the Board been advised of the disruption to buses caused by them being re-routed around the construction on Preble St.? (this falls under the purview of Ridership)

The MMC agreement was poorly thought out and should have been structured so METRO received an upfront payment at least equal to the amount MMC was paying annually for tickets. Now every employee that uses the bus has to be captured at the bus, included in an elaborate invoicing system, and payment received at a later date so that it is financing MMC programs. This should have been done like the Rock Row lease agreement with an upfront payment. He hopes the Board is requiring at least quarterly updates on MMC usage and money being received.

Now that Yarmouth is continuing the Breez, when do they have to pay? This could be a cash flow issue for METRO.

3. **Meeting Minutes of June 27, 2019:**

Motion made by Ed Suslovic, seconded by Mike Foley, to approve the minutes from the June 27, 2019 Board of Directors meeting, amended to indent public comment and add a clarification statement that public comment is paraphrased. **Motion passed unanimously by all present.**

#### **4. General Manager's Report**

The FTA Interim Administrator was in Portland to announce funding for Casco Bay Lines. Metro has a pending FTA grant for competitive funding for five replacement buses. These would replace three CNG buses and two 2004 diesel buses that are at the end of their life. The State is involved as well. Though not expected, if all of this funding is approved, it would allow PACTS to free up funding sources. The award is expected by late August/early September. The new buses will be diesels through Metro's contract with New Flyer, which run cleaner than old CNG and diesel engines. If award is not received, three buses will be replaced with PACTS funding.

Maine Medical Center pass program boardings were at 2,500 in July and expected to reach 3,000 in August. In comparison, MMC purchased tickets in the past equaling an average of 1300-1400 boardings per month. MMC is billed and pays monthly. This information will be sent out to the entire Board and shared with the Maine Med Neighborhood Advisory Committee, which meets monthly.

MeDOT is studying the possibility of moving the PTC to a location near Mercy at Fore, cutting down on transit time. Cost benefits of moving both Amtrak and Concord vs. just one are also being considered, as well as a rail stop in Falmouth with a transfer to a Portland circulator. MeDOT and the State own much of the PTC, though Concord owns the building and one parking lot. The State owns the land at the proposed new location. Discussion followed about which location would be the most positive for Metro.

FTA Triennial Review information was submitted earlier this year. There is an FTA Metro site visit scheduled for 9/17 and 9/18. Metro will issue a report to the Board about the visit in October.

#### **5. Automated Fare Policy and Technology**

Greg Jordan presented slides to refresh Board members and the public on the proposed project's background. South Portland (SP) councilors expressed overall support for the project. They are in agreement with a February launch, though still want to keep Reduced Fare at current rates. They may also choose to keep transfers for cash customers within their system. Greg feels SP wants to push toward regional alignment with them subsidizing riders internally.

METRO, ZOOM, and SP staff will visit Greensboro, NC 9/12-9/13 to see a program Delerrok implemented in a system similar to Metro.

The current expectation is program launch in February or March 2020; paper fare media sales stopping at implementation; and paper media use ending in March-April. ZOOM and SP want a longer transition period to phase out paper media.

Several documents need to be completed: MOU's with the partners, sub-recipient agreements required by FTA, and revenue sharing agreements. Hope to have all of these to the Board in October or November. The new projection is \$2.4m in fare revenue rather than \$2.6m.

Electric bus project: CTE is the project consultant and Proterra is the vendor for buses and charging equipment. At a kick-off meeting with CTE, a facility and route tour took place to begin a needs analysis. METRO wants delivery and testing of the electric buses in the winter before they are accepted and tied in with the Peninsula Loop Reboot in spring 2021. The site being visited in Greensboro just received Proterra electric buses, so that, too, will be discussed during the site visit. Boston's T system is exploring going completely electric, with batteries rather than overhead lines.

The Peninsula Loop Reboot task force has been doing community outreach activities, alongside GPCOG, and through the internet and social media. Two public meetings are scheduled for September and October. Denise Beck will look into the suggestion of GPCOG going to Kennedy Park and the Office of Economic Opportunity's Welcome event in September.

Budget revenue with the later launch: METRO will be short on revenue this year, but plans to save on expenditures and has other options to fall back on if needed. This will be discussed with the Finance Committee in September.

#### **6. METRO Breez and Status of New Members**

Ridership on the Breez has been higher than projected throughout the pilot. Yarmouth has voted to continue the Breez and join METRO. Greg has made presentations to Freeport and Brunswick and each town approves having one representative per community on the Board. Final votes for Freeport and Brunswick have not yet been scheduled. Greg would like to have the formal members part of the Board by October so they can vote on the 2020 budget. Each town will cover "their fair share," though Breez expenses tend to be less. A strategy is needed to replace the smaller buses in 2021 because a larger fleet is needed and many will hit 200k miles next year, enabling them to be replaced under FTA standards.

#### **7. 2020 Budget Process**

Greg Jordan distributed an outline of the process and is preparing to present to the Ridership Committee on 8/29. He will be meeting with City managers over the next few weeks. A higher-level preliminary budget will be reviewed at the 9/4 Finance Committee meeting. The preliminary budget will go to Ridership 9/16, back to Finance 10/2, and then to the Board for approval 10/24. Board approval triggers the 30-day review period for member communities for approval by action or non-action. Final budget approval is in early 2020.

The Board would like the budget to be a communication/discussion item at the September meeting and then go to Finance for more review and information before the October Board meeting.

A Downtown Westbrook Hub is being vetted and Metro should be prepared to respond to this with available options, other than BRT or rail, under its 5-year CIP plan. A locally-preferred alternative has to be determined, then goes to FTA for scoring to receive capital grant funding. How much more could METRO do at a fraction of the cost of what is being proposed?

Transit Tomorrow: Pacts is hosting a transit board workshop at Casco Bay Lines terminal 9/23/19, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

#### **8. Future Agenda Items**

- Rapid Transit (BRT) – go to Ridership first.

- Rail corridor information
- Status update, memo, and check-in about Rock Row (as of 6/30/19 Ed Suslovic is no longer a consultant for Rock Row).

**9. Upcoming Meetings – NO MEETINGS IN JULY**

- Finance Committee – September 4, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.
- Executive Committee – September 11, 2019 at 4:30 p.m.
- Ridership Committee – August 29, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.
- Board of Directors – September 26, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.

**10. Adjournment**

Mike Foley moved to adjourn, seconded by seconded by Paul Bradbury. **With unanimous approval by all present, the meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.**