



Meeting of the Board of Directors
March 28, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of Thursday, Thursday, March 28, 2019 held at 4:00 p.m. in the Greater Portland Transit District's conference room, 114 Valley Street, Portland, Maine.

Board Members Present:

Hope Cahan – Board Vice President
John Thompson – Board Secretary
Merrill Barter
Mike Foley
Jim Violette
Ed Suslovic
Jeff Levine
Pious Ali

Staff and Others Present:

Greg Jordan
Ellen Sanborn
Glenn Fenton
Jennifer Ogden
Tom Ridge
Denise Beck
Lauren Shaw

Board Members Absent:

Belinda Ray – Board President
Paul Bradbury – Board Treasurer

Public: George Rheault

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m. by Hope Cahan, Vice President of the Board.

2. Public comment:

George Rheault of West Bayside was present. He noted an omission in the December minutes of the very quiet and well-behaved presence of his dog, Pistachio, at the entire December meeting, and reiterated that some dogs should be allowed on buses. He also clarified that the “many” USM students he spoke of in December was actually a handful and he had a chance to speak with Greg Jordan after the meeting who clarified that there are times a bus running a route may not show on the tracker because it's operating as a supplement to an existing trip.

George also commented that Falmouth is going through a big bump about growth, improvements, and pro-density, but with an attitude of nimbyism. Similar to Munjoy Hill last year. Greg Jordan's long-term vision for Metro won't work if the agency doesn't support the pro-density push, resulting in empty buses and lack of revenue.

3. Meeting Minutes:

Motion made by Ed Suslovic, seconded by John Thompson to approve the minutes, as written, from the February 28, 2019 Board of Directors meeting. Jeff Levine pointed out a needed correction that each Portland member would have the equivalent of 1.6 votes rather than a 1.6% vote as written in the minutes.

Motion made by Ed Suslovic, seconded by John Thompson to approve the minutes, as amended, from the February 28, 2019 Board of Directors meeting. **Motion passed unanimously by all present.**

4. General Manager’s Report – due to time constraints, this item was moved on the agenda to be presented after Item 6.

5. Final 2019 Title VI program

Greg Jordan gave a brief background of the development and review of the draft 2019-2022 Title VI Program. As required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), this program is updated every 3 years.

Denise Beck, Marketing and Community Outreach Manager provided an overview of the program and major changes. She reviewed the key items on the checklist of requirements, including:

1. Notice to Public including a list of locations where notices are posted
2. Complaints procedure, complaint forms and log
3. Public Participation Plan
4. Public Language Assistance Plan
5. Board member breakdown
6. Service standards and policies – including vehicle load, headways, on-time performance, service availability, vehicle assignment, transit amenities, and service monitoring.

Metro’s Title VI notices are on buses, the web site, at the Elm St. Pulse, and in the Transit Guide.

Greg Jordan reviewed the updated procedures for documenting and investigation Title VI complaints. When complaints are received, they are now immediately provided to HR Director, Jennifer Ogden as the EEO Officer for investigation and disposition. Hope Cahan asked why a 2016 complaint is still open. Greg Jordan explained it was investigated at the time at a lower staff level, but had not been formally identified as a Title VI complaint and elevated, so at this stage, HR Director Jennifer Ogden is investigating. Greg further commented that Ms. Ogden will be augmenting the annual Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Training provided to bus operators. Greg also noted that our bus operator ranks are much more racially and culturally diverse than in the past and now more closely reflect the community we serve.

Regarding Metro’s public participation plan, Denise reported that all Board and committee meetings are open to the public and held at a location accessible by transit and ADA accessible. Supporting materials are posted on the web site and people can sign up for text alerts regarding meeting information. Metro also holds targeted community workshops, task forces, and advisory committees for specific initiatives, including meeting with students and staff of Portland Public Schools (PPS) for input, ideas, and feedback. Metro also has an on-line comment form and an easily accessible email for questions, comments, or complaints. Additionally, public meetings/hearings are held to address any fare increases or major service reductions per Metro’s Public Participation Policy.

Regarding language assistance, Denise reported that Metro will begin translating our “Vital Documents” into Spanish and Portuguese in addition to Arabic, French, and Somali. Metro began translating for these latter languages in 2016.

On the recommendation of Pious Ali, additional items were added to the list of vital documents Metro will have translated: route changes, postings in buses, announcements, and notices advertising Transit Guide availability.

Regarding service standards, Denise reported on the various service standard that Metro is required to monitor for equitable implementation. Denise noted that Metro distributes its buses evenly across its service area based on ridership demand and operational or geographic limitations. Only Husky Line and Breez buses are limited to those routes due to the modal distinction.

Ed Suslovic reiterated that the updated program was reviewed by the Ridership Committee in February and March and at the March 13, 2019 meeting voted unanimously to recommend its passage by the Board of Directors.

Motion made by Mike Foley to approve the 2019 Title VI Program as presented, seconded by John Thompson. **Motion passed unanimously by all present.**

6. Automated Fare Policy and Technology

Greg Jordan, General Manager, reviewed previous discussions and the general terms of Metro's proposal. Eight public meetings were held in March: two in Portland and one in each of the other six communities served. Based on these engagements so far, Metro staff believe there is positive overall reaction to the proposed fare changes and payment options. The chief concerns heard include the fare increase itself and the elimination of paper transfers for cash-paying customers.

Mike Foley gave a kudos to Denise Beck for how helpful and informative the materials and poster boards used at the meetings were.

Metro has met with several stakeholders, many of which attended in-person workshops with the program consultants March 6-8, and is in negotiations with Maine Medical Center (MMC) about launching a new passenger program there.

Regarding regional cooperation, Greg reported that Metro initiated the discussion around increasing fares, adopting new technology and considering fare capping at a July 2018 meeting of the PACTS Transit Committee Workshop. At a February 14, 2019 meeting coordinated by GPCOG, Metro presented a set of fare pricing and payment proposals to representatives from South Portland, Shuttlebus-Zoom, Casco Bay Lines, Maine DOT and GPCOG and requested input, potential concerns and in invitation to join the project. At this meeting, Metro presented an offer to utilize funding from an existing grant and the local contributions from Metro member communities to cover 100% of the design-engineering costs and 80% of equipment costs attributable to the partners. The only cost to the partners would be the 20% local share on their equipment costs. This meeting was followed by a series of workshops with interested partners and stakeholders on March 7-8. Based on these engagements, Shuttlebus Zoom decided to join the project. Additional communications and materials were submitted to the City of South Portland on March 4 and a meeting was held with the Assistant City Manager on March 26. At this stage, its unclear whether South Portland will participate in any part of this initiative.

Ed Suslovic expressed the need for a single fare system and partners joining Metro's proposed program should adopt unified pricing to make it as easy as possible for all riders.

The Automated Fare Vendor RFP will be issued Friday, March 29, 2019 and will close on May 8, 2019, with the expectation that a vendor will be chosen by the end of May.

The current timeline includes the program going before the Board on April 25, 2109 for final approval. Discussion followed about whether to extend the final approval of fare pricing to the May meeting to give South Portland additional time. The board agreed to hold to the planned timeline for now, but will evaluate the issue at its April 25 meeting. At that meeting, the Board may elect to defer the final approval until May based on concrete information that a mutually agreeable unified fare pricing and collection system can be established.

4. General Manager's Report

Greg Jordan provided updates on the following issues and projects:

- Battery electric bus production
- Route 8 urban circulator development
- Process around transitioning BREEZ from pilot phase to permanence and associated board membership issues.
- PACTS long range regional transit plan: Transit Tomorrow
- Metro Facility and status of RTP's plans and funding requests to construct a separate facility.

7. Future Agenda Items

The Ridership Committee meeting is being held on April 10, 2019 at 5:45 p.m. at the East End School and will double as a public hearing opportunity for the proposed fare increase and new payment options.

The 2018 Financial Audit will be presented by Runyon Kersteen, Ouellette at the April 3, 2019 Finance Committee meeting.

8. Upcoming Meetings

- Finance Committee – April 3, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.
- Executive Committee – April 10, 2019 at 4:30 p.m.
- Ridership Committee – April 10, 2019 at 5:45 p.m. – East End School
- Board of Directors – April 25, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.

9. Adjournment

John Thompson moved to adjourn, seconded by seconded by Ed Suslovic and Pious Ali. With **unanimous approval by all present the meeting adjourned at 5:29 p.m.**