

Board of Directors – Remote Meeting
May 28, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Board of Directors Remote Meeting of Thursday, May 28, 2020 held at 4:00 p.m.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85266869087?pwd=YlhSNEZkNIY4aXRaNWJaOVMrUEpZdz09>

Call-In Number: +1 646 558 8656 Webinar ID: 852 6686 9087 Password: 579884

Board Members Present:

Belinda Ray – Board President
Hope Cahan – Vice President
Paul Bradbury – Treasurer
John Thompson - Secretary
Jeff Levine
Mike Foley
Ed Suslovic
Jim Violette
Merrill Barter
Nat Tupper

Staff and Others Present:

Greg Jordan
Glenn Fenton
Denise Beck
Denise Beck
Ellen Sanborn
Lauren Shaw
Joshua Crooker
Ed Knutson

Board Members Absent:

Bill Rixon
Kim Cook
Ryan Leighton

Public:

None

1. With a quorum in place, the meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m. by Belinda Ray, Board President.

2. Public comment: (Comments will be paraphrased in the meeting minutes)

Ed Knutson, Bus operator and Union President of local 714, which represents Mechanics, Maintenance, and Bus Operators. I've said this to Greg and management personnel, but would also like to go on the record with my thoughts and those of several of my union sisters and brothers to recognize the support we have received from management regarding COVID-19. These are very unusual times, and we appreciate their acknowledgement of the heightened risks that we, as front-line workers, endure daily, including increased internal and external stress, such as family life. The Union also extends its appreciation to the Board, knowing that they have our backs as well.

3. Meeting Minutes

John Thompson moved, seconded by Paul Bradbury to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2020 meeting of the Board of Directors as written. A roll call vote was called for by Belinda Ray, Board President. With approval by John Thompson, Mike Foley, Jeff Levine, Ed Suslovic, Paul Bradbury, Nat Tupper, Jim Violette, Hope Cahan, Merrill Barter, and Belinda Ray, **the motion passed unanimously by all those present.**

4. General Manager's Report

Greg Jordan reviewed the numerous precautions in place at Metro, including reduced service, required face coverings, limited capacity, frequent cleaning, cleaning supplies given to drivers, rear-door boarding, suspension of fares, and closure of offices to the Public. Passengers have been receptive to following the procedures in place.

- Bus Operator compartment shields are being installed. Target for all buses is the end of June.
- There has been a slight uptick in average daily boardings in May.
- Highest density ridership is on Routes 4, 5, and 8 during commuter times. These routes will have to be augmented with more equipment or more robust service until full service is reinstated.
- Anticipate more ridership increases in June as Phase 2 re-openings begin.
- Staffing level updates were shared via a table showing staff on active on-site and remote duty (74), those out on precautionary leave (16), those in quarantine (2), as well as STD (1) and LTD (6). Metro has had two positive cases; one has recovered and returned to work and the other is recovering. All LTD (long-term disability) absences pre-date the COVID-19 outbreak.

5. COVID-19 Employee Paid Sick Leave and Pay Benefits

The Board approved supplemental leave and emergency pay benefits thru May 30. This included leave benefits mandated by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) passed by Congress in March and supplemental leave and pay benefits deemed prudent for Metro's needs.

Due to continuing uncertainty about how the crisis begins to resolve and timelines for re-opening state and local economies, staff believes it is prudent to extend these supplemental benefits thru July 4, but with proposed modifications. The modifications reduce or eliminate certain additional benefits provided by Metro and in some cases re-align with the benefits provided by the FFCRA. The proposed changes are outlined on Attachment A, the updated MOU between Metro and ATU. The proposed changes include:

- Extend emergency pay (\$5.00 per hour) for working hours for Operators, Maintenance, and Dispatchers through July 4.
- Pay 40 hours per week for those with confirmed cases of COVID-19, through recovery.
- Employee subject to a federal, state, local, or Metro directed quarantine will receive 32 hours of pay through July 4. This benefit is not available to employees who voluntarily leave the state and are then mandated to quarantine for 14 days.
- Precautionary leave: extend 32 hours per week pay through June 13.
- Employee caring for an individual subject to quarantine: gross up employee's pay during initial 80 hours through June 13. Once used, pay 32 hours per week for duration of policy at full wage rate through June 13.
- Employee caring for a child whose school or daycare is closed: gross up employee's pay to regular weekly pay through June 13.
- Instances where Metro has temporarily reduced or eliminated a business function: extend 32 hours per week pay through July 4, unless business function is restored sooner.

Nat Tupper moved, seconded by John Thompson, to approve the request to extend pay/leave benefits through July 4, 2020, with modifications, as presented. A roll call vote was called for by Belinda Ray, Board President. With approval by John Thompson, Mike Foley, Jeff Levine, Ed Suslovic, Paul Bradbury, Nat Tupper, Jim Violette, Hope Cahan, Merrill Barter, and Belinda Ray, **the motion passed unanimously by all those present.**

6. CARES Act Funding – Phase I

Greg Jordan reviewed the background of the CARES Act Funding allocated for transit agencies. Metro’s requested CARES Act Phase 1 amount (\$3,861,373) aims to cover up to 100% of the agency’s net operating costs for the period of February 1 thru June 30. Metro staff estimated that this funding would supplant approximately \$750,000 in 2020 municipal contributions. This figure was developed based on the following assumptions:

Revenue

- CARES Act funding pays 100% of eligible expenditures, net of revenue for 2/1-6/30 period.
- No fare revenue collected for period 3/20-8/2; reduced fare revenue collected for remainder of year.
- No bus advertising revenue for April & May, and no new advertising contracts until fall 2020.

Expenditures

- No change in wages and benefits costs – reduction in overtime is offset by hazard pay, and employees continue to receive pay.
- Operations cost for maintenance of fleet and facilities continues at regular levels.
- Fuel use is reduced some for April-June.
- Regular service schedule July-December.

At its meeting in May, the Finance Committee was presented with three (3) general options for distributing the supplanted \$750,000. Attachment A provides the three (3) options and associated impacts to local municipalities. The Finance Committee voted to approve the option with following distribution:

- Municipal budget assistance (Metro FY 2020; Municipal FY 2020-21): \$375,000 (50%)
- Pay-off existing debt, which reduces future local funding needs: \$245,215 (33%)
- Strengthen financial reserve which reduces interest expense: \$129,785 (17%)

John Thompson moved, seconded by Hope Cahan, to approve the Finance Committee’s recommended CARES Act Phase I funding distribution as presented. A roll call vote was called for by Belinda Ray, Board President. With approval by John Thompson, Mike Foley, Jeff Levine, Ed Suslovic, Paul Bradbury, Nat Tupper, Jim Violette, Hope Cahan, Merrill Barter, and Belinda Ray, **the motion passed unanimously by all those present.**

7. CARES Act Funding – Phase II Priorities

The remaining balance of CARES Act funding received for transit agencies in the PACTS region is approximately \$40 million. The following set of draft priorities are provided as a starting point for discussion and refinement by PACTS.

Priority 1: Funding to offset Reduced Passenger Revenue -estimates to be submitted for six-month periods beginning July-December, January-June through December 2023. Remaining funding gets distributed among second order priorities.

Proposed Second Order Priorities (after accounting for Priority 1, PACTS will select the number, type, and scopes of possible priorities and assign percentages of remaining CARES Act funding that should be allocated to each priority:

- **Pandemic Recovery and Resiliency (___%)**

This priority area would invest in projects or improvements directly aimed at improving the health and safety of transit agencies’ operations and enhance resiliency to the current and future pandemics. Examples of projects could include: bus operator shields, expanded cleaning

operations, PPE, increasing transit capacity to reduce crowding, mitigating labor shortages, marketing and education aimed at regaining public confidence. Agencies would submit individual and/or regional project requests that are aimed at achieving the goal of enhancing operational resiliency and ridership recovery.

- **Transit System Innovation (___%)**

This priority area would invest in regionally significant projects or improvements that [re]build ridership, improve the customer experience, improve network efficiency and/or help meet climate goals. PACTS will develop regionally significant projects based on the goals of Transit Tomorrow and Moving Southern Maine Forward.

- **State of Good Repair Needs (___%)**

This priority area would invest in the repair-rehab-replacement of major capital assets where municipal local match is either not available, can be avoided to assist municipal budgets or avoid debt.

- a. Eligible projects would be the repair, rehabilitation or replacement of vehicles, equipment or facility systems/components that have either exceeded their useful life or have a condition rating of poor and are identified in transit agencies' Transit Asset Management Plans. Agencies would submit project requests for this area and must demonstrate alignment with TAM plan.
- b. Agencies must commit to pursue discretionary funding programs if time and grant cycles allow, before this funding is finally approved.
- c. Projects with funding already identified in the "funded" portion of the SYCOP would be deprogramed and returned to the region.

- **Direct Municipal Budget Assistance (___%)**

This priority area would allocate funding to transit agencies that directly receive local funding from municipalities. Funding could be used to provide direct credits or reductions to local contributions and/or uses that structurally lower agency costs with direct positive impact on municipal finances. This area is applicable to those agencies that receive local contributions.

Discussion followed with each member voicing their opinion of how the Second Order Priorities should be ordered per importance. All members agreed that the first priority of the proposed second order priorities should be Pandemic Recovery and Resiliency, with Direct Municipal Budget Assistance and Transit System Innovation being the second and third highest additional priorities.

8. Direction on Use of Dirigo Center Developers Lease Fee

The Board approved the lease agreement with Dirigo Center Developers, LLC (DCD) on April 23, 2020. Staff and representatives of DCD are finalizing the lease document for the General Manager's signature. The \$175,000 lease payment will be received in the coming weeks. On May 6, 2020 the Finance Committee was asked to provide direction on the utilization of the lease revenue and the committee voted unanimously to allocate the funding to Metro's financial reserves.

Ed Suslovic stated he has not worked with Dirigo since last June, so therefore no longer has a conflict of interest on this topic.

John Thompson moved, seconded by Jeff Levine, to Approve the Finance Committee's recommendation to allocate the \$175,000 lease revenue to Metro's financial reserves. A roll call vote was called for by Belinda Ray, Board President. With approval by John Thompson, Mike Foley, Jeff

Levine, Ed Suslovic, Paul Bradbury, Nat Tupper, Jim Violette, Hope Cahan, Merrill Barter, and Belinda Ray, **the motion passed unanimously by all those present.**

9. Future Agenda Items:

- Create Procedure for full CBA review – Executive Committee
- Mobility needs brought forward at PACTS – Ridership Committee
- Update by GM on METRO’s role under MTA’s main line assessment – Board & Committees
- TMC & micro transit – Strategic Planning
- Advertising policy – Executive Committee
- Metro 2025 Strategic Plan – Executive Committee
- 2019 Financial Audit – Finance Committee
- PACTS CARES Act Phase II allocation (added)
- Board Attendance policy creation (added)
- Finalization of General Manager contract (added)

10. Upcoming Meetings

- Finance Committee – June 3, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.
- Executive Committee – June 10, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.
- Ridership Committee – June 18, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.
- Board of Directors – June 25, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

11. Adjournment

Motion made by John Thompson, seconded by Paul Bradbury, to adjourn. A roll call vote was called for by Belinda Ray, Board president. With approval by John Thompson, Mike Foley, Jeff Levine, Ed Suslovic, Paul Bradbury, Nat Tupper, Jim Violette, Hope Cahan, Merrill Barter, and Belinda Ray, **the motion passed unanimously by all those present, and the meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.**

From: Jacob Losey <jakerlosey@gmail.com>

Date: April 29, 2020 at 4:15:46 PM EDT

To: Jthompson1@maine.rr.com

Greetings,

I am just a regular rider who is required to be available for essential functions at a major veterinary resources company in Westbrook. I am contacting you, not to complain, but to profess my gratitude to your organization for the unheard-of kindness that has been shown to essential workers. Keeping the service running on a free-ride basis! That level of community support sets me in awe of what you are doing. I would be heavily disappointed if this is the first time any of us has said it to you all -- everyone involved in this act. Please, as Secretary, convey this sentiment to everyone who supports Greater Portland Metro and it's affiliates on my behalf.

Sincerely,

J.L.

Notice: Under Maine law, documents - including e-mails - in the possession of public officials or city employees about government business may be classified as public records. There are very few exceptions. As a result, please be advised that what is written in an e-mail could be released to the public and/or the media if requested.



General Manager's Report
May 28, 2020



1

Item 3: Update on Metro Response to COVID-19

Pandemic Response Actions:

- Pulse and Metro HQ Closed to Public – Non-operating Staff Working Remotely.
- Enhanced Nightly and Daytime Bus Cleaning.
- Passenger policies on maintaining physical distance on cough/sneeze etiquette.
- Rear Door Boarding Policy.
- Restriction on Use of Front Seats.
- Daily Cleaning Supplies Provided to Bus Operators.
- Restriction on Passengers Entering Forward Cabin.
- Roping off Seats to Facilitate Sufficient Physical Distance.
- Communications on Using Transit for Essential Trips Only.
- Face Masks/Coverings Mandated for Bus Operators and Passengers.
- **Bus Operator Shields – In house solution; implementing by end of June.**
- **Passenger Loads Limited to 10 – will likely be increased in June.**
- **Suspension of Fares and Service Reduction.**

2

Item 3: Ridership Update

Comparative ridership statistics for May 2019 and May 2020:

- Routes 4 (Brighton), 5 (Outer Congress) and 8 (Peninsula) generally have the highest ridership density.
- Observing incremental uptick in average daily boardings during May.
- Saturday service level remains sustainable at current boardings.
- Volume spikes are handled with back-up buses as needed/available.
- Anticipating additional increases in June as Phase 2 Re-opening goes into effect.

AVG Daily Boardings	May-19	May-20	% Change
Weekday	7,183	1,723	-76%
Saturday	3,616	1,344	-63%
Sunday	1,582	575	-64%

3

Item 3: Metro Staffing Levels Update

Duty Status	Bus		Dispatchers	Customer	Admin/	Total
	Operators	Maint.		Service	Management	
Budget amount	68	13	4	2	14	101
Vacancies	0	0	1	0	1	2
Long-term Leave (> 12 mo.)	3	1	0	0	0	4
Long-term leave (< 12 mo.)	2	0	0	0	0	2
Short-term Leave	1	0	0	0	0	1
COVID-19 Precautionary Leave	12	2	1	0	1	16
COVID-19 Quarantine	2	0	0	0	0	2
Active Duty - Onsite	48	10	2	2	5	67
Active Duty - Remote	0	0	0	0	7	7
Total Active Duty	48	10	2	2	12	74
% Active Duty to Budget	71%	77%	50%	100%	86%	73%
COVID-19 Positive Cases	2	0	0	0	0	2

4

Item 6 – CARES Act Funding Phase I

- \$25 Billion allocated to Transit nationwide.
- \$53 Million allocated to PACTS region.
- Phase 1: 13.7 million to 7 transit agencies
- \$3.8 million to Metro (Amount developed to cover 100% of net operating costs for Feb 1-Jun 30 period.
- Added funding can supplant about \$750k in local funding paid to Metro in 2020.

Finance Committee took action on the following distribution:

- \$375,000 (50%) submitted back to municipalities in proportion to local contributions.
- \$245,215 (33%) eliminates portion of existing Metro debt.
- \$129,785 (17%) allocated to agency's financial reserve.

5

Item 7 – CARES Act Funding

Phase 2 – Focused on medium-long term needs and priorities:

Remaining balance is \$40 million.

- **Priority 1 – Funding to Offset Reduced Passenger and Operating Revenue:**
 - Goal is to preserve sufficient funding to offset the long-term loss of passenger revenue to ensure preservation of transit services and avoid higher municipal contributions while allowing post-pandemic recovery strategies to gain effectiveness.
 - Any alternative emergency funding sources which can also offset lost passenger revenue should be optimized.
 - Agencies will submit estimates of anticipated lost passenger revenue in 6-month increments (Jul-Dec, Jan-Jun, etc.) thru December 2023.
 - Needs based in relation to anticipated ridership losses 2020-2023.
 - Remaining funding gets distributed among second order priorities.

6

Item 7 – CARES Act Funding

Proposed Second Order Priorities

- **Pandemic Recovery and Resiliency (___%)**
Projects aimed at improving the health and safety of transit agencies' operations and enhance resiliency to the current and future pandemics.
- **Transit System Innovation (___%)**
Regionally significant projects or improvements that [re]build ridership, improve the customer experience, improve network efficiency and/or help meet climate goals.
- **State of Good Repair Needs (___%)**
Invest in the repair-rehab-replacement of major capital assets where municipal local match is either not available, can be avoided to assist municipal budgets or avoid debt.
- **Direct Municipal Budget Assistance (___%)**
Allocate funding to transit agencies that directly receive local funding from municipalities. Funding could be used to provide direct credits or reductions to local contributions and/or uses that structurally lower agency costs with direct positive impact on municipal finances.