

Meeting of the Board of Directors
 June 27, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of Thursday, Thursday, June 27, 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
 John Thompson – Board Secretary
 Paul Bradbury – Treasurer
 Jim Violette
 Merrill Barter
 Ed Suslovic
 Jeff Levine

Staff and Others Present:

Greg Jordan
 Glenn Fenton
 Jennifer Ogden
 Denise Beck
 Lauren Shaw

Board Members Absent:

Pious Ali
 Hope Cahan
 Mike Foley

Public:

George Rheault
 Chris O’Neil

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)

George Rheault, West Bayside, Portland: Mr. Rheault asked about Jeff Levine leaving the Board. He also pointed out a typographical error in the 5/23/19 Board minutes that Route 38 should be corrected to Route #8 in discussion about the Peninsula Transit Planning Task Force. This task force has had very little public engagement and almost no information is available on METRO’s web site. If METRO cannot get people to ride this new route, it will fail. A Portland Planning Board meeting talked about reducing parking, but did not mention this task force. No one seems to know anything about it. The general public needs to be invited to participate, not just a cherry-picked handful. Also, is there proof of any upticks in ridership during First Friday and with cruise ship passengers?

3. Meeting Minutes:

Motion made by John Thompson, seconded by Paul Bradbury to approve the minutes, amended to reflect the correct the typographical of “Route 38” to “Route #8,” from the May 23, 2019 Board of Directors meeting. **Motion passed unanimously by all present.**

4. General Manager’s Report

Glenn Fenton, Chief Transportation Officer, gave the General Manager’s report on behalf of Greg Jordan, who is attending and presenting at a transportation conference.

METRO brought a bus to the Portland Expo 6/26 and provided travel training to Asylum Seekers and tickets on an emergency basis. Translators were available and METRO’s driver spoke French. A similar event may be done at Chestnut Street and outreach is done monthly at the Root Cellar.

A contract with CTE for program development of the electric buses has been signed. A site visit is planned in August to ride the routes and tour the facility to make recommendations. The plan is to have the electric buses delivered winter 202/2021 to coincide with the rollout of the Peninsula Transit Planning Task Force schedule.

The Peninsula Transit Planning Task Force just began discussing a name for the route and how to get word out; stakeholder outreach has not yet begun. Will break for summer and begin public meetings in the fall with more in 2020. GPCG is also involved in this task force. More information will be included on METRO's web site as things develop, including a timeline.

No Board or Committee meetings will be held in July. A reminder to members that the Employee Appreciation Cookout is August 9, 11-3:00, and the Board has an open invitation.

5. Automated Fare Policy and Technology

Greg Jordan shared it was determined our procurement process was sound, Dellerok's proposal was responsive, and that most other vendors did not bid due to the budget, timeline, and size of our fleet, so Dellerok's bid is being evaluated. It proposes a higher cost on the development side, but lower on the fee side and has a strong retail network already in place with 90 retailers in this area. It also has eight properties of similar size that they have programs in. Dellerok representatives were interviewed on 6/24, with South Portland, ZOOM, and RTP in attendance. The whole group felt confident about Dellerok's presentation. Reference checks are being performed and site visit(s) planned to see existing projects in action. Dellerok has also done a multi-agency program.

If everything looks good, contract negotiations will begin and a timeline determined. Dellerok says it usually takes 4-6 months from start to implementation, falling in the early 2020 timeframe.

Met with South Portland (SP), ZOOM, and GPCOG to discuss the program and answer SP's questions and concerns. They have not yet gone to the public. The SP City Council has a workshop on 7/2 at which METRO, SP, and ZOOM will give a joint presentation. Belinda Ray will be attending that workshop. The issue of a timeline has been tabled until more is known from the vendor.

METRO is working on ways to fill the revenue gap caused by the later start date for a fare increase. Dellerok may be able to have both phases (fare increase, mobile app, and smart cards) go live together, though our consultant, Four Nines, is still pushing for a testing period.

The proposal is over budget on capital, but lower than budget for revolving fees. METRO's attorneys are reviewing the contract for language to avoid fee escalators.

6. Maine Medical Center (MMC) Pass Program Agreement

The 3-year agreement with MMC allows all employees to ride and MMC will be charged at 66.6% of the current fare for local and Breez service (and the same percentage when fares increase) per boarding, has been to Executive Committee. Costs will be capped at 107,000 boardings the first year, and then increase incrementally for each of the second two years. Past history with MMC is the purchasing of \$20,000 in tickets to sell to employees at discounted rates. Going forward, METRO estimates revenue of \$50-100,000 (less current \$20,000) will be generated by this new program. There are also no up-front costs for METRO as MMC supplies the i.d.'s.

If programs like this get very popular, does METRO anticipate overcrowding on the buses? It is not anticipated in year one, but ridership will be tracked for trends that may need to be addressed.

Public Comment: (Comments will be paraphrased in the meeting minutes)

George Rheault: He is generally in favor of the pass initiative, but found the press this week totally overboard and numbers inflated. MMC has to meet its Traffic Demand Management plan, which METRO should have a copy of. In a February 2017 survey, only .3% of MMC employees reported using METRO. The agreement has promise, but in the short-term, it only affects 65 employees and MMC is getting a subsidized rate that others in the area are not. Boarding numbers are window dressing and METRO should look more deeply into MMC’s motives.

Motion made by John Thompson, seconded by Ed Suslovic, to approve the 3-year MMC Badge Holder Access Transit Pass Program as written.

Following a lengthy discussion about the possibility of METRO losing revenue with this program; how other programs like this have excited the market and removed a “barrier to entry” for employees who can now randomly grab a bus anytime; how the program was advertised to employees to maximize usage; how it gives a great option to employees on the lower income levels; and the poor planning that brought the agreement to the Board for approval after it was signed and only days before the well-advertised program begins, the **Motion passed unanimously by all present.**

7. Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)

Ed Suslovic moved, pursuant to 1 MRSA Section 405 (3) and Section 405 (6) (D), to enter into Executive Session to discuss Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiations and related items, seconded by Merrill Barter. **Motion passed unanimously by all present**, executive session entered at 5:01 p.m., including Glenn Fenton and Jennifer Ogden.

Executive session ended at 5:25 p.m.

8. Future Agenda Items

- Pass program procedure

9. Upcoming Meetings – NO MEETINGS IN JULY

- Finance Committee – August 7, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.
- Executive Committee – August 14, 2019 at 4:30 p.m.
- Ridership Committee – August 15, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.
- Board of Directors – August 22, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.

10. Adjournment

Jim Violette moved to adjourn, seconded by seconded by John Thompson. **With unanimous approval by all present, the meeting adjourned at 5:29 p.m.**