

**MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (MART)  
MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 18, 2020  
REMOTELY**

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m.

**ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: (constituting a quorum)**

Mayor Dean Mazzarella	Leominster
Mayor Stephen DiNatale	Fitchburg
Colin Smith (representing Mayor)	Gardner
Dick Maki (representing Selectmen)	Sterling
Robert Pontbriand (representing Selectman)	Ayer
Kenneth F. Troup (representing Selectmen)	Bolton
Selectperson Heather Billings	Westminster
Jan Robbins (representing Selectman)	Ashburnham
Shaun Suhoski (representing Selectmen)	Athol
Joe Layden (representing Selectmen)	Littleton
Alexandra Turner (representing Selectmen)	Lancaster

**ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Corey Harju (representing Selectman)	Ashby
Selectperson Barbara Anderson	Winchendon
Ryan Ferrara (representing Selectmen)	Boxborough
Tim Bragan (representing Selectman)	Harvard
Ryan McLane (representing Selectmen)	Hubbardston
Roland Hamel (representing Selectmen)	Royalston
Alyson Toole (representing Selectmen)	Stow
Carter Terenzini (representing Selectman)	Templeton
No Representative	Shirley
No Representative	Hardwick
No Representative	Lunenburg

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Mohammed Khan, Bruno Fisher, James Sluss, Bonnie Mahoney, Jessica Lashua, Sherry Corcoran, Dave Gallant, Adam Gromelski and Keary Connors.

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

George Kahale	MRPC
Phil Rocca	Management of Transportation Service

**II. General Comments**

**III. Approval of Minutes from May 19, 2020**

**RESOLUTION- Robert Pontbriand of Ayer moved that the Advisory Board of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority approves the May 19, 2020 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**IV. Financial Matters**

**A. Status of State Funding**

Mohammed Khan informed the Board that state funding will remain the same this year.

**B. Status of Federal Funding**

Bruno Fisher informed the Board that even though MART received \$10.3 million in CARES funding from the Federal government, MART will still receive 5307 funds. This CARES funding will give MART carryover funding for the next few years.

**C. Finance Committee Update**

- FY2020 Preliminary Audit Update- Bruce D. Norling, CPA, P.C

James Sluss informed the Board that even though MART stopped collecting fare in April, MART ended the year with no deficit and no surplus. MART was able to use about \$1.5 million in CARES funding to help with the loss from not collecting fare. James also informed the Board that the interest on the RAN is .763% which is 1.5% lower than last year.

Bruno informed the Board that MART filed another lawsuit against Western Surety. MART will try to recover some of the cost we spent in legal fees.

**RESOLUTION- Ken Troup of Bolton moved that the Advisory Board of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority accept the draft Audit as presented by the Administrator. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**D. Executive Compensation Committee**

- Executive Compensation Update

James informed the Board that the Executive Compensation Committee will meet in the future to go over the executives' salaries.

**V. Administrative Matters**

- A. Ayer Commuter Rail Parking Garage**
- i. Facility Completion and Opening
  - ii. Depot Square Improvements

Bruno informed the Board that the Ayer Commuter Rail Parking Garage is in Stage 3 of design and construction. In this stage the bathrooms will be constructed along with the bus shelter and finishing the lighting.

- B. Fixed Route Services Full Operation and Revenue Collection**

Mo informed the Board that at the end of February ridership was up 1.5% and revenue was up 5.5%. Once COVID hit ridership reduced by 55% and revenue reduced by 80%. MART will resume collecting fare effective September 8, 2020. COVID barriers have been installed on all of MART's buses and vans.

**RESOLUTION- Ken Troup of Bolton moved that the Advisory Board of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority will started collecting fare again on September 8, 2020. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

- C. Fully Funded Inter-RTA Transit Operation Serving Clinton and Neighboring Municipalities within MART/WRTA Service Areas: Clinton will be served as a MART Community**

Bruno informed the Board that MART applied for a work force grant to serve Clinton in conjunction with Worcester RTA. We will extend the Worcester shuttle to serve Clinton. There will be 1 run in the am and 2 runs in the pm. The fare for this service will be \$3.00 a ride.

Richard Maki asked if the service could run through Sterling.

Alexandra Turner asked if Lancaster could also be a stop on this service.

Bruno stated MART could do on demand service to Sterling and Lancaster if needed. MART would need to make a centralized stop for this service in Sterling and Lancaster.

- D. Implementation of Centralized Dispatch for Council on Aging (COA)**

Bruno informed the Board MART would regionalize the dispatch offices for multiple Council on Aging's by grouping them together in one office area. This centralized dispatching would be on a volunteer basis by community. This will help Council on Agings improve their operations and transport more people. MART will arrange a sub region meeting for all interested parties. The centralized dispatching office is just in the planning stages as of now, MART is hiring a Mobility Manager to reach out to all of the communities.

- E. MART's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Presentation and Approval**

Bonnie Mahoney went over the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) with the Board. MART hired a consultant to help put this safety plan together. Bruno has been named the Chief Safety Officer; this position provides a

layer of communication and oversight to the operating company. This needs to be approved by December 31, 2020 for next year's Triennial review.

**F. Adoption of Fare Policy by Advisory Board by December 2020**

Bruno informed the Board that the Legislature is requiring all RTA's to have a written fare policy that the Board must approve. MART's plan is to review its fare structure every 2 years.

**G. \$1 Million FTA Bus / Bus Facilities Grant Awarded to MART for Fare Collection System Upgrades**

Bruno also informed the Board the MART received a grant for \$1 million to update our fare collection system.

**VI. Operational Services**

**A. Transit Operation Update:**

**1. Revenue and Ridership Statistics**

<b>FY20/FY19 Annual Data</b>			
<b>12 Month Data (July thru June)</b>			
	FY20	FY19	% Difference
<b>Fixed Route</b>			
Ridership	454,545	548,334	-17.10%
Revenue	455,618	613,856	-25.78%
Miles	927,390	1,045,998	-11.34%
Hours	55,692	61,883	-10.00%
<b>Demand Response</b>			
Ridership	80,034	103,023	-22.31%
Revenue	231,915	304,985	-23.96%
Miles	723,072	865,987	-16.50%
Hours	33,688	42,282	-20.33%
<b>Agency Service</b>			
Ridership	92,308	138,093	-33.16%
Revenue	2,181,937	3,173,447	-31.24%
Miles	683,317	1,012,055	-32.48%
Hours	36,255	54,088	-32.97%
<b>Council-on-Aging</b>			
Ridership	92,239	114,531	-19.46%
Revenue	58,912	80,018	-26.38%
Miles	505,488	639,478	-20.95%
Hours	43,364	50,010	-13.29%

**COVID-19 Impacts (March thru June)**

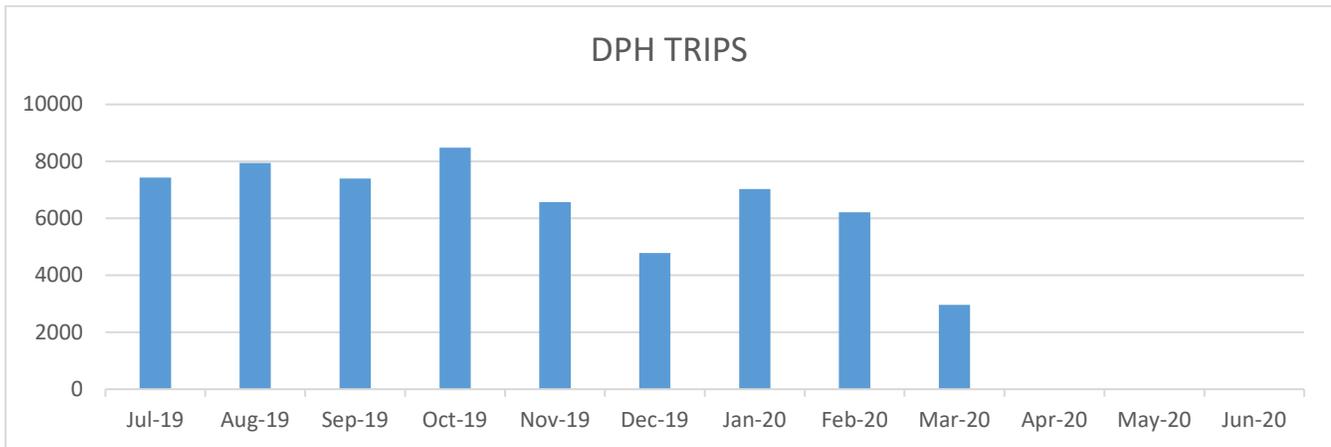
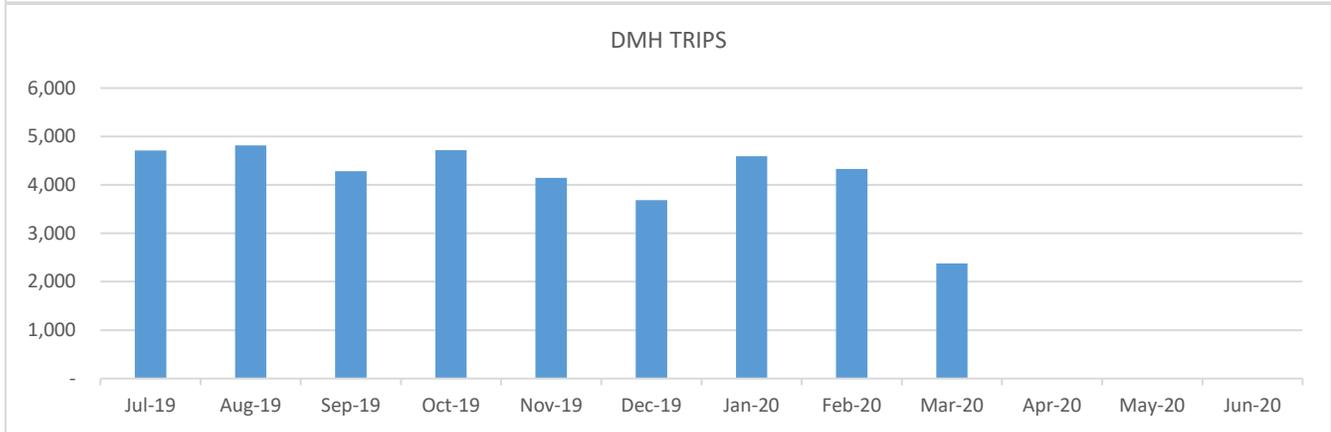
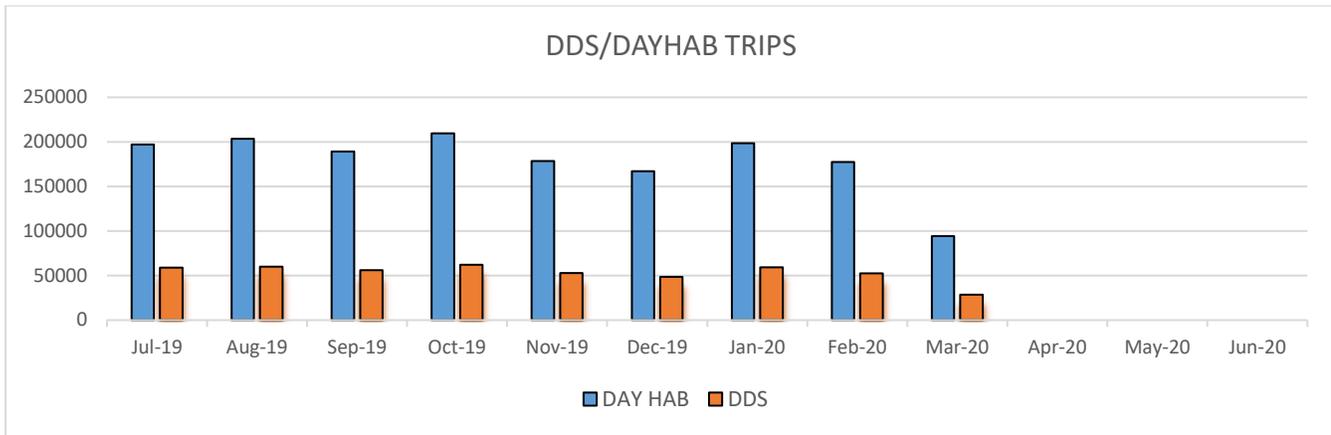
**8 Month Comparison (July thru February)**

	FY20	FY19	% Difference		FY20	FY19	% Difference
	Fixed				Fixed		
	Route				Route		
Ridership	81,182	179,747	-54.84%	Ridership	373,363	368,587	1.30%

Revenue	24,459	204,930	-88.06%	Revenue	431,159	408,926	5.44%
Miles	262,621	337,534	-22.19%	Miles	664,769	708,464	-6.17%
Hours	15,858	20,220	-21.57%	Hours	39,834	41,663	-4.39%
	Demand				Demand		
	Response				Response		
Ridership	15,768	34,235	-53.94%	Ridership	64,266	68,788	-6.57%
Revenue	38,062	103,584	-63.26%	Revenue	193,853	201,401	-3.75%
Miles	114,401	283,401	-59.63%	Miles	608,671	582,586	4.48%
Hours	5,410	13,860	-60.97%	Hours	28,278	28,423	-0.51%
	Agency				Agency		
	Service				Service		
Ridership	5,534	45,412	-87.81%	Ridership	86,774	92,681	-6.37%
Revenue	145,223	1,051,629	-86.19%	Revenue	2,036,713	2,121,818	-4.01%
Miles	44,335	339,405	-86.94%	Miles	638,982	672,650	-5.01%
Hours	2,327	17,778	-86.91%	Hours	33,928	36,309	-6.56%
	Council-				Council-		
	on-Aging				on-Aging		
Ridership	13,371	38,653	-65.41%	Ridership	78,868	75,878	3.94%
Revenue	5,651	26,422	-78.61%	Revenue	53,261	53,595	-0.62%
Miles	74,075	215,715	-65.66%	Miles	431,413	423,762	1.81%
Hours	7,008	16,544	-57.64%	Hours	36,356	33,466	8.64%

## B. HST Brokerage Operation

**Program Based Services:** Department of Developmental Services; Department of Mental Health and Department of Public Health EI Program services were discontinued due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The majority of the programs closed and stopped providing services on March 16 and 17, there were a couple of programs that continued to remain open with very low attendance but those were then closed by the Department of Public Health and their last day of providing services was March 20<sup>th</sup>.



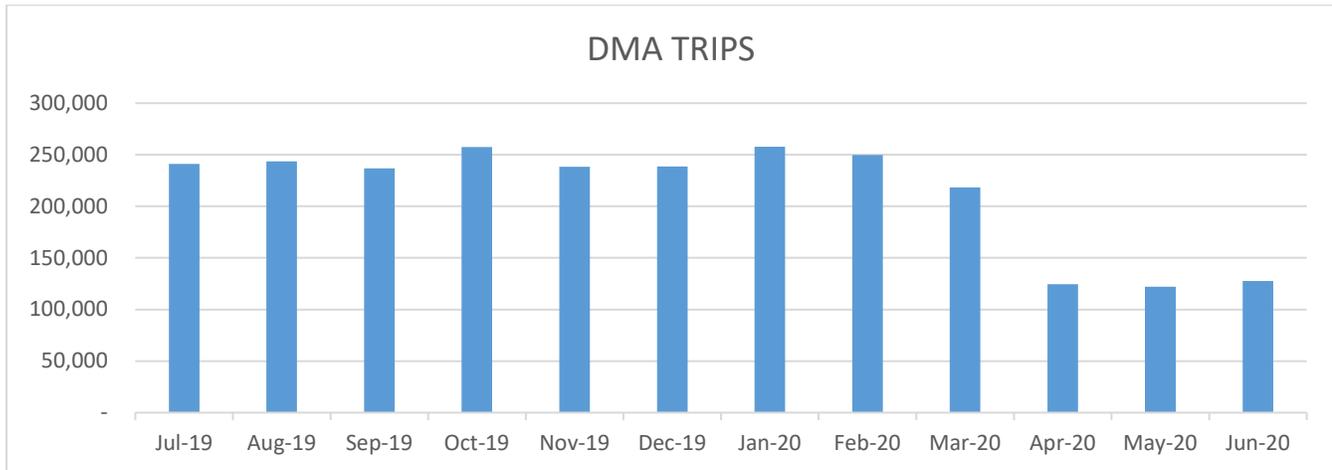
The various agencies have been working together with the Department of Public Health and the HST Office on a reopening plan and some of the DDS Dayhab programs are slowly starting open at drastically reduced capacities to follow the guidelines that have been imposed to promote social distancing. Routes are running a major reduction in capacity as well and will not be increased without approved direction from the Department Public Health and the HST office. Some of the DDS/Dayhab programs opened their doors on August 3<sup>rd</sup> and August 10<sup>th</sup> there are 15 more DDS/Dayhab programs and 5 DMH Clubhouses that will be opening on August 17<sup>th</sup>.

To date there has been no decision made regarding when the DPH Early Intervention on site services and transportation will resume.

## Mass Health Transportation Program

MART continues to provide brokerage services for the Mass Health and Integrated Care Options (ICO) transportation for the Greater Metro Boston, Pioneer Valley, North Central and the South Central areas.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic although we continue to service the transportation needs of the Mass Health consumers in two hundred and twenty-three (223) cities and towns, the services at this time are about half the capacity of trips that we normally serviced daily. The majority of the transportation services that are being provided during April, May and June were primarily for critical care trips such as dialysis and chemo therapy and transportation for methadone treatment continues to run daily as well.



MART currently has 12 vendors that have put their contracts on hold during this pandemic as they have had to lay off staff due to the reduction in trip volumes. As various facilities are starting to open their doors and schedule in patient visits we are starting to see a somewhat steady increase in the daily trip volume and finished the month of July with a total of 135,366 one way trips.

## Other Brokerage Services

MART continues to provide brokerage services for Mass Rehab Commission and the Mass Commission for the Blind; this is primarily a demand response service with transportation requested being processed by the agency through the HST Office and MART then bids out the trips via a low cost bid system. This is our smallest volume and is even smaller during the pandemic; we received a transportation request for the MRC consumer for a trip in August.

1. Trip and Expenditure Statistics
2. Brokerage Proposal Submitted for 2022-2026 RFR (with two potential 5 year options)
3. Settlement with State / Federal Agencies for FY11-FY15 MassHealth Claims

## VII. Other Business

Bruno discussed the \$300,000 settlement MART reached with the Federal Government in regards to MassHealth trips that were billed and either not preformed or there were no medical appointment to match the trip. (see attached letter)

## VIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:51 a.m.