

**MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (MART)
MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2023
REMOTELY**

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:33 a.m.

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: (constituting a quorum)

Mayor Dean Mazarella	Leominster
Mayor Stephen DiNatale	Fitchburg
Mayor Michael Nicholson	Gardner
Dick Maki (representing Selectmen)	Sterling
Kenneth F. Troup (representing Selectmen)	Bolton
Selectperson Aubrey LaBrie	Winchendon
Jan Robbins (representing Selectman)	Ashburnham

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Selectperson Heather Billings	Westminster
Robert Pontbriand (representing Selectman)	Ayer
Selectperson Deborah D'Amico	Royalston
Adam Lamontagne (representing Selectman)	Templeton
Lisa Lavargna (representing Selectman)	Ashby
Joe Layden (representing Selectmen)	Littleton
Ryan Ferrara (representing Selectmen)	Boxborough
Tim Bragan (representing Selectman)	Harvard
Ryan McLane (representing Selectmen)	Hubbardston
Alyson Toole (representing Selectmen)	Stow
Jessica Sizer (representing Selectman)	Barre
Michael-Ray Jeffreys	Lunenburg
Mitchell Grosky (representing Selectmen)	Athol
Alexandra Turner (representing Selectmen)	Lancaster
No Representative	Shirley
No Representative	Hardwick
No Representative	Phillipston

STAFF PRESENT:

Bruno Fisher, James Sluss, Scott Rich, Jessica Lashua, and Keary Connors.

GUESTS PRESENT:

Melissa L'Ecuyer	MTS
Nancy Fors	MTS
Jack Kelly	HBSS
David Romanoff	HBSS
Veronica Kell	Townsend

I. Call to Order

II. General / Public Comments (Est. 5 minutes)

Dick Maki of Sterling thanked the MART team for getting a grant to help Sterling with transportation.

III. Approval of December 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes – Board vote required

RESOLUTION- Dean Mazzarella of Leominster moved that the Advisory Board of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority approves the December 13, 2022 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Roll Call was done

Mayor Dean Mazzarella	yes
Mayor Stephen DiNatale	yes
Mayor Michael Nicholson	yes
Dick Maki (representing Selectmen)	yes
Kenneth F. Troup (representing Selectmen)	yes
Selectperson Aubrey LaBrie	yes
Jan Robbins (representing Selectman)	yes

IV. Financial Updates (Est. 30 minutes)

A. Finance Committee - Updates

1. FY23 Seven Month Financial Update / Full Year Financial Projection
2. FY24 Financial Projection

James Sluss informed the Board FY2023 will end with no deficit and no surplus. MART's burn rate continues to be higher than expected. MART is developing a plan to correct high expenditures. In FY2024 MART will return to tightening cost measures. MART is looking to perform more efficient routes and increase ridership.

Scott Rich informed the Board that MART is undergoing a major redesign/rebranding. MART will be doing more marketing, adding bus stop signs, adding bus shelters, new website, new social media presence, vehicle rebranding and new building signage. MART is designing recruiting efforts around veterans and council on aging. MART will be changing its 401K plan any employee hired after May 1, 2023 will have to wait 2 years before they are fully vested.

3. CARES / CRRSAA / ARPA Grant Updates
4. FY23 COLA

RESOLUTION- Dick Maki of Sterling moved that the Advisory Board of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority approves a 2% COLA for all MART employees. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Roll Call was done

Mayor Dean Mazzarella	yes
Mayor Stephen DiNatale	yes
Mayor Michael Nicholson	yes
Dick Maki (representing Selectmen)	yes
Kenneth F. Troup (representing Selectmen)	yes
Selectperson Aubrey LaBrie	yes
Jan Robbins (representing Selectman)	yes

5. Fare Structure Review

V. Administrative Matters (Est. 20Minutes)

A. Townsend Request to Become Member Municipality – Board approval required

Bruno informed the Board Townsend is a member of the Lowell Regional Transit Authority but also wants to join MART. Townsend is looking for shuttle service to the Fitchburg Train Station seven days a week. There will be 2 am runs and 2 pm runs.

Aubrey LaBrie of Winchendon expressed her concerns that some MART member communities do not have the services they need. The MART Advisory Board needs to focus on communities that are already a part of MART and get funding for services in these communities.

Veronica Kell of Townsend stated that Townsend right now does not have any service to an MBTA line.

Dick Maki of Sterling stated Sterling also does not have any service to MBTA Commuter Rail. He asked MART to do a study and report back.

The Board wanted to know how adding Townsend would increase MART's bottom line.

Bruno stated the town will pay 1/3 of any service and the other funding will come from the assessment. Once a community joins MART we estimate the cost of the service they are looking for and present to the Board of Selectmen of the town for approval.

RESOLUTION- Dick Maki of Sterling moved that the Advisory Board of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority approves Townsend to become a MART member community. The motion was seconded and passed.

Roll Call was done

Mayor Dean Mazarella	yes
Mayor Stephen DiNatale	yes
Mayor Michael Nicholson	yes
Dick Maki (representing Selectmen)	yes
Kenneth F. Troup (representing Selectmen)	yes
Selectperson Aubrey LaBrie	no
Jan Robbins (representing Selectman)	yes

B. Mass Development Finance Agency – Taxi/Livery Grant (\$250,000)

MART has received a Taxi/livery Grant to support these types of companies in rural areas. This grant is for Lunenburg, Lancaster, and Sterling. The contract has been received and signed. MART will now work on developing the software.

C. Metropolitan Area Planning Council - CMAQ Grant (\$1,316,000)

MART has received a CMAQ Grant for adding services to rural areas. This grant is for Stow, Littleton, Boxborough, and Bolton. MART will create routes to shopping centers and commuter rail stations.

D. Operating Company RFP Update

MART received 3 responses to the Operating Company RFP. MART had a 6-person evaluation team, and a notice of award went to The Fitchburg Consortium (MTS/HBSS). The new contract will begin on July 1, 2023.

E. Potential Transit Depot at Devens Update

MART is looking into having a depot at the former Devens Bakery site, this depot will help reduce dead head miles and cost/revenue miles. The total cost of the project is \$100,000 with the first phase being \$48,000 for the building and parking lot. MART will be presenting to the Board in May to purchase the property. MART will be redeploying resources from Fitchburg to Devens.

VI. Operational Updates (Est. 20 Minutes)

A. Operational Updates:

1. Transit Ridership / Revenue Data Comparison
 - a. FY22/23 Six Month Ridership/Revenue Data Comparison
 - Fixed Route ridership up 27%
 - ADA Service up 7%
 - Council on Aging Services up 9%
2. Brokerage Ridership / Revenue Data Comparison
 - a. FY22/23 Six Month Ridership/Revenue Data Comparison
 - All services are on the rise and as of now telehealth is not affecting ridership.

VII. Other Business (Est. 5 Minutes)

A. Items Not Reasonably Anticipated to be Discussed

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:28 a.m.