

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF AUTHORITY
County of Lackawanna Transit System
September 21, 2021

The regular meeting of the County of Lackawanna Transit System Authority was held on Tuesday, September 21, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. at the Lackawanna Transit Center.

Present were:	Martha Dougher	Larry Wynne
	Michael Dougherty	Gregg Nieto
	Brian Doughton	Atty. Timothy Hinton
	Robert Fiume	Atty. Joseph DeNaples
	Jane Farrell	Michael Danchak
	Gretchen Wintermantel	Wayne Williams
	Kelly Matone	Borys Krawczeniuk
	David Kaczmarek	

Mr. Larry Wynne opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Wynne added that an Executive Session was held prior to the meeting to discuss personnel matters.

Mr. Wynne requested a roll call of the board members. Larry Wynne and Brian Doughton were present. Martha Dougher, Gregg Nieto and Michael Dougherty participated via phone.

Acceptance of Minutes

Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the August 2021 meeting minutes. Martha Dougher made a motion to accept the minutes and Michael Dougherty seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Acceptance of Financial Documents

Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the Financial Statements for the month of August 2021. Brian Doughton made a motion to accept the financial documents and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Public Comment/Agenda Items

Mr. Wynne welcomed comments from the public regarding agenda items; there were none.

Executive Director's Report

- A. Mr. Robert Fiume presented the ridership reports for the month of August 2021 for fixed route. The fixed route average daily ridership for August 2021 was 1,694, this is up approximately 100 passengers from July 2021. Mr. Fiume noted that the ridership has continued to increase. The industrial parks, CANPACK and students contributed to the increase. Mr. Fiume noted that we are at about 55% pre covid for fixed route.

- B. Mr. Fiume presented the ridership reports for the month of August 2021 for shared ride. The average daily trips for shared ride in August 2021 was 371, compared to 363 in July 2021. Shared ride ridership is at approximately 72% of ridership prior to covid.

- C. Mr. Fiume stated that the Department Reports are included in the board packet. He asked the members to let him know if they had questions.

Public Comment/Other Business

- A. Mr. Fiume requested a motion to approve the Resolution to authorize the interim Executive Director to have access dotGrants. Brian Doughton made a motion to approve the resolution and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- B. Mr. Fiume requested a motion for the Resolution to include the interim Executive Director as signatory to the FNCB General Account effective October 15, 2021. Martha Dougher made a motion to approve the resolution and Gregg Nieto seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- C. Mr. Fiume requested a motion for the Resolution amending the COLTS and Local 169 ATU Pension Plan to provide an increase in the Pension Benefit Formula and change to the Employee Contribution. This change is a result of the new Collective Bargaining Agreement. Brian Doughton made a motion to approve the resolution and Michael Dougherty seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- D. Mr. Fiume requested a motion for the Resolution to offer free rides the week of October 25th through October 30th. Mr. Fiume noted that several transit agencies across the state and country are providing time to offer free rides, in an attempt to increase ridership. COLTS is working together with LCTA to provide the free service. Penn Dot requires a resolution be passed by the board to amend our fare policy for that period. Mr. Fiume stated that Gretchen Wintermantel has been working on this promotion. Michael Dougherty made a motion to approve the resolution and Brian Doughton seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- E. Mr. Fiume requested a motion for the approval of the Revised Ethics Code. Larry Wynne made a motion to approve the revision and Brian Doughton seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- F. Mr. Fiume requested a motion for the approval of the Revised Statement of Values and Code of Conduct. Gregg Nieto made a motion to approve the revision and Brian Doughton seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- G. Mr. Fiume requested a motion for the approval of the SEIU Collective Bargaining Agreement. The approval is pending the vote of approval by the SEIU members. Brian Doughton made a motion for the approval of the agreement. Larry Wynne seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Public Comment/Other Business

Mr. Wynne welcomed comments from the public regarding other business; David Kaczmarek, President of the ATU, addressed the board. Mr. Kaczmarek stated that he was there to represent himself and his members. Mr. Kaczmarek commended Robert Fiume for his contribution to COLTS. Noting the building of the transit center, the updated fleet of buses, better communications with the public and the upcoming construction of the pumping station. He felt that they had a very good labor and management relationship through the years. He stated that, if he had an agreement with Mr. Fiume, he knew Mr. Fiume would stick to it. Mr. Kaczmarek felt that it was sad that he was leaving but he was happy to see him close by at LCTA and looks forward to working with him in the future. Mr. Kaczmarek stated that, when the ghost rider scandal hit, the news was reporting on it and stated that routes would be cut and the drivers were nervous. He said that he spoke Mr. Fiume late in the day and he drove back from Hazleton to the union meeting and put all of their minds at ease. Mr. Kaczmarek stated that Mr. Fiume would be missed by him, all of his people and the residence of Lackawanna County. He felt that they were the ones that lost out with his departure. He wished him luck and thanked him for everything he did for COLTS.

On behalf of the board, Larry Wynne thanked Robert Fiume for his 13 years of service at COLTS. Noting that he had gotten COLTS through several big project and he wished Mr. Fiume good luck at LCTA.

Robert Fiume addressed the board. Mr. Fiume thanked everyone for their comments and stated that he enjoyed his 13 years at COLTS. He felt that there were several hurdles that he had gone through. Noting the payback for the ghost ridership, without cutting routes or jobs. Also, the covid crisis, construction of the transit center, the construction of the new main office and the transfer center. He felt that there were great improvements with the relationships with ATU and SEIU members. Mr. Fiume stated that it was a pleasure working with everyone and he thanked everyone for the opportunity. He stated that he will be right down the road at LCTA and he will be happy to help with anything. Mr. Fiume said that the transit industry is like a family and they are looking to help each other. He felt that COLTS has a good staff and excellent drivers. He stated that he has always gotten complements about our drivers and they work very hard, especially through the pandemic. Mr. Fiume also complemented the dispatchers and mechanics. He wished everyone the best.

David Kaczmarek addressed the board again. Mr. Kaczmarek stated that his drivers and the public have asked if there was a way that the board meetings could be held when it would be convenient for them to attend. He stated that most of the drivers are still working when the meeting is held. He thought that every other meeting could be held in the evening around 7:00. He felt that this is also a difficult time for the public to attend. He asked if the board could come up with an option to allow others to attend the meetings.

Gretchen Wintermantel, Director of Marketing and Communications, addressed the board. Ms. Wintermantel thanked the board for the opportunity to address them. She felt that the departure of Mr. Fiume, as Executive Director, was a tremendous loss to COLTS and the citizens of Lackawanna County. She stated that she knows that Mr. Fiume loved working at COLTS and would have loved to retired from COLTS. Ms. Wintermantel noted his many accomplishments, such as, the building of the Lackawanna Transit Center which was nearly dead when he started his employment with COLTS. She stated that he has forged many valuable relationships with people from Penn Dot and others in the transportation industry. She felt the importance of these

contacts cannot be underscored enough. Ms. Wintermantel stated that Mr. Fiume managed the takeover of the Shared Ride division of COLTS from Lackawanna County. This saved Lackawanna County approximately one million dollars. She stated that he was also a leader in the staving off of the privatization of the MATP Program until a sensible solution can be found. Ms. Wintermantel said that Mr. Fiume has worked with the Chamber of Commerce to lead the effort to provide transportation to the industrial parks in our area. She stated that he has been working tirelessly on State committees to find a sustainable funding source for public transportation. With cuts looming, this is a significant connection for COLTS. Ms. Wintermantel stated that Mr. Fiume has led the staff at COLTS as we continue to navigate through this unprecedented world wide pandemic and made sure the transportation in Lackawanna County never stopped. She stated that these are just a few of the examples of the success that COLTS has seen with Mr. Fiume at the helm. There are several other initiatives that he has taken but, she did not have time to continue. Ms. Wintermantel stated that she has worked with Mr. Fiume since 2009 and she sees how well respected he is among her fellow staff members and she felt that she can speak on their behalf on how sad they are to see him leave. On a personal note, she stated that Mr. Fiume has been a companionate and understanding boss and she knows that many of the staff appreciate that. She has witnessed how well respected he is and valued by his peers in the highly specialized field of transportation. Mrs. Wintermantel felt Mr. Fiume's level of experience and expertise are immense assets to COLTS and to the County. She felt it was a shame to lose him. She noted that Mr. Fiume has more than 22 years' experience in the transportation industry and she couldn't emphasize the importance of this experience. Ms. Wintermantel stated that she understood that the board is planning to do a nationwide search for a new executive director. She felt that, as they pursue the search, she hoped they would consider the level of transportation experience that is needed to keep COLTS moving forward and to continue the progress that Mr. Fiume has achieved. Ms. Wintermantel trusts that the board will do what is best for the citizens of Lackawanna County and she noted that the passengers are counting on the board.

Wayne Williams, Director of Shared Ride Operations, thanked Mr. Fiume for his service on behalf of the shared ride department. Mr. Fiume stated that it was a pleasure working with everyone.

Brian Doughton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:50 p.m. Larry Wynne seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Submitted by:
Jane Farrell, Administrative Specialist