

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF AUTHORITY
County of Lackawanna Transit System
March 22, 2023

The regular meeting of the County of Lackawanna Transit System Authority was held on Wednesday, March 22, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. at the Lackawanna Transit Center.

Present were:	Larry Wynne	Martha Dougher
	Michael Dougherty	Atty. Joseph DeNaples
	Atty. Timothy Hinton	Timothy McGrath
	Jane Farrell	Michael Danchak
	Keri Savage	Steve Matassa
	Alyne Scartelli	Greg Czyzyk
	Zain Rabbani	John Thomas
	Delmar Guziewicz	Mark Occhipinti
	Krysten Xanthis	

Mr. Larry Wynne opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Timothy McGrath added that an Executive Session was held prior to the meeting. Atty. Timothy Hinton noted that union negotiations and personnel matters were discussed during the Executive Session.

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

Acceptance of Minutes

Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the February 2023 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 February 2023. Martha Dougher made a motion to accept the financial documents and Michael Dougherty 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. Timothy McGrath presented the ridership report for the month of February 2023 for fixed route. Mr. McGrath noted that the fixed route ridership was at 52,285 compared to 50,860 in January 2023. Pre-covid numbers from February 2019 were 76,703. Mr. McGrath pointed out that the revenue for February 2023 was \$43,772, compared to January 2023 which was \$64,215 and pre-covid February 2019 which was \$80,547. There have been comments added to the bottom of the report. Mr. McGrath pointed out the comment regarding the Taylor/Walmart express and that it had 1,551 riders for the entire month.

- B. Mr. McGrath presented the ridership report for the month of February 2023 for shared ride. Mr. McGrath noted that the revenue was \$28,498, in comparison, with February 2022 which was \$31,974. The revenue for January 2023 was \$35,750. The ridership for February 2023 was 9,823 which is an increase from 8,429 from in February 2022. This is also an increase from January 2023 which was 9,070.

Public Comment/Other Business

- A. Mr. McGrath requested a motion to approve the Drug Free Workplace Substance Abuse Policy for Company Non-Safety Sensitive Employees. Martha Dougher made the motion and Michael Dougherty seconded the motion. All others were in favor.
- B. Atty. Joseph DeNaples announced that there was a point of order to the agenda today that was not identified on the original agenda. Atty. DeNaples stated that RKL, our external auditor, is in attendance (via zoom) to present the June 30, 2022 Audit Reports. Atty. DeNaples stated that RKL is unavailable for next month's meeting so they will present today. Atty. DeNaples requested that RKL be available from now until the next meeting to answer any questions that may arise. Atty. DeNaples requested that we include on the April agenda, the adoption of the Audit Report. Mark Zettlemoyer and Luke Byrne from RKL addressed the board members. The audit was presented as an unmodified opinion.
- C. Mr. Wynne welcomed comments from the public regarding other business; Krysten Xanthis addressed the board. Krysten felt that the change to bus (41) Highworks is inconvenient to the passengers now that it is only running once an hour. She has been working on collecting petitions to address the issue. Krysten asked if it is possible to have the run go back to the way it was. She said because she rides the bus a lot, passengers know her and ask her about the schedules. Mr. McGrath asked Krysten for the petitions. She said they are not completed at this time. Mr. McGrath stated that she can hand them in when they are ready but, he asked that they be clear on exactly what her expectations are for the change. Zain Rabbani asked Krysten if the passengers have an issue with the bus going inbound our outbound. She felt the issue was inbound and outbound. Mr. McGrath asked Zain to explain why the changes were made. Zain stated that the ridership for the Highworks bus was primarily to Allied Services and the Keyser Oak shopping center. With the changes to route (35) Keyser Valley, the addition of route (55) Shoppers Special and the (41) Highworks, the service to the Keyser Oak shopping center has been expanded. COLTS also did a survey of the passengers that were going to Allied and based on the survey, they felt that once an hour would service the needs of the passengers at Allied. Zain stated that he is unaware of any issues with passengers coming inbound on the Highworks route. He asked Krysten to provide information on that if she can and Zain would be happy to speak with any passengers that have issues. Mr. McGrath felt that the petition may help communicate what needs to be addressed. Our goal is to provide as much service as possible but, we have to meet requirements to the state and federal government on ridership for each route. Zain also stated that some of the adjustments to the routes we done to make it easier to connect to other routes. He felt that we can guide passengers to other options that they may not be aware of.

Krysten also addressed the issue of security at the transit center, which she as discussed at prior board meetings. She asked if anything has been done to address her issues. She is not only concerned for herself but, others too. Mr. McGrath stated that he can not discuss the security publicly but, COLTS has had meetings with several government agencies and police to address the issues. He said that he has addressed the issues, specifically with her situation and he has offered phone numbers for COLTS

employees, offered advise on where to situate herself and other advice to make her feel more secure. Mr. McGrath also noted that the transit center has video surveillance and security is a primary concern at all of our facilities.

John Thomas addressed the board. He had questions regarding the new facility on North South Road. He asked where the new garage will be built. Mr. McGrath stated that this is a Penn Dot project and the facility will be built on an adjacent property. When the new facility is built, the current facility will be demolished. That property will be built into the architectural landscape of the new facility. Mr. Thomas asked if the new building is necessary. Mr. McGrath stated that COLTS does not make these decisions solely. The decisions are based on information provided by our funders and they have deemed our property has outlived its useful life. There are also changes and preparation for the future that the new property will accommodate. Atty. DeNaples stated that the new facility will benefit the community for the next 50 years. Atty. Hinton noted that part of the new facility is a CNG fueling station to fuel our buses on site. It will also provide a larger bus wash and expanded storage for the buses. Atty. DeNaples stated that one of the considerations for the new facility was the need to comply with the CNG fueling regulations. To modify the current facility to meet the regulations would be an enormous task. With the new construction, all of the safety measures will be addressed. John Thomas asked if COLTS intends on using electric buses in the future. Mr. McGrath stated that the federal government is attempting to lead to electric vehicles but, we are dealing primarily with the state and they are focused on funds for CNG vehicles at this point. In the future, COLTS is open to the idea of electric but, there are many factors to consider. Such as retraining drivers and mechanics. They are concerned about how the electric buses will handle longer runs such as the Carbondale route. They are also looking at how the batteries are disposed and how to get parts for the vehicles. With the construction of the new facility, they have addressed the possibility of electric vehicles in the future.

Delmar Guziewicz addressed the board. Delmar asked if COLTS is still considering a merger with Luzerne County Transportation. Mr. McGrath stated that we are not exploring the merger at this time. The state and federal government has explored the possibility but, at this point they do not feel it is the right thing to do. Mr. McGrath did not think that he should speak for everyone, but he did not feel it was appropriate to merge two of the largest agencies. He felt a better idea would be merge some of the smaller agencies into the larger agencies separately.

Martha Dougher made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:05 p.m. and Mike Dougherty seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Submitted by:
Jane Farrell, Executive Assistant