

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF AUTHORITY
County of Lackawanna Transit System
September 20, 2023

The regular meeting of the County of Lackawanna Transit System Authority was held on Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at 4:35 p.m. at the Lackawanna Transit Center.

Present were:	Martha Dougher	Larry Wynne
	Brian Doughton	Gregg Nieto
	Michael Dougherty	Atty. Timothy Hinton
	Atty. Joseph DeNaples	Timothy McGrath
	Jane Farrell	Michael Danchak
	Zain Rabbani	Nicole Ference
	Wayne Williams	Evann Xanthis
	Krysten Xanthis	John (did not offer last name)

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. Brian Doughton and Larry Wynne were present. Martha Dougher, Gregg Nieto and Michael Dougherty participated via phone.

Acceptance of Minutes

Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the August 2023 meeting minutes. Brian Doughton made a motion to accept the minutes and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Acceptance of Financial Documents

Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the Finance Report for the month of August 2023. Michael Dougherty made a motion to accept the financial reports 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/Department Reports

- A. Mr. McGrath opened his comments by welcoming and introducing Nicole Ference, the new Human Resources Manager. Mr. McGrath noted that the board members have reviewed all of her credentials and he feels that she will be a tremendous asset to the team.

- B. Mr. McGrath commended the COLTS team for the results that were received during the recent reviews. Mr. McGrath noted that there were only eight findings on the report and the findings were centered around one particular issue. Mr. McGrath stated that it is remarkable how far we have come from previous reviews. The Penn Dot review has also provided recommendations that will have to be accepted by the board. In the emails

from Penn Dot, they were grateful for the timely responses and how everything was addressed. Last week there was a Safety review and they stated that we have addressed the issues that were presented in the previous year report. Mr. McGrath noted that we are committed to elevating the company and working very hard to address all of the issues. Mr. McGrath stated that they continue to work on several items, such as the Charter Policy to address services that we provide to the community. We are in the process of putting together an RFP for third party advertising. Attempting to formulate a plan for uniforms. We have also been asked by the County Emergency Office to provide supplemental transportation to their site that was established in Chinchilla to assist victims of the recent flooding. We will be running the service for three days. Mr. McGrath stated that they have been contacted by the newspaper and Fox news to promote the service. We are happy to provide the service to the people that have been impacted by the flooding.

- C. Wayne Williams presented the ridership report for the month of August 2023 for shared ride. Wayne noted that the ridership for the shared ride department continues to grow. We have surpassed some of the pre-pandemic numbers. The revenue has increased approximately \$20,000 from July 2023 based on increased ridership. The ridership continues to increase, even with inclement weather-related conditions. Wayne stated that the on-time percentage continues to be at or above the state average of 92%, which is a credit to the drivers and other employees. In August, the shared ride department implemented a new Seatbelt Policy and the employees have been very receptive to the policy and felt it was a safety issue that needed to be addressed. Wayne noted that nine new vans will be going on line in November with an expected delivery date in mid-January. This will represent approximately 1/3 of the fleet. This is a credit to everything that we have been doing to keep the van ordered on a regular basis. Wayne announced that the shared ride department was presented with a customer appreciation award. The plaque was presented to Wayne from Marlene Lieber, who is a resident of Webster Towers. The plaque was engraved thanking the department for their services. Wayne accepted the plaque on behalf of the department and thanked her for the award. Wayne stated that this is a credit to all of the employees in the shared ride department.
- D. Zain Rabbani presented the ridership report for the month of August 2023 for the fixed route department. Zain stated that the ridership was 64,484 compared to 56, 820 in July 2023. This is an increase of approximately 8,000 passengers and now we are at 71% of pre-pandemic numbers. The number typically fluctuates between 66% and 73%. They have added two additional trips to the Walmart schedule due to high demand. The change will take effect in October. Information on the change will be posted on the website. Zain stated that he joined shared ride department representatives at a Senior Expo on September 8, 2023 and they had positive feedback from the public.
- E. Keri Savage addressed the board regarding the human resources department. Keri welcomed Nicole Ference to COLTS as the Human Resources Manager. Keri also welcomed Frank Soto, Jr. to COLTS as the new Director of Safety, Security and Training. With the hiring of Frank, security of the transit center will be addressed along with safety measures at all facilities. Frank will also work on updates and enforcement of policies and procedures. Keri stated that we continue to look for a mechanic. Keri has also participated in community outreach. She attended the Senior Expo and collected approximately 25 applications for senior bus passes. They hope to begin advertising for the Stuff the Bus event beginning in October. Keri also noted that they are looking for people to join the Citizens Advisory Committee.

- F. Mike Danchak addressed the board regarding the finance department. Mike stated that, this month, we continue to make some capital expenditures. Mike noted that, in addition to the new vans, we will also get four new CNG buses. Next year, another order will be going in for four more new buses. We have made some IT expenditures recently such as computers and shop equipment. Mike stated that there will be more expenditures coming soon for security upgrades. We are working on having security presence at the transit center. Mr. McGrath stated that we have been speaking with representatives from Allied Universal, which is a professional security company. At this point, they are preliminary conversations on what their services would look like if it was implemented at the transit center. There should be something presented to the board shortly regarding the security. Mike noted that the expenses have been going along as expected. Insurance has always been an issue and with the new equipment coming, the expense will be higher. Gas continues to be an issue, especially for the vans. Mr. McGrath stated that there is also an update to the fob system and the board members should expect to receive a new fob in the near future. The new fob will have employee identification as a part of the new system.

Public Comment/Other Business

- A. Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the COLTS Act 44 Action Plan. Brian Doughton made the motion and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All others were in favor.
- B. Atty. Timothy Hinton requested a motion to approve the contract for the Executive Director. Atty. Hinton stated that Mr. McGrath approached the board as, the last year of his three contract is coming near. Mr. McGrath requested an additional three-year contract. The contract would provide 3% raises, which he had in his previous contract. The only other changes in the contract would be with regard to vacation. In the last year of the contract, he would receive four weeks' vacation. The contract is largely in place with what we have now. Martha Dougher made the motion and Michael Dougherty seconded the motion. All others were in favor.
- C. Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve Adoption of the Stormwater Policy. Gregg Nieto made the motion and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All others were in favor.
- D. Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve Adoption of the Spill Prevention and Protection Policy. Brian Doughton made the motion and Gregg Nieto seconded the motion. All others were in favor.
- E. Mr. Wynne requested a motion for the Acceptance of the FTA Triennial Report. Brian Doughton made the motion and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All others were in favor.
- F. Mr. Wynne requested a motion to Approve the Charter Policy and Procedures. Brian Doughton made the motion and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All others were in favor.

Mr. Wynne welcomed comments from the public regarding other business; Krysten Xanthis addressed the board. Krysten stated that a person that she provides service too, uses the vans. She stated that some of the white vans are difficult for individuals with wheel chairs because they let out in the back of the van. This way, they are backing up into the road and she feels it is unsafe. Wayne stated that the vans that are ordered, are similar to the silver vans. Wayne explained that the white vans were purchased to accommodate further distance trips and small alleys. Kristen also discussed safety concerns at the transit center for herself and other passengers. She stated that a man approached a girl behind the desk and asked her how old she was and if she had a boyfriend. She stated that she feels bad for the passengers and the workers. Krysten stated that she will be talking to the mayor to address the issue.

Evann Xanthis addressed the board. She stated that she recently took the bus to the Giant in Scranton and had to cross Greenridge Street to get home. She stated that crossing the street is very dangerous. She also went to the transit center and she felt it was unsafe.

John addressed the board also regarding security. He asked if it was possible to get together with Martz to figure out some type of security. Mr. McGrath stated that we do not discuss security measures but, we are taking steps to address the issue. Mr. McGrath also stated that, part of the day, there is a security presence at the transit center. There are also several cameras that are monitored. Mr. McGrath noted that he has spoken to the mayor, city council members, the commissioners and many other officials. They all understand the issues we are dealing with. John also stated that, at the Oppenheim building on Wyoming Avenue, there are big lights and a fence in front of the building that block the COLTS shelter. He suggested reaching out to someone to have them removed. Mr. McGrath will have it addressed and he thanked John for bring it to his attention. John also asked about the construction of the new building. He asked what the new garage will have that the old one doesn't. Zain explained that the new buses that are coming in, are more high tech and larger. Currently, there isn't enough room in the garage to accommodate storage of the buses. John asked how many mechanics we have. Keri stated that we have eight but, we are looking for more. He also asked how many are cleaning the bus. Keri stated that we have four service employees.

Brian Doughton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:05 p.m. and Larry Wynne seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Submitted by:
Jane Farrell, Executive Assistant