

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF AUTHORITY
County of Lackawanna Transit System
October 25, 2023

The regular meeting of the County of Lackawanna Transit System Authority was held on Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. at the Lackawanna Transit Center.

Present were:	Martha Dougher	Brian Doughton
	Michael Dougherty	Atty. Timothy Hinton
	Atty. Joseph DeNaples	Timothy McGrath
	Jane Farrell	Michael Danchak
	Zain Rabbani	Nicole Ference
	Frank Soto	Keri Savage
	Kelly Matone	Jon Beckage
	Steve Matassa	Mark Gifford
	Ralph Colo	

Mr. Michael Dougherty opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Dougherty added that an Executive Session was held prior to the meeting to discuss personnel matters. Mr. Dougherty also noted that all of the materials that were provided in the board packet had been previously circulated electronically and through regular mail. Any specific questions may be raised as the items are presented.

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

Acceptance of Minutes

Mr. Dougherty requested a motion to approve the September 20, 2023, September 25, 2023 and the October 13, 2023 meeting minutes. Martha Dougher made a motion to accept the minutes of all three meetings and Brian Doughton seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Acceptance of Financial Documents

Mr. Dougherty requested a motion to approve the Finance Statements for the month of October 2023. Brian Doughton made a motion to accept the financial reports and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Public Comment/Agenda Items

Mr. Dougherty 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 Frank Soto, the new Safety and Security Director. Mr. McGrath noted Frank was unable to attend the meeting last month. Mr. McGrath once again welcomed Nicole Ference as the new Manager of Human Resources. Mr. McGrath also recognized Kelly Matone. Kelly has been the Assistant Manager for the Shared Ride department for six years. She has graciously accepted the position of Acting Director of the department as the search for a

new Shared Ride Manger continues. Mr. McGrath thanked Kelly for helping the department.

- B. Mr. McGrath announced that the facility project is approximately 25% complete. The foundation should be complete by next week. At this point we are about 25 days behind schedule but, there have been no major issues. There is a big tower on the property and that is for the elevator. Penn Dot suggested a visit to the construction site of the new Luzerne County Transit facility as it nears completion. Because there are designs that are consistent between the two facilities, a team went down to look at the project. As the completion gets closer, a few more visits are possible. Maybe some drivers and maintenance workers will go down to see the facility just to get some perspective.
- C. Zain Rabbani presented the ridership report for the month of September 2023 for the fixed route department. Zain stated that for the month of September, the ridership is at 79% of the pre-pandemic numbers. Zain feels that the increase is due to the outreach that have been done recently. The ridership in September of 2023 was 66,632 compared to 59,132 in September of 2022. This is an increase of 7,500 trips. Expansion of the Taylor/Walmart route took effect on October 2, 2023. Ridership for this will be provided at the next meeting. Zain announced that the on-time performance for September was 95% and monthly updates will continue to be provided. The State average is 90%. Mr. McGrath also noted that the demographics showed the increase in student ridership for the month of September. This is a benefit of the outreach that was done with the schools and we will continue to focus on those areas.
- D. Kelly Matone presented the ridership for the month of September 2023 for the shared ride department. Kelly stated that the ridership has decreased slightly from August 2023 due to less operating days. The ridership continues to be at or above the state average. We are currently at 95% of the pre-covid numbers, which is a positive sign. The ridership for September 2023 was 10,209 compared to 9,783 in September of 2022. This is an increase of 426 trips. Kelly also announced that the drivers and office staff continued to exceed the state benchmarks with the performance indicators. The on-time performance has also exceeded the benchmark at 92%. Mr. McGrath stated that this is a tribute to the entire shared ride department and he appreciates their efforts.
- E. Keri Savage addressed the board regarding the human resources department. Keri stated that there haven't been any new hires since the last board meeting. They have had several interviews. All applicants have been given the paperwork for the background checks. Currently we are looking for drivers in the fixed route and shared ride department. There will be shifts with some part-time employees moving to full-time status. Keri stated that we are in desperate need of two mechanic with a CDL. We do have one applicant that we are working on for the position. Keri stated that they have been very active with the public outreach and will continue to be through December. They attended a fair at Goodwill at North that was well received. COLTS was invited to join their community panel, which would be a great opportunity for us to be a part of the senior community. Also, the director at North completed an application to be a part of our Citizens Advisory Committee, which we are always looking for members. Keri felt that she would provide great input within the senior community. Keri stated that there was also a lot of outreach with the Scranton School District. Zain and Katie McAndrew attended events to provided materials and offered training. COLTS representatives also attended a job fair at Johnson College to seek out mechanics or drivers. Johnson now offers a new CDL course so hopefully we can encourage some of those students to join

our workforce. There is another senior expo scheduled for tomorrow and we are currently promoting Stuff the Bus. We are looking for volunteers and sponsors for the event. Keri noted that Stuff the Bus is scheduled for Thursday, December 7, 2023. Mr. McGrath felt that there are many causes that are out there but, this has become one of our signature events. He felt it was wonderful to see the unions and other partners come together for such a great cause. Keri announced that the driver's quiet room has been completed but, there are some final touches that have to be done. Mr. McGrath explained that the conference room at the transit center had always been off limits to the drivers but, when COVID hit, the room was offered to them while they were on breaks. Recently we were approached by some entities that requested the use of the room on a regular basis and we agreed to the use. The quiet room has been made available because the drivers have expressed the need for a place to decompress during their breaks. The office furniture and equipment that was used in the room, has been moved to the storage closet to offer the quiet space.

- F. Mike Danchak addressed the board regarding the finance department. Mike stated that there haven't been many changes since last month. The financial performance and cash flow has been holding steady. A couple of expense items have come forward, especially due to the construction project. Mike spoke with Penn Dot regarding the project and we will have to include \$1.5 million of our own funding for change orders that may arise. Mike stated that he had a meeting with Cummings Insurance regarding the health insurance renewal. Cummings provided three quotes but, we have decided to stay where we are with the PMHIC Group. That was the lowest option. The quote for 2024 came in at approximately \$2.8 million for total premiums. Mike noted that the Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) for the pension has also increased. The major inflationary areas can be seen in parts, fuel and wages that get passed on by our vendors. Mr. Dougherty thanked all of the department heads for their reports and he stated that the information is very informative to the board.

Public Comment/Other Business

- A. Mr. Dougherty requested a motion to approve Allied Universal as the security vendor of the Lackawanna Transit Center, pending Solicitor approval. Brian Doughton made the motion and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All others were in favor.
- B. Mr. Dougherty opened the discussion to cancelling the November Board Meeting due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Mr. McGrath explained that there is an additional reason for the cancellation. He stated that, historically, the reports for the meetings have been provided for the previous month. Unfortunately, many of the figures are not accurate because the information hasn't been posted in the system. With the cancellation of the meeting, the reports will be one month behind and they will be more accurate. Mike Danchak explained that, with accounting, invoices for service in a certain month may not get paid until the following month. We do our best to accrue all of the expenses but, it results in a lot of estimates and burden of the staff. If Penn Dot is looking for the reports, at times, the reports are changed to reflect the late postings. Mr. McGrath also noted that the shared ride department does not receive the reconciliation for the funding sources until after the report is provided to the board. This will give us the ability to provide more accurate reports. Brian Doughton made the motion to cancel the November board meeting and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All others were in favor.

C. Mr. Dougherty opened the discussion of the 2024 meeting schedule and the discussion to extend the executive session from 30 minutes to 45 minutes. Mr. McGrath discussed the extended executive session. He stated the reason to extend the session is due to the fact that there are many things going on, such as the construction to the new facility and other projects that are taking place. Mr. McGrath stated that the other reason for the extension is to include some board training sessions. Penn Dot and FTA have suggested the initiation of the training. We are currently working with a consultant who will be able to implement the Penn Train approved trainings. They plan to do the training during the executive sessions. Atty. Hinton asked if the training will be over Zoom or in person. Mr. McGrath stated that it would be through Zoom. Mike Danchak stated that some of the training will focus on financial matters such as, pension and actuarial numbers. Jane Farrell addressed the board regarding the 2024 Board Schedule. Jane stated that, because of the reporting, the meetings were pushed to the Wednesday either on or following the 20th of each month. She felt that was confusing for the public so she suggested possibly the third Wednesday or the last Wednesday of each month. Mr. Dougherty felt it was a valid issue. Jane also stated that we received correspondence from the county stating that they may provide a link to the minutes to the meetings. Jane went on the county website and the information for our meeting schedules on their website is incorrect. Mike Danchak stated that the recommendation was to have the meetings on the last Wednesday of each month. Brian Doughton made the motion to hold the board meetings on the last Wednesday of each month and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All others were in favor. Martha Dougher made the motion to extend the executive session to 45 minutes and Brian Doughton seconded the motion. All others were in favor.

Mr. Dougherty welcomed comments from the public regarding other business; there were none.

Brian Doughton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 p.m. and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Submitted by:
Jane Farrell, Executive Assistant