

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF AUTHORITY
County of Lackawanna Transit System
January 31, 2024

The regular meeting of the County of Lackawanna Transit System Authority was held on Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. at the Lackawanna Transit Center.

Present were:	Michael Dougherty	Larry Wynne
	Brian Doughton	Martha Dougher
	Gregg Nieto	J. Timothy Hinton
	Joseph DeNaples	Timothy McGrath
	Jane Farrell	Mike Danchak
	Zain Rabbani	Nicole Ference
	Kelly Matone	Frank Soto
	Keri Savage	

Attorney Atty. J. Timothy Hinton opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Attorney Hinton called the meeting to order.

Attorney Hinton, as Solicitor for COLTS, requested a motion for the appointment of the Chairman of the Board of Directors. Martha Dougher made a motion to appoint Larry Wynne as the Chairman. Brian Doughton seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Larry Wynne stated that an Executive Session was held prior to the meeting to discuss personnel matters.

Reorganization

Larry Wynne requested a motion to nominate the Vice-Chairman. Martha Dougher made a motion to appoint Michael Dougherty as Vice-Chairman. Brian Doughton seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Michael Dougherty made a motion for Martha Dougher to hold the office of Secretary. Brian Doughton seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Brian Doughton made a motion for Gregg Nieto to hold the office of Treasurer. Michael Dougherty seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Michael Dougherty made a motion for Brian Doughton to hold the office of Vice Secretary/Vice Treasurer. Martha Dougher seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Martha Dougher made a motion to reappoint Timothy Hinton and Joseph DeNaples as Solicitors to COLTS. Gregg Nieto seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Brian Doughton requested a motion to appoint Martha Dougher and Michael Dougherty to the ATU Pension Committee. Gregg Nieto seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Martha Dougher requested a motion to appoint Gregg Nieto and Larry Wynne to the SEIU Pension Committee. Brian Doughton seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Gregg Nieto requested a motion to appoint Brian Doughton and Larry Wynne to the Personnel Committee. Martha Dougher seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Martha Dougher made a motion to reappoint Katie McAndrew as the Right to Know Officer. Brian Doughton seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Larry Wynne requested a Roll Call of the Board Members. Larry Wynne, Martha Dougher and Brian Doughton were present; Gregg Nieto and Michael Dougherty participated via phone.

Acceptance of Minutes

Mr. Wynne requested a motion to accept the October 2023 and the December 2023 meeting minutes. Martha Dougher made a motion to accept the October 2023 minutes and Michael Dougherty seconded the motion. All were in favor. Martha Dougher made a motion to accept the December 2023 minutes and Gregg Nieto seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Acceptance of Financial Documents

Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the Income Statements for November 2023. Gregg Nieto 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. Timothy McGrath announced that Kelly Matone has been selected as the new Director of the Shared Ride department. He congratulated Kelly on her new position. He also updated the board on the facility project. At this point the project had been on schedule but, due to procurement they have run into issues which will delay the project an additional six months. The issue has to do with the source of power for the new building. Mr. McGrath felt the six months was a cushion and it could come in sooner but, it may not. They are working to expedite a solution. He also stated that they had to reconfigure the dispatch office in the new building and a possible change order due to issues with work stations. Mr. McGrath announced that Governor Shapiro is proposing an additional 1.75% increase in transit funding, which would translate into several million dollars. Most of the shares will go to Pittsburg and Philadelphia but, all transit agencies will benefit in receiving the additional funds for operational spending. This is separate from the capital spending. The funds will go directly towards the day-to-day operations. One option that we could use the funds for, would be to expand our services to senior citizens by expanding the shared ride department. Mr. McGrath stated that, if the rail service is expanded to our area, the funds could be used to expand our service to seven days a week. Or we could expand our night services due to increased demands. Mr. McGrath will send out additional information to the board about this as information becomes available. Mr. McGrath stated that many of the other agencies are having major funding issues and this will help alleviate some of the problems. He also

commended Mike Danchak for his budgeting efforts with the finances at COLTS. Mr. McGrath stated that they have gotten several complains about access to the Mall at Steamtown and the medical facilities in the mall. He stated that they have a meeting with the city tomorrow to come up with a solution to drop off our shared ride and fixed route passengers. Mr. McGrath announced that there will be a kick off meeting for the Shared Ride Technical Assistance Grant on February 15, 2024. With this, they will come in to analyze our shared ride operations to insure we are keeping up with Penn Dots expectations.

- B. Kelly Matone reviewed the shared ride ridership report for November 2023. Kelly stated that the ridership has increased by 8% from last year and revenue increased by 3%. The ridership is at approximately 95% pre-pandemic numbers. Kelly noted that five of the new vans arrived. We are still waiting for four more vans. They are expected to arrive in February.
- C. Zain Rabbani reviewed the fixed route ridership report for November 2023. Zain stated that the ridership is at 78% of the pre-pandemic numbers. They continue to look at routes that can possibly be expanded. Such as the Mohegan, Carbondale and Old Forge routes. They have also been updating some of the bus stop signs as they can, based on the weather conditions. Atty. Hinton asked if there were any updates on the shelter that the woman was asking about at the last board meeting. Frank Soto stated that they are working with a local civil engineering firm for the project. The company is Reuther & Bowen and they are out of Dunmore. They will survey the area where we would like to put the shelter. The shelter has been ordered and it will take approximately sixteen weeks for it to arrive. It will be installed on the corner of Mulberry and Colfax. Mr. McGrath stated that we plan to use this shelter as our temple going forward. He also cautioned everyone that this plan was just based on the woman that spoke at the last meeting. We did not hear from any of our constituents about the project. The project was discussed on a recent phone call with Penn Dot to make sure we are going through the proper procedures. We are also working to determine where other shelters are a priority. Martha Dougher stated that she has been asked several times about what is going on at Lackawanna and Wyoming. Zain stated that construction continues in the 100 block of Wyoming Avenue. Mr. McGrath stated that they have looked into the situation but, there isn't much we can do because it isn't our property. Mr. McGrath stated they will look into it again. Atty. Joseph DeNaples asked if it was the contractors for the building development that caused the issue. Mr. McGrath though it has something to do with a road project. Brian Doughton agreed that the thought it was a road project. Mr. McGrath noted that there was an issue with snow removal. Because we do not own the property, we could not do it. He wasn't sure who owned the property. Atty. DeNaples stated that there are signs on the building. He thinks the company name is D&D Development or something similar. Mr. McGrath also stated that they reached out to the city but they could not do anything about it because it wasn't their property.
- D. Keri Savage addressed the board regarding the human resources department. Keri stated that they continue to look for a mechanic Class A. There are also four part-time operator positions available. They have several interviews scheduled for this week. Keri stated that we lost a full-time fixed route operator so we will be moving someone from part-time to full-time to cover that position. This will create openings in fixed route but, there haven't been as many applications for that department. She felt it was due to the CDL requirements. With regard to public outreach, there was a shared ride

calendar prepared. The calendar provides information on policy and procedures with regard to the shared ride service for the clients. This will be a convenient way for the clients to have our phone number available and the calendar will help as a reminder for their appointments. It will provide a friendly reminder of the policies. There were only a limited number available at this time. She hopes to get sponsors for the calendars for next year. Keri stated that they had a meeting with Goodwill this month and they were invited to a birthday celebration that they will most likely attend. Keri stated that the Substance Abuse Policy, that was approved at the last meeting, has been distributed to the employees. This was processed per the FTA findings and requirements. There are a few employees remaining that have to sign the acknowledgements. The information was submitted to the FTA. Keri stated that the EEO Policy will be expiring in March. There was a finding with regard to identifying a new EEO Officer but, most of the plan has revisions that have to be made. Keri believes it will be presented in February or March. Mr. McGrath noted that the calendar was a labor of love and it turned out very nice. He stated that, because the shared ride department has been customer service driven, many of the policies have been overlooked. This has created a problem and the calendar is a friendly way to address the issues. Mr. McGrath stated that the plan is to have it available on the website as well. Keri stated that, Christen Pellegrini, suggested having a fund raiser for the Scranton police officer that was injured while on duty. Initially, the thought was to do a dress down day. Then they decided to sell pins to the employees and to have the proceeds benefit Officer Gilmartin. This would allow for all employees to show their support. The recommended donation is \$5.00 per pin.

- E. Frank Soto addressed the board regarding safety and security. Frank stated that there has been a decrease in preventable accidents recently. They are finalizing the details for the refresher training program for the drivers. Frank also noted that operators are now able to upgrade their license in house so, we no longer need any outside assistance to provide that service. This would be to authorize the passenger endorsements. Frank stated that there has been one minor incident at the transit center since the security professional started. The security has shown to be a deterrent for incidents. Frank feels that he is doing a great job. Mr. McGrath noted that there was a debrief meeting with him to discuss how things were going. Mr. McGrath also congratulated the board and the team that worked on getting the service up and running. Especially because of the recent activity in the city. Going forward they will keep a record of incidents and the categories of the types of incidents. This reporting is reflected in the PTASP that is being approved at the meeting today. The plan will be our tool to assess all of the risks and safety measures in front of us. The team that reviewed the document went page by page to get all of the information together. Mr. McGrath congratulated the team for the work they provided on the document. Keri noted that, during the meeting with the security professional, there was a discussion about the increase in dealing with people that suffer from mental health issues. It was suggested that we reach out to some mental health organizations to help with the issues and possible partnerships. The hope would be to have assistance on site for individuals and not have to get the police involved. Keri is working on setting up some meetings. Mr. McGrath noted that, during a PPTA presentation, representatives from SEPTA stated that they have been working with agencies to assist with the problems they are having. Mr. McGrath stated that the security guard told him that he was commended by a passenger because, since he started, people have noticed a decrease in loitering.
- F. Nicole Ference addressed the board regarding human resources. Nicole stated that they conducted interviews for the customer service position in the shared ride department. A

decision will be announced shortly on the position. Mr. McGrath noted that Linda Smolley has retired after forty years of service. They hope to honor her at a future meeting for her service.

- G. Mike Danchak addressed the board regarding the finance department. Mike stated that the finances are holding steady. There is approximately \$5 million in cash flow. We are looking to purchase the shelter that was discussed earlier. The one shelter is already in the budget but, they will be working on grants for other shelters that are past their prime. There are four CNG buses that are being purchased and we are using grants for them. We purchased five shared ride vans and we will be getting another four. Mike believes there will be another seven or eight purchased next fiscal year. This is typical because the fleet continues to get older. The funding for the facility project is looking good. We have approximately \$300,000 in surplus to cover any change orders. Brian Doughton asked about grants that we previously had for the shelters. Mike explained that the grants expired and the funds had to be returned. Atty. DeNaples questioned the contract we had with Four Seasons to build shelters. They were only to be paid when the shelters were built. Mike was not familiar with the contracts. Mr. McGrath felt that they were retained to do repairs on the existing shelters. Brian thought that contract was with Allied Services. Mr. McGrath stated that Allied only cleaned the shelters. Martha Dougher asked if the vans will have the extra step in them. Mike stated that he did not know but, we are required to go with the state regulations and we are unable to make major changes. Ms. Dougher stated that in some of the vans, you go up the steps and then there was another step to deal with. She said that the drivers have to warn the passengers about the additional step. Mike noted that we piggyback on the state contract because the procurement is very difficult. Frank stated that he looked at the new vans and he does not believe that they have the additional step. Mr. McGrath asked that Frank confirm the information and send him and email about it.

Public Comment/Other Business

- A. Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the Resolution to Authorize the Amendment to the COLTS Disadvantaged Business Enterprise to Include a DBE Plan Addendum. Martha Dougher made the motion and Brian Doughton seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- B. Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the Resolution to Approve the 2024 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. Brian Doughton made the motion and Michael Dougherty seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- C. Mr. Wynne welcomed comments from the public regarding other business; there were none.

Martha Dougher made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:10 p.m. Brian Doughton seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Submitted by:
Jane Farrell, Transit Center Manager