

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF AUTHORITY
County of Lackawanna Transit System
February 28, 2024

The regular meeting of the County of Lackawanna Transit System Authority was held on Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 4:45 p.m. at the Lackawanna Transit Center.

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Present were: | Martha Dougher | Michael Dougherty |
| | Larry Wynne | Brian Doughton |
| | Atty. Joseph DeNaples | Atty. Timothy Hinton |
| | Timothy McGrath | Jane Farrell |
| | Kelly Matone | Michael Danchak |
| | Zain Rabbani | Keri Savage |
| | Frank Soto | Sarah Cruz |

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, Brian Doughton and Martha Dougher were present. Michael Dougherty participated via phone. Gregg Neito and was excused.

Acceptance of Minutes

Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the January 2024 meeting minutes. Martha Dougher made a motion to accept the minutes and Brian Doughton seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Acceptance of Financial Documents

Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the Finance Statements for the month of December 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. Wynne welcomed comments from the public regarding agenda items; there were none.

Executive Director's Report/Department Reports

- A. Mr. McGrath updated the board on a few items. He provided the board members with pictures of the construction work being completed on the new building. We had been notified that there may have been a delay in the project due to the main switch gear being on backorder. He was recently notified that they are more optimistic and it may be here on time. Hopefully now we are back to the original timeline. Mr. McGrath stated that they had a meeting with UGI and Trillium and we will have to work on getting some easements for the project. Mr. McGrath announced that between March 26th and March 28th, the Technical Study Grant project will be conducted. This project is provided by Penn Dot to review the operations of the shared ride department. The idea behind it is, to complete a comprehensive review of the operations. They will provide

recommendations and best practices to help the department. The team will be involved for a few days and they will do a preliminary assessment. In months going forward, they will review the findings and offer recommendations on training. Mr. McGrath also wanted to publicly thank the City of Scranton for their communication in advance of closing down of Theodore Street to traffic. This gave us the opportunity to adjust the bus route and to give notice to the public about the route change.

- B. Zain Rabbani reviewed the ridership reports for the December 2023 for the fixed route department. Zain stated that, for the month of December, the ridership is at 81% of the pre-pandemic numbers. Zain noted that the ridership has been rising small and steady. He also noted that the ridership for senior citizens is at 94% of pre-pandemic numbers. Knowing that the senior ridership is on track, it leaves the opportunity to focus on business and factories for partnerships. With this, it would increase the ridership and be beneficial to the local economy. Mr. McGrath noted that they have a meeting with Penn Dot tomorrow and these numbers are reviewed with them. He stated that our numbers are slightly higher than the other agencies, which is encouraging.
- C. Keri Savage addressed the board regarding the human resources and communications department. Keri stated that, since the last meeting, there has been a transition in customer service. Abby Diano has moved from the transit center to the shared ride department and she is doing well. Currently, we have positions open for two casual drivers for fixed route and two part-time positions for shared ride. Also, we continue to look to fill the mechanic position. Keri state that they continue to advertise on Facebook, Indeed and our website. They have also been working closely with the safety and security department to ensure that all of the employees receive the required training. Keri stated that they recently had a meeting with a Human Service agency to focus on mental health issues for our passengers and individuals at the transit center. We are looking for input on crisis intervention and to avoid police involvement if it isn't necessary. This could help the individuals get the resources that they need. The intention of the partnership is to assist the drivers in providing de-escalation training but, it can also help with travel training for their clients. Keri stated that they just had a Citizens Advisory Committee meeting and one of the points of interest is the issue with the stop at the Mall at Steamtown. Another topic is providing lines at the transit center for the drivers. COLTS is also getting things together for the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Keri stated that the theme for the parade will be a leprechaun trap. With the saying, don't fall for the drinking and driving trap. We are seeking sponsors for they event and they are working on other details for the day. Mr. McGrath stated that COLTS participates in two ways with the parade. One is with the advertising and sponsorship of being in the parade. The other is providing transportation for public officials. In the past we provided the trolley but, because they are being disposed of, they have been offered the use of the CNG buses. Mr. McGrath noted that they have a meeting set up with the city to discuss the stop at the mall. Keri noted that representatives from the city, police, mall and other business impacted by the situation will attend.
- D. Mike Danchak addressed the board regarding the finance department. Mike reviewed the information that will be voted on by the board at the meeting today. He stated that we procured a grant for the sweeper for the garage area. The one that we have now is malfunctioning so it is necessary to purchase a new one. The Capital Match Grant will be used towards the purchase of the four buses, two vans, IT equipment and items for the garage in the new building. Mike stated that the Technical Study Grant is the capital asset plan the he creates every year. We have to go through a five-year process that

forecasts what we plan to purchase and we receive grant money for it. The amount of the grant is \$28,300 and the resolution is to sign the agreement today. Mike stated that, because most of our funding is taxpayer provided, we are required by Penn Dot to have a resolution to provide free rides for the St. Patrick's Day parade. We also have to look into getting sponsorship to supplement the fares we are not taking in that day.

- E. Frank Soto addressed the board regarding the safety department. Frank stated that, by the end of March our refresher training should go live. The training will encompass all facets of the job for the operators. We had six preventable accidents last month and this month there were five. All of them were minor occurrences and most of them happened in the garage due to the lack space available. Frank stated that they continue to work on the shelter that will be at the corner of Colfax and Mulberry. Information was provided to the engineering firm and the survey was received today. Frank stated that the shared ride department is just about finished with the human trafficking training and the fixed route department is complete. In March, they will assign defensive driving courses. Mr. McGrath noted that there was an article in the Scranton Times recently sheading light on the on the issues in Lackawanna County that they are having with human trafficking. This is a timely exercise because this issue is hitting home.
- F. Kelly Matone reviewed the ridership for the shared ride department for December 2023. Kelly noted that the revenue and ridership was down slightly. She felt this was due to the holidays and weather conditions. Due to the weather, they had to cancel several trips. We are currently at 92% of the pre-pandemic numbers, which continues to increase. Kelly addressed the concerns that Martha Dougher brought up about the steps on vans T1 through T6. Kelly stated that they have added reflective tape and "watch your step" tape on the steps on five of the six vans. She has pictures that she can show the board following the meeting. Mr. McGrath stated that, during the executive session, they were conducting board training. Items like this show how invaluable Martha's perspective is to the board. She identified an issue with steps that some of the clients are blind to on several of the vans. It was a team effort to make the steps visible to the passengers. Mr. Mr. McGrath thanked Martha for her input and hopefully this change will make the vans safer for our passengers.

Public Comment/Other Business

- A. Mr. Wynne requested a motion for the resolution authorizing the purchase of a Powerboss Nautilus High Dump Rider Scrubber/Sweeper in the amount of \$86,485.33 from Bortek Industries. Martha Dougher made the motion and Brian Doughton seconded the motion. All others were in favor.
- B. Mr. Wynne requested a motion for the resolution approving the 2023-2024 Local Capital Match. Michael Dougherty made the motion to for the resolution and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All others were in favor.
- C. Mr. Wynne requested a motion for the resolution to approve the Technical Study Grant Contract. Brain Doughton made the motion for the resolution and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All others were in favor.
- D. Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve free rides for the Scranton St. Patrick's Day Parade. Brian Doughton made the motion approve the schedule and Michael Dougherty seconded the motion. All others were in favor.

Mr. Wynne welcomed comments from the public regarding other business; Sarah Cruz addressed the board. Sarah asked for an update on the shelter on Mulberry Street. Frank stated that he was contacted by the engineering firm looking for the dimensions for the pad for the shelter today. Frank provided the information to them. Sarah asked for a timeline for when it is expected to be completed. Frank stated that the shelter has been ordered but, it will take approximately 20 weeks before it is delivered.

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

Submitted by:
Jane Farrell, Executive Assistant