

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF AUTHORITY
County of Lackawanna Transit System
May 29, 2024

The regular meeting of the County of Lackawanna Transit System Authority was held on Wednesday, May 29, 2024 at 4:35 p.m. at the Lackawanna Transit Center.

Present were:	Martha Dougher	Brian Doughton
	Michael Dougherty	Larry Wynne
	Atty. Joseph DeNaples	Atty. Timothy Hinton
	Timothy McGrath	Mike Danchak
	Jane Farrell	Frank Soto
	Zain Rabbani	Keri Savage
	Greg Czyzyk	Kelly Matone
	Steve Matassa	Sarah Cruze
	Ralph Colo	Cory Melisky

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. Michael Dougherty and Martha Dougher participated via zoom. Gregg Neito was excused.

Acceptance of Minutes

Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the April 22, 2024 and April 24, 2024 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 Statements for the month of March 2024. 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 updated the board on a few items. Mr. McGrath stated that the construction project is still on track but, things can possibly change going forward. At this point, the completion date is anticipated to be June 11, 2025. This would also include the demolition of the current site. The hope is to be working out of the new facility in the beginning of 2025. Mr. McGrath stated that all of the furniture has also been ordered for the new facility. There was a meeting with Trillium with regard to the fueling station which is ahead of schedule. Also, they had a meeting with UGI regarding projected consumption and they are estimating our cost to be over 200% of our current

costs. This will be a substantial increase but, we are working to see about bringing the costs down. Mr. McGrath stated that it has been a busy month. He participated in numerous meetings, conferences and events. He joined PPTA in Harrisburg for a rally to advocate for the Governor's budget and proposed 2% increase for public transit. Mr. McGrath participated in a two-day review with the FTA for the Lackawanna/Luzerne MPO. We also had meetings and reviews of the shared ride technical assistance study. There was also a planning session with NEPA moves. They have been going back in forth with the consultant regarding the triennial review to craft our responses to the FTA findings. Mr. McGrath also stated that they are in preparations for the negotiations with the ATU to renew the agreement.

- B. Mike Danchak addressed the board regarding the finance department. Mike stated that the finances are about the same as they were last month. He also stated that the finance department has reached out to a consultant, Delta Development, to assist with federal grant funding. He is working with them to offer proposals to the board for their services. These grants will assist us in getting more federal funds for the new CNG buses, a possible transfer center and other projects. The range of the grants can be anywhere from \$10 million to \$25 million and this company has been very successful in accessing these grants. Mike hopes to have additional information from them in the near future.
- C. Zain Rabbani reviewed the ridership reports for the fixed route department for March 2024. Zain stated that the ridership is at 75% of the pre-pandemic level. Zain reported that they have had several meetings with Johnson College to make arrangements to pick up their students in the evenings. They plan to have this taken care of by July. Zain stated that they are looking at expanding the Mohegan Sun route because the numbers are below average. They feel that, adding additional times to the route, will increase the ridership. Zain announced that we have lost four full-time operators in the last six weeks, due to various reasons. They had three interviews that went well and now the candidates are going through background checks. Because of this, there will possibly be a spike in overtime and also there will be overtime due to training the new employees. Brian Doughton asked if they have officially been offered the positions. Zain stated that they are waiting on the results of the background checks before they will offer the position. Tim McGrath added that the transportation for the Johnson students will be covered by changing an existing route, not adding a new one. It will be the same idea with the Mohegan run because the last bus leaves there very early. These ideas were brought up due to our outreach to the community. Mr. McGrath also noted that we are working with the Railriders to service that area. The possible plan would be to have the regular buses serve the area earlier in the day and then have the evening shuttles service the area later. All of this is an effort to expand our service to the community.
- D. Kelly Matone reviewed the ridership report for the shared ride department for March 2024. Kelly stated that the March ridership was about the same as last year. The revenue had an approximate 3% drop. We are now at 84% of the pre-pandemic numbers. This would be due to the fact that we lost some of the medical providers and the clients aren't going to the senior centers as often. Kelly stated that Penn Dot reached out to see about doing a rider survey in mid-March. The survey was mailed out at the end of April. They surveys were sent to random clients to complete. Recordings were sent to clients to have the surveys completed and they were returned directly to Penn Dot. We are waiting to receive the results. Kelly stated that, for the fourth year, we are providing transportation for all four days of the Lackawanna Heritage Fair. There are seven shared ride drivers participating in the transportation. Kelly announced that, on Monday, May 13, 2024,

they had a follow-up call with Penn Dot to go over the Shared Ride Assessment. Recommendations on what type of assistance was provided and suggestions on redistribution of tasks. Kelly believed that more information will be provided by the end of the month. She noted that she has begun implementing some of the recommendations and things are going well. Kelly also announced that this is the second month in a row that the shared ride department had no accidents. Mr. McGrath noted that Michael Baker is the consultant that Penn Dot hired to perform the study. The next step will be to set up calls with peer agencies over the next few months to exchange ideas and information on how to improve service. Mr. McGrath stated that Penn Dot is aware that some of their recommendations are not feasible but it is a great baseline for us to work off of.

- E. Keri Savage addressed the board regarding communications department and human resources department. Keri noted that Zain had touched on the positions that are available in the fixed route department. The shared ride department conducted three interviews and they are in the process of conducting background checks. If they go well, the department will be fully staffed. Keri stated that they are still looking for a mechanic and recently a resume was received that looks hopeful. In partnership with Johnson College, there were a few graduates who approached her about positions. They are diesel mechanics but, they do not meet the age requirements. The plan is to onboard them as part-time service employees and train them when time permits. Keri stated that members of administration were assigned EEO training that focused on discrimination. All employees that were assigned the training have completed it. There was additional training set up for the month of May but, only two employees completed the training so far. With regard to public outreach, we continue to advertise open positions. From May 6th to May 11th, they recognized rider appreciation week. Thanks to the board, we were able to offer free rides on May 8th to the public. Keri noted that WBRE did a spotlight of the event. Champ, from the Railriders, visited the transit center and traveled on some of the bus routes to see the passengers. Keri felt the relationship with the Railriders will be successful at finding new opportunities for outreach. Keri added that there was a fire at the Giant in Greenridge. Representatives from the Giant contacted COLTS and we were able to create a variant to transport the shoppers from the Greenridge store to the Dickson City store. Keri noted that the subject for the monthly memo in May will be safety topics. They are focusing on pre-trip and post-trip inspections. They will also include information on the Technical Assistance Study provided. Keri shared information about a bird that flew on to one of the buses. The driver attempted to catch the bird but, it hid in the back of the bus. The maintenance department was unable to find the bird. The next day, the bird came down the aisle of the bus. The driver calmly pulled the bus over and gently placed the bird in a bush on the side of the road. Keri stated that they will be meeting the ATU to work on negotiations. Mr. McGrath noted that Giant has purchased passes from COLTS and they are making them available to their customers to transport them to Dickson City.
- F. Frank Soto addressed the board regarding safety and security. Frank also noted that the shared ride department had no accidents in the months of March and April. They communicated to the drivers that they appreciated their efforts in keeping everyone safe. The fixed route department had three minor accidents in March and one in April. Frank stated that they continue to work on the shared ride training program. They are narrowing down the list of individuals interested in participating in the program. In June, they plan to offer ADA sensitivity training and mobility device security training for fixed route. Frank stated that they offered online training in May focused on intersection

safety. There were 3 incidents reported at the transit center. Two included law enforcement and the other was a medical incident but, nothing too serious.

- G. Greg Czyzyk addressed the board regarding the IT department. Greg stated that all of the tablets for the shared ride department have been upgraded to provide larger screens. They plan to include the pre-trip and post-trip information on them by the end of next month. The projector and the sound system in the conference room at the transit center has also been upgraded.

Public Comment/Other Business

- A. Larry Wynne requested a motion for the Resolution to Approve the Amendments to the Procurement Manual. Michael Dougherty made the motion for the approval of the resolution and Brian Doughton second the motion. All were in favor.
- B. Larry Wynne requested a motion for the Resolution Authorizing the Approval to Pursue a Third-Party Advertising Contract. Brian Doughton made a motion to award the advertising contract to Gateway Outdoor Advertising based on the submitted proposal. This would be subject to the contract being written and approved by our solicitors. Larry Wynne second the motion and all were in favor.
- C. Mr. Wynne welcomed comments from the public regarding other business. Steve Matassa asked if the new fuel station will be fast fill. Mr. McGrath stated that he believes it is fast fill. Steve asked Keri if there were age waivers available for apprentice workers with regard to age requirements. Keri stated that we have to follow the requirements from our insurance company. So far, they have not altered the standards but she will see if they are considering it. Steve stated that other unions have recently made changes to the requirements. Atty. DeNaples asked Keri what the age requirements are. Keri stated that there are different requirements for individuals between the ages of 22 and 24 that we have to abide by. Atty. DeNaples suggested approaching Safety to see if they would grant a waiver. Keri stated that they have two individuals now that are interested in positions so she will reach out to them. Mr. McGrath noted that, in the past, we were not prepared to offer an apprentice program. Now it is something we are considering offering. Steve stated that he believes this would be an asset to the organization. Steve asked what the duration of the new third-party evening contract. Keri stated that it is a three-year contract.
- D. Sarah Cruze addressed the board during the public comment period. Sarah stated that she attended Advocacy Day in Harrisburg on April 30, 2024. She was asked to give a speech on the proposed increase to the transit funding and her personal experience with public transportation. She was escorted by Steve Matassa, Leonard Fata and Joseph Pollock. Sarah stated that she was proud to speak on behalf of COLTS and transit riders. She noted that the majority of the people there were from the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia areas. She believes we were the only representatives from Northeast Pennsylvania. She noted that the union members had a meeting with representatives from Marty Flynn's office. Later, they were all able to meet with representatives from Mullins, Donahue and Kosierowski's offices. She felt it was a very productive day and she added that all of the representatives stated that they are in support of the Governor's proposal. Sarah thanked the board for allowing her to be a representative for COLTS. Sarah also thanked COLTS for working with the Giant supermarket to have a variant to provide transportation to Dickson City. She noted that the

announcements were shared on several different Facebook pages but, she suggested the COLTS also share the information on their page. She felt that the public is very happy to see that COLTS and the Giant have been working together on this. Mr. McGrath thanked Sarah for her outstanding presentation and advocacy on our behalf.

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

Submitted by:
Jane Farrell, Executive Assistant