

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF AUTHORITY
County of Lackawanna Transit System
November 20, 2024

The regular meeting of the County of Lackawanna Transit System Authority was held on Wednesday, November 20, 2024 at 4:50 p.m. at the Lackawanna Transit Center.

Present were:	Brian Doughton	Gregg Nieto
	Larry Wynne	Atty. Timothy Hinton
	Atty. Joseph DeNaples	Timothy McGrath
	Zain Rabbani	Jane Farrell
	Frank Soto	Kelly Matone
	Keri Savage	Greg Czyzyk
	Sarah Cruz	Mike Roszak

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 and Brian Doughton were present. Gregg Nieto participated via zoom. Michael Dougherty and Marta Dougher were excused.

Acceptance of Minutes

Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the October 30, 2024 meeting minutes. Brian Doughton made a motion to table the acceptance of the minutes. Larry Wynne seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Acceptance of Financial Documents

Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the Finance Statements for the month of September 2024. Brian Doughton made a motion to accept the financial reports and Larry Wynne 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. Kelly Matone reviewed the ridership report for the shared ride department for September 2024. Kelly stated that revenue had increase by 17% from last year and the ridership was up by 3%. We were at 89% of the pre-pandemic numbers. Kelly updated that board on the Technical Assistance Program. Kelly stated that an email was sent out for Michael Baker requesting information regarding service hours and appeal decisions to help with the assessment. They also suggested sending us some outlines with the steps to move one day reservations. We are still working on the organizational chart. They will be speaking with some employees tomorrow. With regard to the driver satisfaction survey, we had 40% participating in completion of the survey. Kelly was very happy

with the amount completed. We are in the process of reviewing the responses and compiling all of the information to determine what has to be done in the future. Mr. McGrath noted that we have already implemented some of the recommendations that have been made. We are still working on the training and identifying the in-person interaction as a follow up to the program. Mr. McGrath thanked everyone for their time and patients with the project.

- B. Frank Soto addressed the board regarding safety and security. Frank stated that the number of reportable accidents is trending low compared to this time last year. There is one part-time shared ride operator in training. Frank feels they will be on the road by themselves by the end of November. We have one new fixed route operator in training and he feels he will be on the road by the last week of November as well. There is one operator schedule to test at the DMV to receive their class CDL P endorsement. Frank stated that the pad has been poured for the shelter at Colfax and Mulberry Streets. The subcontractor has picked up the new shelter and it should be installed in the next coming week, weather pending.
- C. Zain Rabbani addressed the board regarding the Fixed Route department. Zain stated that we are at 77% of the pre-pandemic numbers. We are also up 5% from September of 2023. Zain state that he and Greg Czyzyk participated in a conference with Avail in Altoona. They provide the software to record ridership, stop information and tracks the buses. This information assists with looking at what routes should be adjusted or updated. They have new updates, such as providing detour information to make the system more user friendly. Zain stated that they are looking to adjust some routes that are running parallel. The Highworks and Carbondale could possibly be merged to eliminate redundancy. He will update the board regarding any changes that come up.
- D. Keri Savage addressed the board with regard to the communications and human resources. Keri stated that, with regard to the fixed route department, we have 40 full-time operators and 5 part-time operators. Keri noted that one of the full-time operators requested to be transferred to part-time so that reduces the number of full-time to 39. Keri stated that we have 2 candidates in pre-employment process. Technically we have 3 full-time operator vacancies. The shared ride department remains at full staff with 28 full-time and 12 part-time operators. The maintenance department has 6 full-time mechanics, 6 full-time service employees, 1 full-time janitor and 2 part-time service employees. We have a mechanic that will begin training tomorrow and we have another candidate that is in the pre-employment process. This will put us where we want to be with the mechanics but, we will continue to post for the position. There was a posting for a full-time service employee internally. Only internal applications have been submitted and they will be vetted soon. Keri stated that they are scheduled to meet with the ATU for union negotiations next Tuesday. Since the last meeting, our employees collected \$114 for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The funds were donated to the National Breast Cancer Foundation. The Stuff the Bus Committee had a meeting on November 7, 2024 and donation boxes have been delivered to over 25 locations. We continue to prepare for the event, which is scheduled for Thursday, December 5, 2024. Katie McAndrew was just on WBRE and she will be on Fox to promote the event. Keri stated that Katie has been doing a great job with the event. Members of administration recently had a meeting with representatives from the Railriders organization. They are working to improve the Game Day Express route for next year. We held open enrollment meeting today for employees to review their health insurance options. Thanksgiving certificates were provided to all employees during the open enrollment

meetings. They felt it was nice to hand deliver the certificates and to thank the employees for their service. For the part-time employees, the supervisors are hand delivering the certificates to the employees. We are scheduled to participate in the Downtown Santa Parade this coming Saturday. Everyone is invited to participate from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. Keri stated that members of administration are going down to Benco Dental tomorrow for a meeting with NEPA Moves. Keri wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

- E. Mr. McGrath updated the board on a few items. Mr. McGrath, stated that Mike Danchak was unable to attend the meeting and offered to relay any questions to Mike if necessary. Mr. McGrath stated that the new facility is completely enclosed at this point. All of the utilities have been brought to the building and the sidewalks have been installed. The latest schedule indicates that the timeline has been moved back about a month or month and a half. There is nothing to be alarmed about or any specific reason why the timeline has changed. They project that we will be in the building by February. Penn Dot actually feels that this project is running ahead of most other projects and it is not problematic. Mr. McGrath stated that we received confirmation via email from Lackawanna County that they have processing the local match for this project. He thanked them for their ongoing support and partnership. Mr. McGrath noted that it has been an extremely busy few months for the entire team at COLTS. They are engaged with many different agencies and initiatives. Even though we are committed to our daily jobs, we also engaging in other opportunities and outreach activities.

Public Comment/Other Business

Mr. Wynne welcomed comments from the public regarding other business. Mike Roszak addressed the board. Mr. Roszak felt that the wait times are excessive and he feels that we are understaffed at this point. He thinks it is important to reach out to the Governor for additional funding. He also stated that he was at the Commissioner meeting earlier and he offered some suggestions. Because we are in need of so many CDL drivers, maybe the County vocational schools can partner with an accredited driving school to help with the need. Mr. Roszak stated that pickup time changes often but the passengers are not aware of the change from when they have made their reservations. He suggested reaching out to one of the local colleges to write a program to automatically send a message to the client to inform them of the change. This can also avoid calls to the office. He stated that he spoke with Kelly previously and pointed out all of the social media outlets that COLTS has but, he didn't feel that it was necessary to look at all of the outlets to get the information he is looking for. Mr. Roszak felt that it was better to hear the information from him rather than a high ranking official but, he understands that additional funding is needed. Mr. McGrath appreciated finally meeting Mr. Roszak but, pointed out that the shared ride department is fully staffed at this time. He noted that the demand is rising but the funding is not. The State has been working on a study of the shared ride departments across the state to work on the funding issues. But this has been going on for approximately three years to figure out how to fund this because reimbursements are so low. Mr. McGrath stated that funds received from the Federal Government assist with offsetting the shortfall. He told Mr. Roszak that he appreciates his comments and suggestions. Noting that, in the fixed route department, we have an app that shows where the bus is so possibly something can be created for the shared ride department. Mr. Roszak stated that he had called because his ride was late and he was told by the CSR that they changed his pickup time in the computer from the original time. Kelly asked who he spoke with because that is not how it works. He said he did not know because she did not identify herself. Kelly said she will have a discussion with the staff about that. Keri stated that they did a rider survey and a large portion of it was regarding communication. The survey asked

if clients would be interested in different forms of communication such as, text messages or phone calls. They just received the results back and they have to review the information but, many of the senior citizens did not want to receive a lot of notifications. Mr. Roszak disagreed with that and he felt they would like the communication. Kelly noted that it is just a habit with many of the passengers just to call and confirm the information. Mr. Roszak pointed out that this inconveniences the other clients. He stated that recently, he transferred seats on the van to allow room for a woman in a wheelchair, although he has many problems with his foot. He stated that he was running late for his appointment and he asked them if he can get off the van first and they would not allow him to go first. Mr. McGrath asked Mr. Roszak if he could speak with him separately due to time constraints.

Sarah Cruze addressed the board. Sarah commended COLTS on altering the route at Scranton High School on election day to accommodate voters. Sarah commended Zain Rabbani for spearheading the alteration. She felt it was important also to make the same accommodations for each election day. Zain thanked Sarah for the complement and stated that this is something they intend to do in the future. He noted that the ridership was lower than expected but, as they continue to advertise, it can possibly increase. Sarah stated that she was at the location and saw the passengers arriving. She also shared the Facebook post several times about the service. Sarah asked if any other routes were altered on that day. Zain said they didn't change any of the other routes but, they will look into it for the next election.

Brian Doughton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:25 p.m. and Larry Wynne seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Submitted by:
Jane Farrell, Executive Assistant