

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF AUTHORITY  
County of Lackawanna Transit System  
December 17, 2024

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The regular meeting of the County of Lackawanna Transit System Authority was held on Tuesday, December 17, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. at the Lackawanna Transit Center.

Present were:	Brian Doughton	Gregg Nieto
	Larry Wynne	Martha Dougher
	Michael Dougherty	Atty. Timothy Hinton
	Atty. Joseph DeNaples	Timothy McGrath
	Zain Rabbani	Jane Farrell
	Frank Soto	Kelly Matone
	Keri Savage	Mike Danchak
	Bill Kuehner	Steve Matassa
	Ralph Colo	

Mr. Brian Doughton opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Doughton added that an Executive Session was held prior to the meeting to discuss personnel matters.

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

Acceptance of Minutes

Mr. Doughton requested a motion to approve the October 30, 2024 meeting minutes. Martha Dougher made a motion to accept the October minutes. Larry Wynne seconded the motion and all were in favor. Brian Doughton made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 20, 2024 meeting minutes. Larry Wynne seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Acceptance of Financial Documents

Mr. Doughton requested a motion to approve the Finance Statements for the month of October 2024. Martha Dougher made a motion to accept the financial reports and Michael Dougherty seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Public Comment/Agenda Items

Mr. Doughton welcomed comments from the public regarding agenda items; there were none.

Executive Director's Report/Department Reports

- A. Mike Danchak addressed the board regarding the finance department. Mike stated that the budget hasn't changed much since last month and no new updates. Mike noted that the annual pension payment would be made and the annual insurance payment had been made. These are two major payments that have to be made. The Resolution for the Local Match will be approved at the meeting today for our capital expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year. The funds will be used to purchase IT equipment, 9 vans, various equipment for the garage and specialty equipment. The local match will be

approximately \$50,000 and it will come out of our treasury. Mr. McGrath noted that recent conversations with the County have gone well and we appreciate the partnership that we have with them.

- B. Kelly Matone reviewed the ridership report for the shared ride department for October 2024. Kelly stated that revenue was up by 24% from last year and the ridership was up by 8%. The On Time Performance ran at 91.31% with over 10,000 trips. The ridership is at 91% of the pre-pandemic numbers. Recently they had a zoom call with MBI and Penn Dot regarding the Technical Assistance Program. They continue to work closely and provide requested documents and keep the line of communication open between all parties. Kelly anticipates that they will have more meetings in the future. Mr. McGrath noted that we have made two formal requests, as we move into the final stages with MBI. We requested formal training for scheduling and CSR training. The purpose is to have all of the shared ride department cross trained.
- C. Frank Soto addressed the board regarding safety and security. Frank stated that the we still remain steadily low with the number of reportable accidents. We have one new mechanic that started training on December 9, 2024. The mechanic has been working in the shop doing some hands-on training. There is one shared ride operator that is tentatively scheduled to test at the DMV in Dunmore on January 16, 2025. Frank stated that some of the goals for this month are to eliminate accidents while backing up, in the fixed route department by implementing a safety protocol procedure.
- D. Bill Kuehner announced that the shelter installation on the corner of Colfax and Mulberry is complete. Also, the shelter at the Viewmont Mall has been refurbished.
- E. Zain Rabbani addressed the board regarding the Fixed Route department. Zain stated that they have been discussing staffing issues and route configurations recently. In the past, we did not have major staffing issues but beginning in 2023, staffing became an issue. In the last several months, we were having problems with drivers covering runs and drivers being forced to work overtime. The average shift was 8 to 10 hours a day but now, some of the drivers are being forced to work 12 to 14 hours to cover the shifts. The plan was to hire additional drivers and get them trained and, on the road, as soon as possible to help with the problems. But, as drivers are being hired, other drivers are retiring or terminating employment. Zain stated that we had 33 shifts and it was reconfigured in a way that we now have 29 shifts. This would require 4 less drivers a day to cover the shifts. We will continue to have an extra list of drivers as backup. Zain noted that this change is a temporary solution to the problem. This is expected to last for approximately three months. Another change that they have been working on is the merging of routes 55 (Shoppers Special) and 43 (Viewmont/Bangor) to limit redundancy and create efficiency. The merge will begin on January 11, 2025 and for now, it will only be on Saturday as a pilot program. Zain stated that it was important to bring it to the board's attention because, when the routes are merged, it lowers the number of hours worked per day. The first phase of the changes will start in January. Then they will have meetings to discuss other potential changes to begin in April. Zain stated that, for the next three months, the shifts will be equally distributed among all drivers. Drivers will not get forced to work every day and there will be less strain on the drivers. As they work on this, some drivers may have to work a bit longer than they are used to but, not as much as they have been working recently. Zain noted that the changes were reviewed with the union so they understand that the issues are being addressed. Keri stated that the change hasn't been made public. They wanted to make sure the board was aware of

the change first. Mr. McGrath also noted that this workforce issue was problematic and this was a dual solution to the fix the issues. It is important to reexamine the routes on a regular basis and making changes without disenfranchising our riders. It is also not intended to reduce our workforce but this was an opportunity to work more efficiently. Mr. McGrath thanked Zain for his effort in improving our operations and presenting the information to the board members.

- F. Keri Savage addressed the board with regard to the communications and human resources. Keri stated that we have 37 full-time fixed route operators and we are looking for more full-time candidates. In the last two weeks, they conducted four interviews that are good potential applicants. Keri stated that the shared ride department is fully staffed at this time. With regard to the maintenance department, they continue to look for mechanics and there have been posting for service employees in the department. With regard to public outreach, we participated in the Downtown Santa Parade at the end of November. The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Stuff the Bus event was held at the transit center. Keri stated that we surpassed last year's numbers. The monetary donations totaled \$11,672 and 2190 toys were collected. The held a Citizens Advisory Committee meeting on December 11, 2024 and they had some good discussions. Keri also asked if anyone on the board has suggestions for members, they would be welcome to participate.

Public Comment/Other Business

- A. Mr. Doughton requested a motion to approve the 2025 Board Meeting Schedule. Martha Dougher made the motion. Brian Doughton seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- B. Mr. Doughton requested a motion to approve the Resolution to File Application and to Certify the Local Match. Martha Dougher made the motion for the resolution. Larry Wynne seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- C. Mr. Doughton welcomed comments from the public regarding other business; there were none.

Martha Dougher made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:50 p.m. and Larry Wynne seconded the motion. All were in favor.

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Submitted by:  
Jane Farrell, Executive Assistant