

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF AUTHORITY  
County of Lackawanna Transit System  
February 26, 2025

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The regular meeting of the County of Lackawanna Transit System Authority was held on Wednesday, February 26, 2025 at 4:40 p.m. at the Lackawanna Transit Center.

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| Present were: | Brian Doughton       | Michael Dougherty     |
|               | Robert Durkin        | Atty. Joseph DeNaples |
|               | Atty. Timothy Hinton | Timothy McGrath       |
|               | Zain Rabbani         | Jane Farrell          |
|               | Frank Soto           | Kelly Matone          |
|               | Keri Savage          | Mike Danchak          |
|               | Bill Kuehner         | Greg Czyzyk           |
|               | Paul Marcunis        | Sarah Cruz            |

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. Michael Dougherty, Robert Durkin and Brian Doughton were present. Gregg Nieto and Martha Dougher were excused.

Acceptance of Minutes

Mr. Doughton requested a motion to approve the January 29, 2025 meeting minutes. Michael Dougherty made a motion to accept the minutes. Robert Durkin 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 December 2024. Robert Durkin 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; Sarah Cruz had a question regarding the 2025 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. Sarah asked if it is an internal document or is it something that will be on the website. Timothy McGrath stated that the document would be on our website.

Executive Director's Report/Department Reports

- A. Mike Danchak addressed the board regarding the finance department. Mike stated that the month of December usually carries a lot of expense. During the month, we tend to have more sick time which results in more overtime. There is a large payment that has to be made to the pension plan. Mike noted that we also have a retro payroll payment that has to be made. Mike stated that we track the cost per passenger and in December, we saw an increase across the board. In December there was an increase with that. In the

fixed route department, there was a 5.5% increase and in the shared ride department there was a 6.2% increase. The numbers are within tolerance and there should be no concern. We use grants to offset the numbers with the budget. Mike stated that this is the time of year that he works on the budget and writing grants. He asked the board to keep in mind that we have two grants that are outstanding. They are for inventory and for the building project. Because of change orders on the building project, they may have to go back to the state for an additional \$3/4 million. Mike is working on the 5307 federal grant now for \$3.1 million for various operating costs. These are all ways that the finance department uses the grants to offset costs. Mr. Durkin asked Mike if he has heard from any associations that he is a part of about issues about grants from Washington. Mike stated that there are more concerns across the transit field about operating assistance than there is about capital assistance. Mike feels that we are favorably situated because the funding we receive is formula based. This means that we do not have to go and competitively get the grants. At this point, there is approximately \$12 million allocated to COLTS for capital and operating assistance. We did have some funds left over and now is the time to start utilizing that funding. Mr. Durkin asked where the funds come from for the building project. Mike said that the funds come from the state. Mike noted that some federal money is allocated to the project but not a substantial amount. Mr. Dougherty asked if any of the money that is coming through the state is part of federal money. Mike did not believe that it was but, it is possible that the state had gotten a grant through federal funds. All funding has been locked in so we should not have any issues finishing the project.

- B. Kelly Matone reviewed the ridership report for the shared ride department for December 2024. Kelly stated that the ridership for the month of December exceeded the pre-pandemic numbers by 2%. The On Time Performance for December was at 95%. Kelly updated the board on the Technical Assistance Program. On Friday, February 21, 2025, COLTS, Penn Dot and Michael Baker had a meeting. They reviewed resources that were received for ADA and PWD comparisons, new stop responsibilities, organizational chart, moving to next day service and many other things. They also asked what training we are looking forward to having. Kelly stated that they would like an overview of the new Ecolane Evolution System and best practices. Also, scheduling, service areas and customer service. Anything that will improve efficiency. Kelly also wanted more information on funding. Program types, qualifications, sponsors, requirements and any other information. Kelly stated that they outlined a timeline for implementation and she believes it will be in mid-March and it will continue for a few months after that.
- C. Frank Soto addressed the board regarding safety and security. Frank stated that we are trending lower with accidents from last year. Preventable accidents make up most of the issue that are in the garage. Additional training will be provided and when we move to the new building, we will no longer have these issues. The Fixed Route Backup Safety Protocol/Procedure was created and implemented to eliminate backup accidents. With this, the driver will be required to have a spotter when backing up. Included in the board packet is the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) for approval at the meeting today. Frank stated that there is one new shared ride hire and one fixed route hire in the pipeline.
- D. Zain Rabbani addressed the board regarding the Fixed Route department. Zain reviewed the ridership report for the December 2024. Zain stated that the ridership was at 77% of pre-pandemic numbers. The On Time Performance was at 75%. Many factors influenced the number such as, holiday traffic around the shopping areas. Typically, we are above

80% but, during the holidays we have to send extra coverage to cover trips. Also, snow and inclement weather was an issue in December.

- E. Keri Savage addressed the board with regard to the communications and human resources. Keri stated that, in the fixed route department, they have 38 full-time drivers. A new hire started in the beginning of February. A full-time driver also transferred to the service department. The maintenance department has 9 full-time mechanics, 7 full-time service employees, 1 full-time janitor and 2 part-time service employees. The shared ride department is fully staffed. There are 28 full-time employees and 12 part-time employees. Administration is at 16 full-time and 1 part-time. We posted an opening for a nighttime supervisor and quality assurance specialist. A handful of applications were received for the position. They plan to begin interviewing early next week. There are 4 full-time vacancies in the fixed route department. There is one applicant in the pre-employment screening. In the last month, department heads were provided a fact sheet titled Preventing Discrimination with Business. It addressed reasons for complying and how to be better about following EEO in our daily practices. Keri stated that the ATU contract was signed and it is now at the printer. There was a Citizens Advisory Committee meeting held on February 19<sup>th</sup> and several people attended. There was more public participation than we normally have. Keri felt it was good to have the department heads at the meeting to be ready and willing to address issues that are being brought up. Or, just to have a face-to-face explanation on the way things are handled. Keri noted that COLTS will be participating in the St. Patrick's Day parade. She invited everyone to come and join the group for the day. Keri stated that they have travel training scheduled Friday with Abington Hights School District. It is for special education students. This helps with independence and worries or fears that they may have with riding the bus. The drivers enjoy volunteering for this. If there are any other schools or organizations that may be interested, she would be happy to schedule an appointment. Mr. McGrath noted that, if they get more ridership in the Abington area, maybe we can expand the service. Mr. Durkin asked if there was any movement between drivers from the shared ride department and the fixed route department. Keri stated that there have been shared ride operators that have transferred to fixed route but, it isn't often. Also, to drive fixed route, a CDL is required. There have been times that drivers have transferred to service. Mr. McGrath noted that the fixed route operators are paid more than shared ride so, they typically do not go backward. Keri stated that the shift from fixed route to service is easier because it is the same union. Mr. Durkin noted that there are more part-time drivers in the shared ride department. Maybe there can be incentive for them to move to the fixed route department. Keri stated that, the shared ride department only works Monday to Friday and they prefer the schedule in that department. Kelly noted that, if a driver changes unions, they drop in seniority. Zain stated that the fixed route department works Monday through Saturday from 4:55 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. so it is a huge trade off. Bill believed there was only one transfer from shared ride to fixed route that lasted a very long time.
- F. Timothy McGrath addressed the board. Mr. McGrath stated that the latest date provided for the facility project completion is May 19, 2025 however, this is just a goal for the project as we expect further delays. Different levels of government have inquired to when the ribbon cutting would occur. Until the demolition of the current building is complete, we do not want to schedule any type of public event. He will keep everyone updated. Mr. McGrath stated that they continue to monitor the rail project. While it remains uncertain, we continue to move forward with the plans. We are working on assessment projects for our facility if it should impact us. We have been looking at how

pedestrian and vehicle traffic would be addressed around the railroad tracks. If any decisions are made, they will be presented formally. Mr. McGrath stated that the Governors budget is similar to last year. The intention is to increase the funding for transit across the state. We have received estimated numbers, should the budget pass. It is possible that we could receive \$1.9 million in additional funding for operating expenses. Mr. McGrath noted that last year they indicated that transit had not had an increase in funding in over a decade. We are hoping that this will happen but, there may be issues in this political climate. Mr. McGrath stated that there will be a call to action with other state agencies on Monday. This will be to get some engagement in lobbying, advocacy and letter writing. Mr. McGrath stated that we may be calling on the board for assistance with this in procuring the funds. Mr. McGrath stated that we are possibly donating one of our engines to a local university. We have been in close contact with all of the local universities and one of them came up with the idea of donating equipment that we would dispose of. We have two buses that have exceeded their useful life. Normally we strip down what we can use and then sell the rest for scrap. After researching, we discovered that we can donate items once all of the criteria are met. They invited the universities in that specialize in workforce training to show them what we have to offer. We do have one interested in a motor and we are thrilled to offer this opportunity. Mr. Durkin asked how old a vehicle would be for it to meet its useful life. Mike stated that it is 12 years or 500,000 miles. Mr. Durkin asked if working on a 12-year-old motor would transfer to the technology for today. Mr. McGrath stated that they felt they saw value in it because it is a hybrid and there are electronic components in it as well. Mr. Durkin asked if this would help COLTS down the road. Mike stated that we usually salvage the parts that we need and then just sell the rest for scrap. With this case, it is more a gesture of good will with the university. Keri felt that the technology might shift but, when the students are working on the engine, they are aware that it was donated by COLTS. And possibly when she is there for a job fair or other event, they will come to her and discuss opportunities at COLTS. After events, students have come to the shop to see how things work and meet people to see what it is like to work here. The possibility of working in the new building is another opportunity for them. She points out to them that working at COLTS is not a job, it is a career. There are benefits, union representation and a good work life balance. Greg Czyzyk noted that the general fundamentals for the engine mainly remain the same, it is the components that hook up to the engine that would be different. This will just give the students the experience to work with the motors.

#### Public Comment/Other Business

- A. Mr. Doughton requested a motion for the Resolution Authorizing for the Purposes of Procurement for the Funds from the FTA. Michael Dougherty made the motion. Robert Durkin seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- B. Mr. Doughton requested a motion for the Resolution to Authorizing the Payment to Replace the Motor in Bus #324. Robert Durkin made the motion for the resolution. Michael Dougherty seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- C. Mr. Doughton requested a motion for the Resolution to Approve Free Rides for the Scranton Saint Patrick's Day Parade. Michael Dougherty made the motion. Robert Durkin seconded the motion. All were in favor.

- D. Mr. Doughton requested a motion for the Resolution to Approve the 2025 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. Robert Durkin made the motion and Michael Dougherty seconded the motion. All were in favor
- E. Mr. Doughton requested a motion for the Resolution for the Approval of the Written CBA Between COLTS and the ATU covering the period from 7/1/2024 to 6/30/2027, and authorizing Timothy B. McGrath, Executive Director, to execute the CBA for COLTS. This CBA was approved by the Board of Directors on 1/29/2025 pending the final review by COLTS Solicitors and it was fully executed by the parties on 2/7/2025. Michael Dougherty made the motion. Robert Durkin seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- F. Mr. Doughton welcomed comments from the public regarding other business; Paul Marcunis addressed the board. Mr. Marcunis stated that on Saturday, a driver on bus #328 was yelling at him while he was getting off the bus at the Giant in Greenridge. He said the driver was rude and using foul language. Mr. McGrath stated that he was sorry for the experience that the incident would be reviewed. Mr. Doughton asked what time this happened. Mr. Marcunis said it was around 1:00. Keri asked for his personal information so they can contact him after this is looked into and she apologized again for the treatment he received.

Sarah Cruz addressed the board. She commended COLTS on having a more enhanced presence on the social media outlets. She has notice more posting on snow delays and advertising open positions at COLTS. She also noticed that the background colors have changed to give more attention to them as you scroll through. She felt that the photos and graphics are more eye catching and professional.

Michael Dougherty made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:20 p.m. and Robert Durkin seconded the motion. All were in favor.

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Submitted by:  
Jane Farrell, Executive Assistant