

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF AUTHORITY
County of Lackawanna Transit System
November 19, 2025

The regular meeting of the County of Lackawanna Transit System Authority was held on Wednesday, November 19, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. at the Lackawanna Transit Center.

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| Present were: | Brian Doughton | Martha Dougher |
| | Robert Durkin | Gregg Nieto |
| | Atty. Timothy Hinton | Atty. Joseph DeNaples |
| | Timothy McGrath | Jane Farrell |
| | Michael Danchak | Frank Soto |
| | Keri Savage | Zain Rabbani |
| | Kelly Matone | Nicole Ference |

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. Brian Doughton and Robert Durkin were present. Martha Dougher and Gregg Nieto participated remotely. Michael Dougherty was excused.

Acceptance of Minutes

Mr. Doughton requested a motion to approve the minutes from the board meeting held on October 29, 2025. Robert Durkin made a motion to accept the minutes. Brian Doughton 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 September 2025. Martha Dougher made a motion to accept the financial reports and Gregg Nieto 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. Keri Savage addressed the board regarding communications. Keri stated that she has been focusing on the Stuff the Bus event. She has been dropping of donation boxes, picking up sponsorships and organizing volunteers. They did have a meeting last week to finalize the logistics. We applied to the city for an event permit and we have gotten tentative approval. Keri stated that we have already collected \$6,000 in sponsorships. She asked that everyone keep pushing out the posters as they have a Venmo code on them so, if people can't get here to donate, they can Venmo a donation. We are set to participate in the Santa parade this weekend. She sent out a companywide invite to attend the event. They can meet at the COLTS headquarters and ride the bus down. The bus that will go through the parade will promote our Stuff the Bus campaign. She felt

that will help spread the word about the event. Keri noted that we offered the free rides to veterans on Veteran's Day. Also, the Title IV is set to expire but it has been approved so that has been taken care of. Mr. McGrath asked Keri what time people should meet at the headquarters on Saturday. Keri stated that we have to be in town by 9:00 a.m. so she asked everyone to be there by 8:00 a.m. Where we get staged isn't as difficult as the St. Patrick's Day parade so it is very accessible and easy to get to. The actual meeting place in town is on the corner of Mifflin and Lackawanna. Mr. McGrath noted that we were prominently featured in the commercial for the parade from the footage from last year.

- B. Kelly Matone addressed the board regarding the shared ride department. Kelly stated that the ridership for September was 4% over our pre-pandemic ridership. The average daily ridership was up 11% compared to September 2024. The on-time performance was at 88% and the annual ridership is trending 17% higher than our pre-pandemic annual ridership. With regard to the technical assistance grant, we are working on implementing several changes. Kelly stated that she has been tracking the statistics for the soft roll out for the one-day service and the expanded service. We were told to track the information for two months. She will set up a meeting with Keri to determine when we should advertise the changes. The reports show that our busiest times are 8:00, 10:00, 1:00 and 3:00. She compared August to October and we had an increase from 6% to 34%. Ridership has picked up with the changes. Mr. McGrath noted that the demand has been increasing in the shared ride department. One of our biggest challenges are the dialysis clients and we are exploring many things internally. We will come back to the board at a later date with suggestion on how we would like to approach the issues.
- C. Nicole Ference addressed the board with regard to the human resources department. Nicole stated that over the last two weeks, we have on-boarded two employees. One full time custodian started around two weeks ago and she is doing very well. One part time shared ride operator was hired. We continue to look for fixed route operators. We had one that we thought would be starting but, they had issues with family obligations. We continue to interview for those positions. Nicole stated that they continue to meet with the ATU regarding the maintenance reorganization. We have made progress so she feels it will be complete soon. Nicole stated that she has schedule open enrollment for December 2nd and December 3rd. She and a representative from Cummings Insurance will meet with all full-time employees to make sure they are enrolled properly in the benefit plans. Mr. McGrath noted that the HR department has been working on the changes that have been implemented with regard to overtime pay. Mr. Durkin asked if the issue is having employees at the precipice. Keri stated that it isn't about the number of people, it is about the constant monitoring and calculations. Knowing that there will not be a high number that will meet the threshold. Nicole noted that you have to provide the calculation on the W2 if they meet the threshold or not. Also, none of the payroll companies will offer support for it because everyone's payroll is set up differently. Keri noted that it is more complicated because of different terms of what count and what does not count. Nicole stated that they can't just take the overtime numbers and do a calculation based on that number. What they are paid for in overtime compared to what qualifies as part of the calculation for overtime under the bill are two different things. Keri stated that she did an example on a simple timesheet and there we six different answers. When you go by transit timesheets, that go by runs, it will be much more difficult. Keri felt it will be difficult to explain to employees why certain things count and other things don't.

D. Mike Danchak addressed the board with regard to the finance department. Mike stated that we are in audit season. We have two audits that we are focused on. The financial audit with RKL and our single audit, for grants, with RKL. With that, they produce financial statements and with the financial statements they produce a financial report. That information is sent to the FTA and Penn Dot by the end of the calendar year. So far, things have been going well. He had a meeting today with RKL and everything is going good and there aren't any questions or adjustments. He believes that we will have a clean audit this year. We have things coming up that have to be worked on. Our contract with the CNG provider, Compass Natural Gas, is expiring in June of 2026. Then we will be changing over to Trillium and they will be running our CNG fueling station. We have worked out some particulars with UGI for the gas for the new building and the fueling station. We also have designated Constellation as our supplier for our gas and our electric. PPL and UGI are the companies that have the infrastructure but, Constellation will actually supply the gas and electric. We have a two-year contract with them for the electric. We are waiting to see what the rates look like in the future if there is a change in the rates due to the data centers. If there are changes, we may look into solar energy or other options if the bills run very high. The gas contract with them is for five years. At this time, we are in good shape with the utilities. Mike felt that they may have a budget revision in front of the board in the next month or so. The anticipated costs this fiscal year is approximately \$18.5 million but, the costs may end up being around \$19.5 million. With the new building, we need a lot of people to manage it and to run it. The utilities are high and the insurance is high so something will be presented soon. Mr. Durkin asked if the increased costs will be picked up by Penn Dot or other funding sources. Mike stated that funds will not come from Penn Dot. The funds will come from 5307 funds to be used for operating. Mike felt that there are enough funds available and we will be in good shape. The strategy we are using is sound and this is why we did what we did a few years ago with the funding. We gathered our grant money to keep it for this moment. Mr. Durkin asked if the Pennsylvania budget is not passed, will any adjustments affect us. Mike felt that we will continue to see our %5 increase over the years. But, some of the other increased in funding that they were talking about, he didn't see it happening now. Mr. McGrath stated that Governor Shapiro had asked for an additional 12% for transit, which we have not seen. The 5% was basically a cost-of-living increase but, he wanted to increase it to 12%. Mike stated that a big change happened but, it did not apply to us. The state is now allowing some transit agencies to use capital money to be used for operations. There doesn't seem to be a formal mechanism how to get this approved. Mike stated that they have done it in the past but they don't like it. If anything comes out of this that will affect us, he will advise the board. Mr. Durkin asked, if we tap into the capital funds in the short run, it seems to be ok. But, in the long run, you can jeopardize your capital for capital improvements. Mike stated, in theory, yes that can be the side effect of it. But, we have very few capital needs, now that we have the new building. We replace approximately 4 buses each year and the state can comfortably fund that. That is approximately \$2.5 to \$3 million dollars. Mike stated that we can ask if we can move the capital money on the state side, just to see if it is an option. It isn't something that we defiantly would do. The state may say we can do it but, it may be at the peril of capital replenishment. If that is the case, we would probably back off. It can be a consideration.

- E. Frank Soto addressed the board regarding safety and security. Frank stated that we had a relatively busy October. They recently completed the Collective Bargaining Agreement portion of the Accident Review Committee. This is where they determine the preventability of the accident. He will have all of that data to show at the next board meeting. They are also working on some trainings for 2026. Also, we are still trending on the lower end as far as accidents. None of them have been DOT reportable. There have been very minor fender benders and we intend to mitigate them by ongoing training. Atty. Hinton asked how the drivers are doing in the new garage. Frank stated that, with the new garage and having bus assignments, there have been no issues. Frank also felt that it is much lighter in the garage so that helps.
- F. Zain Rabbani reviewed the ridership report for the fixed route departments for September 2025. Zain stated that they were at 82% of the pre-pandemic ridership. He feels that there is a spike due to schools returning. Zain stated that they are pending some responses from the route extensions that were discussed at the last meeting. We will potentially be servicing the Geisinger Behavioral Health Center. We are awaiting their response and then we can have a meeting with them. We are trying to find out what the demand would be for their patients and employees. Then we can plan the route accordingly. We are also awaiting results from Keystone College. We gave them information we had and they planned to do a survey with the students. They will get back to us when the information is received. We have also reached out to the new cancer center that is on Commerce Boulevard in Dickson City. We are also waiting for responses from them. We are also looking at services to Montage. The requests were sent approximately two weeks ago. When all of the information is received, we will plan accordingly. Recently AZEK Building Products reached out to us because they had a spike in employees and they want to have a meeting about our services. We will try to expedite this as fast as we can but, we also have to deal with day-to-day operations. Zain noted that there was only so much pushing we can do to get the information from them. Mr. McGrath noted that Commissioner Chermack reached out to us regarding Keystone College. Commissioner Gaughan reached out to us on behalf of the Mayor of Moosic to see about servicing Montage. As is our practice, we reach out to them to get preliminary information. As we all know, we can't just make changes unless we look at the potential ridership and how we can adjust existing routes. With regard to Montage and Keystone, we asked for potential employee and clientele counts. With Keystone, the needs of the students can change every semester. Mr. Durkin thought that we have a route to Montage at this time. Zain stated that we only go as far as EDM and that is only twice a day. Atty. Hinton asked if we go to the Shops at Montage. Zain stated that our evening routes service the shops but we no longer run there during the day. The ridership pre-covid was low and we could not justify servicing the area.
- G. Timothy McGrath addressed the board. Mr. McGrath stated that every day we seem to run into issues with the new building but, nothing of major consequence. We are just working through some glitches. We are nearing the second phase of the project. The hope is to have the other area paved before Thanksgiving. With that, then we will open up the south side after the holiday weekend. Then two additional weeks will be needed to complete the retention pond. Hopefully all heavy equipment will be off the property by Christmas. Two major projects still have to be done. They are the installation of the lights and the fencing. They will be back in the spring for some planting and exterior work. Mr. McGrath stated that he was asked to participate in a review of RFP's for a bus Rabbit transit feasibility study. Because of Amtrack, the study will include Lackawanna County, Luzerne County and Monroe County. Mr. McGrath agreed to be a part of it.

They will be reviewing 12 RFP's which will take up a lot of time. He felt it was exciting because it will include a lot of information that we will be seeking anyway for our Transit Development Plan. Mr. McGrath finalized by wishing everyone a healthy and happy Thanksgiving.

Public Comment/Other Business

- A. Mr. Doughton requested a motion for the resolution to approve the purchase of four (4) CNG buses from Gillig, LLC. Martha Dougher made the motion and Gregg Nieto seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- B. Mr. Doughton welcomed comments from the public regarding other business; there were none.

Robert Durkin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 p.m. and Brian Doughton seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Submitted by:
Jane Farrell, Executive Assistant