

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF AUTHORITY
County of Lackawanna Transit System
April 29, 2026

The regular meeting of the County of Lackawanna Transit System Authority was held on Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at 4:45 p.m. at 800 North South Road, Scranton, PA.

Present were:	Larry Wynne	Robert Durkin
	Brian Doughton	Martha Dougher
	J. Timothy Hinton	Joseph DeNaples
	Michael Danchak	Timothy McGrath
	Jane Farrell	Zain Rabbani
	Nicole Ference	Keri Savage
	Frank Galli	Sarah Cruz

Larry Wynne opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Wynne noted that an Executive Session was held prior to the meeting to discuss personnel matters and for the presentation of the audit information.

Mr. Wynne requested a Roll Call of the Board Members. Robert Durkin, Larry Wynne, Martha Dougher and Brian Doughton were present; Michael Dougherty was excused.

Acceptance of Minutes

Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the January 2026 and the February 2026 meeting minutes. Brian Doughton made a motion to accept the minutes for both meetings and Robert Durkin seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Acceptance of Financial Documents

Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the Income Statements for January 2026 and February 2026. Martha Dougher made a motion to accept the financial documents and Brian Doughton 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 and Department Reports

- A. Zain Rabbani reviewed the ridership reports for the Fixed Route and Shared Ride departments for January 2026 and February 2026. Zain began with the Shared Ride department. Zain stated that the average daily riders for January was 6% less than January 2025 and there was a 20% decrease from the pre-pandemic numbers. The annual ridership is trending higher than the pre-pandemic annual ridership. The On Time Performance for January was at 89.53%. The February average daily ridership had a 20% increase from February 2025 and a 15% increase from the pre-pandemic numbers. The annual ridership is trending 47% higher than the pre-pandemic numbers. The On Time Performance was at 87.59%. Zain stated that Bill Kuehner worked with

the safety, maintenance and IT department to work on a smooth transition with the post/pre-trip changes. Bill also worked on TAPCO and Drug and Alcohol Awareness training. This is mandatory safety training that every safety sensitive shared ride employee must attend. This impacts public safety and controlling the movement of vehicles. The shared ride department is ready to finalize the first quarter CSR performance evaluations. With regard to the Fixed Route Department, Zain stated that the January 2026 ridership is currently 71% of the pre-pandemic level. Zain noted that the ridership has increased three consecutive years after COVID. In 2023/2024 the ridership increased by 35%, 2024/2025 the increase was 20% and 2025/2026 the projection is 14%. But now the numbers are starting to plateau and that poses more challenges for us. Now we are looking at better routing and more efficient services. The ridership for February 2026 was at 75% of the pre-pandemic levels. This reflects a meaningful recovery but, it also highlights that we have work to do. There are a few routes that are severely underperforming. Zain stated that they are talking to local agencies and entities to see how we can merge the routes to be more efficient. As an example, AZEK and Shoppes at Montage are the two main routes that we are looking into. We are also looking at routes that are performing very well, such as the Taylor Express. Are we giving this route enough service and possible adding additional runs to the route. In order to make any additions to a route, something has to be taken from another route. Zain will update the board on this at the next meeting. Brian Doughton asked what the highest performing route is. Zain stated that the Taylor/Walmart Express is always above 17% and our average is 8.7%. It is only a half hour trip but it is very efficient. The last trip is at 2:45 p.m. but we may be able to add more trips in the afternoon. Mr. McGrath stated that the board should have received an email outlining some of the projects that are coming down the pike. One thing that we have been asking for is a Transit Development Plan and we recently had an introductory meeting with Penn Dot for this. They have awarded a consultant to guide us through the process. The route changes are exactly what they are coming to assist us with.

- B. Mike Danchak addressed the board with regard to the finance department. Mike reviewed some of the things that were on the agenda. He felt that the audit went well with RKL. The Technical Study Grant is on the agenda with Lackawanna County Regional Planning Commission. For the MPO, we provide research and expertise to set up grants and grand planning. In turn, we get grant funding for our time. We have to provide a Capital Grant Budget along with our Operating Budget. Mike stated that there are 5 shared ride vans that we are purchasing and they are expected to arrive in January 2027. In January 2028 we will have 20 shared ride vans. They will be replacing vans that are past their useful life. We are also getting 4 CNG buses late this year or early next year and the following year we will get 4 more. The plan is to migrate from the diesel fleet to CNG. We have gotten approved for the cashless fare project. With this, all of the fare boxes will be replaced to accept cashless payments. Penn Dot was very generous by giving us \$200,000 last year and for the final phase, we received \$830,000. Penn Dot is also providing a Technical Assistance Grant for the Transit Development Plan. This will be to look at the fixed route operations. Mike stated that bus shelters are on the docket for 2027/2028. He noted that the audit shows that the pension is doing well but, we can always do better. We plan to inject \$250,000 into the Morgan Stanley plan in June or July. The funds will be put in over a 12 month period. The timing is based on funding and how the budget is.
- C. Nicole Ference addressed the board regarding human resources department. Nicole stated they recently posted two positions last week for service and a custodian. They

interviewed two applicants for the service position and there are five interviews scheduled for custodians. There is one part-time applicant but they are working on her availability. With regard to the fixed route department, we have two full time drivers starting on Monday. We still have full time vacancies but the two new hires will be a help to us. With regard to the shared ride department, we have one full time in preemployment and one part time in preemployment. There is another applicant that she is waiting to hear from. That will bring the shared ride department to full staff per the CBA.

- D. Keri addressed the board regarding communications and compliance. Keri stated that they conducted travel training with Scranton High School on April 15, 2026. Keri stated that Zain does a great job along with a fixed route operator. The students received a travel guide and the students were taken to the transit center to show them how to navigate the transit system. They have a second Scranton event coming up on May 15, 2026. On April 2, 2026, we participated in Earth Day in association with Simplex and other companies on North South Road for a clean up event. On April 26, 2026 COLTS participated in the Community Health and Wellness Fair at the Marketplace at Steamtown. There were over 40 vendors that participated in the event. They offered health screenings as well as health and wellness activities for all ages. The event was very well attended. Members of administration attended the Annual PPTA Meeting in Lancaster. Keri felt that a lot of the segments and information that was given was very helpful. It was a good opportunity to network and see what other agencies are doing. Members of administration also attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the Monroe County Transit bus depot project. COLTS recognized Administrative Professionals Day for the employees that do a great job every day for us. With regard to compliance, we updated the Shared Ride SEATS Rider Guide. The draft has been submitted to our consultant. Her initial thought was to make one guide for the entire shared ride department. As an example, today we had a SEATS appeal that the individual was denied for the SEATS program but the decision was overturned and approved. The individual will be turning 65 shortly so another guide will be sent for that program. Keri feels it will be easier if there is just one guide. With regard to Business and Marketing, Keri provided the board members with information on the RailRiders signage that will be behind second base on the concourse. The contract with the SWB RailRiders was finalized and we are going to schedule a Table Night at the stadium. We have also been working with them on shuttling and providing additional support, as was seen last night. Keri hopes that what they saw will get the public to get on the Crowd Mover. She feels doing this will prepare us for the upcoming events. Keri stated that, when they were doing travel training, they also participated in Read Across America. Initially she was asked to just come and read but then she thought it would be a great idea to have the kids come on the bus and have the bus driver read to them. She attempted to find a book that had information on public transportation but, she thought it would be a great idea to provide a COLTS children's book. Keri went ahead and created a book for the driver to read. She offered a copy of the book to the board members to review. Keri stated that they have also finalized what our other advertising options would be. Keri noted that they have also begun the negotiations with the SEIU. Mr. McGrath wanted to give more information on what happened last night with the RailRiders. As we are working on our relationship with the RailRiders, we had some events in place that we were preparing for. They asked, if there was an unexpected big crowd, how things would look. To begin with, they focused on the fixed events that we knew we would be servicing. Then we received a phone call on Saturday stating that they were expecting a large crowd and they needed assistance. We weren't completely

prepared but, we put out the notices across the county, because they are required. In the past, they hadn't gotten any response but, with this there was a response from a company in California that wanted to provide the service for the RailRiders. We went back to the FTA to find out what additional information that we needed from the company. Keri sent the company a request for information to verify that they would provide comparable service but, they did not respond. That cleared the path for us to go ahead with the service. We had a meeting on Monday and they said that they had to work out some logistics but, they were looking to have three shared ride vehicles staged at Cinemark. Once they shut down parking at the stadium, they would redirect everyone to the Cinemark. Yesterday, they called and asked for a fourth vehicle, just to be safe. But we didn't have the workforce to accommodate the request. Then we received a call stating that they were getting crushed in the parking lot and people were starting to walk down to the stadium. With that, we pivoted and arranged for buses from the fixed route department to go and assist. Zain went to coordinate the transportation and he was there late into the night. The RailRider organization called to thank us for the service we provided and they felt it was an extremely exciting atmosphere. This sets the stage for bigger events that are coming. The whole team came together to make this work and Tim was appreciative for the work and dedication.

- E. Timothy McGrath stated that we are at Phase III of the construction project with the CNG fueling station. We are looking at approximately 2 to 3 weeks when they can begin testing. A problem has arisen with UGI that they may not be able to provide the meter for the project. If that can't happen in a timely manner, that will bring the project to a halt. We have a conference call scheduled for Friday with several partners in the project. Mike Danchak noted that, in the event that we run into an issue, we have extended our contract with Compass until July 31, 2026 to give us a buffer. They are also willing to go into August if necessary. Mr. McGrath noted that the Penn Dot end date for the project isn't until September. In June or July, the site contractor will be back to address the landscaping. We were also notified that Penn Dot has started vetting potential vendors to install a heat system in our roof. This is in an effort to stop the ice accumulation on the roof and coming off in big pieces on the sidewalk. Mr. McGrath noted that there is a very rigorous schedule coming for the next couple of months. There are studies that are being done that will require hour of participation. They include the LCTA/COLTS Bus Rapid Transit Study. This is a study to work on the feasibility for connectivity between the two counties. The Transit Development Plan which will be labor intensive for us and they will be looking for board participation. NEPA Moves will be kicking off a Micro-Transit Feasibility Study. They secured funding for the study and asked us to work with them on it. The annual audit will be coming up at the end of August and that is time consuming. Mr. McGrath stated that he has gotten pressure regarding the Grand Opening when he was at the PPTA event. We are targeting sometime in September for the event. He asked if any of the board members have black-out time during that period to let him know. Mr. McGrath noted that we are still working with the City of Scranton on the streetscape project. He also stated that, since he has been here, we have never received so many requests for additional support service. We have to watch that we do not overextend our operations and our employees. We also have to make sure we are in compliance with everything. Robert Durkin asked Mr. McGrath to keep the board members apprised of the status of all of the studies and events. Mr. McGrath stated that we will. He also noted that there are many stakeholders throughout the community that are a part of the studies. We are

required to have different people from the community participating and review in the surveys.

Public Comment/Other Business

- A. Representatives from RKL presented and reviewed the June 30, 2025 Audit to the board in the executive session. This was presented as an unqualified opinion. Mr. Wynne requested a motion for the approval of the audit. Brian Doughton made the motion and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- B. Mr. Wynne requested a motion for the Resolution to Approve the Amendment to the Money Purchase Plan for SEIU Employees to provide that the Pension Board Meetings are semi-annual rather than quarterly. Martha Dougher made the motion and Robert Durkin seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- C. Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the 2025-2026 Technical Study Grant Contract with the Lackawanna County Regional Planning Commission. Robert Durkin made the motion and Brian Doughton seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- D. Mr. Wynne requested a motion to approve the 2026-2027 Budget. Brian Doughton made the motion and Martha Dougher seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- E. Mr. Wynne welcomed comments from the public regarding other business; Frank Galli, a shared ride driver, addressed the board. Frank stated that he felt that the shared ride drivers are under a lot of pressure because the department is short on drivers. He stated that the morale in the department is low. He noted that he is a part-time employee and he takes the job seriously. He has a commitment to the clients that use the service. Frank is aware that there is no profit in public transportation but there has to be a way that we can hire more people to get the job done. If we don't, we will loose good employees. Frank stated that he picked up a client for the first time in Dalton. She just learned about the service and she was amazed to have it available. On the down side, because it is shared ride, they may have to be on the van for an hour. He felt that, because the ridership continues to increase, we should be hiring more drivers. Brian Doughton agreed that the situation has to be taken care of and he explained that they are in negotiations now to come up with a solution. Frank suggested getting a committee together with management, people that use the service and some drivers to figure out the best way for us to operate. He had a client waiting so long that she ended up cancelling her trip and calling an uber for a ride. Mr. McGrath stated that they appreciate his dedication to the job. He also agrees that the drivers are overworked but, this isn't just a COLTS issue. The issue is the formula funding for the program. With the inception of the shared ride program, it was structured very different. In the past you were restricted with the trips you could take such as, going to the nearest grocery store or doctor. Then changes were made so they can go where the client wants but the funding hasn't change. Mr. McGrath stated that he would welcome a sit down with anyone that would want to learn more about the situation. He stated that the most of the decisions for the department are not made by COLTS but we are following the formula like all the other agencies. He reiterated that we hear the complaints and are working with the union to come up with a solution. Mike Danchak agreed that something has to be done but they have to determine if it is better to hire more full-time or part-time drivers based on hours worked. Mr. McGrath also noted that we only have 35 vans in the fleet and Penn Dot would have to sign off on more vehicles.

- F. Sara Cruz addressed the board. She stated that she was happy to see the new building. She also stated that Keri did a great job at the health fair on Saturday.
- G. Martha Dougher asked about the brochure for the shared ride program. Mr. McGrath stated that Keri is taking care of it and we are waiting for it to be approved. He will get an update to her as soon as possible.

Brian Doughton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:35 p.m. Robert Durkin seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Submitted by:
Jane Farrell, Accounting Assistant