

MINUTES OF THE BAT ADVISORY BOARD
AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE AND
COMPENSATION COMMITTEE

October 5, 2023 10:00 AM

In Attendance:

Michael Dutton, Town of Bridgewater

Dottie Fulginiti, Town of Easton

Michael Lambert, Administrator

Linda Sacchetti, CFO

Glenn Geiler, Grants Manager

Kathy Riddell, BAT

The virtual meeting was called to order by Mr. Dutton, for the purpose of discussing business brought before the Audit and Finance Committee in accordance with the agenda presented and the notice sent out on October 2, 2023. The meeting was held virtually and streamed live on BAT's YouTube channel to meet the public meeting engagement requirements.

Mr. Dutton welcomed the group and called the meeting to order. He asked if there were any public comments. Mr. Lambert stated there were no public comment at this time.

The minutes from the meeting of May 25, 2023 were reviewed. Ms. Fulginiti made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by Mr. Dutton. All were in favor.

Jennifer Cook provided the Committee with a presentation of the results of BAT's FY23 Financial Statements and Single Audit. She provided the highlights of the documents. She indicated that there were no significant issues, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies identified. She thanked the team for their collaboration and dedication to the organization. Mr. Dutton asked if anyone had any questions. Ms. Fulginiti noted that she has been with the Committee for several years but she realizes the amount of work to make these things happen and she thanked Mr. Lambert and his team for their extraordinary performance and dedication. Mr. Dutton thanked Ms. Cook for her very informative and straight forward report.

Ms. Sacchetti provided the group with the FY23 Local Assessments. She stated that the document hadn't changed since the estimate that was provided at the May meeting. The Town of Rockland had a modest increase due to the addition of flex ride service to the community. Ms. Fulginiti made a motion to accept the assessments as presented and the motion was seconded by Mr. Dutton.

Ms. Sacchetti then gave the Committee an FY24 budget update. She said the document reflects July and August actual numbers and highlighted the larger variances. She referred to the Budget summary for details and noted that there was plenty of available federal funds to ensure a balanced budget at the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Lambert provided the Administrators Report. He stated that there have been lots of changes since the last meeting. The state finalized its budget which level funded the RTAs. However there was some new funding based on the “fair share” tax. Funds are being dedicated to education and transportation at higher levels. Fifty-six million dollars (\$56,000,000) is being allocated to the RTAs of which \$3,400,000 will be provided to BAT. BAT plans to utilize the funds to increase weekend service including Sunday morning service and increasing Saturday service from one hour headways to ½ hour headways. Service will start as a pilot for one year and then it will be assessed. The hope is that the funding will be provided for 3 to 5 years but that is not certain at this point. Additionally, \$15,000,000 is being provided to the RTAs to implement a “free fare” period. Last year BAT had a six-week free fare period that was very well received. This year BAT anticipates providing free fare for a 6-month period from November to April. Assuming the Advisory Board will approve and funds are provided, BAT will begin the planning process to keep the riders apprised of the change. BAT will discontinue selling 31 day passes so no riders have any overlap. This program eliminates barriers to riders and drivers which include a financial benefit/savings for riders, increases in on-time performance and elimination of some stress on operators. There will also be funds set aside for new program innovations. BAT will apply for full funding of the Rockland flex ride service, which hit an all-time high in ridership yesterday. BAT does not want to detract from any of its core services but would like to provide relief for 2nd and 3rd shift workers that have difficulty with later night transportation issues. All the expanded service will be contingent on Advisory Board approval and a fully staffed workforce.

A State audit is ongoing for all 15 RTAs. About one half of the audits are complete. The audit is focusing on paratransit on-time performance, cyber security training and data reporting. DIAL-A-BAT has made some improvements by providing cyber training and improving data reporting. Mr. Lambert asked if there were any questions. Mr. Dutton asked if the innovations would come from the top-down or would they rely on local level ideas. Mr. Lambert thinks they will want to do things with local involvement so the money can get out the door as quickly as possible but that is still to be determined. He noted that the innovation funding is not limited to RTAs but includes municipalities and non-profits. Ms. Fulginiti stated she was disappointed in level funding of the RTAs as all costs across the board have increased and as that continues the funds will barely cover costs. She hopes next year that the legislature will take inflation into consideration.

Mr. Lambert said he was trying to help eliminate competition among the RTAs and put together proposals that could collectively be taken to MassDOT as one. MARTA will be meeting to discuss options and plan together for a better end result in the near future.

There was no old or new business to bring before the Committee.

Ms. Fulginiti thanked the group for a lot of good information and made a motion for the meeting to adjourn. Mr. Dutton seconded the motion

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Riddell

Kathy Riddell, BAT

List of handouts for 10/5/23 meeting:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes – 5/25/23
3. FY23 Local Assessments
4. FY24 Budget
5. FY24 Budget Summary