

Board of Directors – Remote Meeting

Minutes of the Greater Portland Transit District’s Board of Directors Meeting on

June 1, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84293032580?pwd=YUc3S2pjRXlvU3VEbnZlWVJjaFFkQT09>

Passcode: 643498 | Webinar ID: 842 9303 2580

Phone: (646) 558-8656 | Telephone participants: *9 to raise hand, *6 to unmute

<p>Board Members Present: Mike Foley, Vice President Paul Bradbury, Treasurer Nat Tupper, Secretary John Thompson Bill Rixon Jeff Levine Ryan Leighton Ashley Rand Ed Suslovic Pious Ali (4:48 p.m.)</p> <p>Board Members Absent: Hope Cahan Merrill Barter Andrew Zarro</p>	<p>Staff and Others Present: Greg Jordan, Executive Director Glenn Fenton, Chief Transportation Officer Shelly Brooks, Finance Director Danielle Nemeth, Human Resources Director Mike Tremblay, Lauren Shaw, Executive Assistant Aga Dixon, Drummond Woodsum</p> <p>Public: None</p>
---	---

1. **With a quorum in place, the meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Mike Foley, Board Vice President.**

2. **Public Comment:** No members of the public were present.

3. **Meeting Minutes from April 28, 2022**
 John Thompson moved, seconded by Nat Tupper, to approve the minutes of the April 28, 2022 Board of Directors meeting as presented. With no objections voiced by any Board member, **the motion passed unanimously by all those present.**

4. **Executive Director’s Report**
 - April’s ridership figures remain approximately 100k boardings per month. Though still well below 2019, ridership is going in the right direction, if slower than anticipated.
 - Electric bus launch. One bus doing very well. The other is doing well battery-wise, but an alignment issue has been discovered and is being addressed.
 - Introduced new employees: Patrick Bakajika, Customer Service Manager; Ryan Ellis, Procurement Manager; and, Debbie Fitzpatrick, Accounting Manager.

5. Net Energy Billing

Shelly Brooks reviewed the background of the CES Revenue Sharing Agreement (presentation was included in meeting packet). CED identified a project for Metro with an estimated savings of \$14k and energy credits of \$20k. Unfortunately, the project has been delayed for permitting issues, though they think it will still be a good project when it is available. Discussed Pros and Risks. Bringing to the board to ask for approval to execute the contracts when they become available. At its April meeting, the Finance Committee reviewed, approved, and moved to bring this item to the Board for approval. A signed contract is in place CES to identify and propose a project for Metro. The number of projects is declining and if Metro is not able to act quickly, we may lose the option.

Following a brief discussion:

Paul Bradbury moved, seconded by Ed Suslovic, to approve entering into a Net Energy Billing revenue sharing contract with Competitive Energy Services, LLC (CES), securing one or more long-term contracts with renewable energy developers to support the development of renewable energy systems in Maine and to secure low-cost renewable electricity. A roll call vote was taken by Lauren Shaw, Executive Assistant. With approval by Ashley Rand, Nat Tupper, John Thompson, Pious Ali, Bill Rixon, Jeff Levine, Ryan Leighton, Ed Suslovic, Paul Bradbury, and Mike Foley, **the motion passed unanimously by all those present.**

6. Non-Union Salary Plan and Policies

The Finance Committee reviewed the Financial Reserve Policy at its March 2, 2022 meeting and approved the revised version at its April 27, 2022 meeting. The full policy was included in the meeting packets.

This plan was modeled off of the City of Portland's plan – structured using the Decision Band Method. The proposed step increase is 3% per year, which is in-line with union step increases already in place. COLA increases and bi-annual market studies of all positions in the structure should mitigate redlining. Also included an open range in the upper end of the grades. The annual COLA increase will be handled at the Board's discretion during the budgeting process, determining what capacity Metro has to provide a COLA that year. The plan is not exceeding approved FTEs; it is providing promotional pathways for existing positions. This year, salary savings from the late hire of a procurement manager, will cover the cost. Step increases are annualized across the board and not linked to performance, while the promotional levels are based on performance. COLA is not based on performance either. In the past, the COLA negotiated by the union was typically approved by the Board for non-union staff as well.

(Pious Ali joined the meeting at 4:48 p.m.)

Nat Tupper moved, seconded by Ed Suslovic, to approve the Non-Union Salary Plan and Policies as presented. A roll call vote was taken by Lauren Shaw, Executive Assistant. With approval by Ashley Rand, Nat Tupper, John Thompson, Pious Ali, Bill Rixon, Jeff Levine, Ryan Leighton, Ed Suslovic, Paul Bradbury, and Mike Foley, **the motion passed unanimously by all those present.**

7. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

In March, the PACTS Policy Board voted to approve funding for all of Metro's projects, as well as others, including money to Casco Bay Lines (CBL) and NNEPRA. Since then, the region's six "Designated Recipients" were asked to sign an important document referred to as the "Split Letter." Five of the region's transit agencies, along with the Maine Department of Transportation (MeDOT), are Designated Recipients. At this time, four of the six Designated Recipients have refrained from signing the letter.

A May 13, 2022 letter (included as part of **Attachment B**) signed by the same four agencies, communicated four major reasons why they have withheld their signatures from the split letter. Three reasons focused on requested changes to the split letter itself, while the fourth called for a process to make fundamental changes to PACTS' "Transportation Funding Framework" (TFF). The TFF is the framework by which proposed projects, other than existing operations/maintenance needs, are evaluated for potential federal funding support.

In response to request this request, PACTS staff recommended formation of a task force to review concerns and considering potential changes to the TFF. The ARPA funding process was the first funding decision to make use of the TFF and it's appropriate to evaluate elements of the process that may be modified or improved in light of actual experience. The new TFF Task Force will take many months to conduct its work, so the timeline for release of the ARPA funding and subsequent implementation of ARPA funded service improvements and projects is unknown and uncertain.

8. Resolution 2022-01: Policy on Regional Bus Service Consolidations

Staff recommends the Board adopt Resolution 2022-01 which affirms that METRO is not pursuing, any form of operational or administrative consolidation with the City of South Portland.

John Thompson moved, second by Pious Ali, to approve the resolution as presented. Significant discussion followed by all present. Topics discussed:

- South Portland's continued belief/misconception that Metro still has a goal of consolidating the two agencies and whether Metro's Board of Directors should approve a resolution for the Executive Director to draft a letter, to be signed by all Board members and the Director, for presentation to South Portland clearly stating that Metro is looking towards regional transit agencies working together and has no sights on consolidation.
- Issuing a statement from the Board that agencies refusing to sign the split letter is making it harder for our population to get to work and other places. Remind the region why signing this letter and moving these projects forward is important – our riders.

Following further discussion about drafting a letter, whether it requires a Board resolution, and whether this letter, or a statement, regarding the split letter should happen first.

Ed Suslovic moved, seconded by Pious Alit, to table this item and refer it to the Executive Committee to review and return to the June 23rd Board of Directors meeting with a more refined resolution. A roll call vote was taken by Lauren Shaw, Executive Assistant. With approval by Ashley Rand, Nat Tupper, John Thompson, Pious Ali, Bill Rixon, Jeff Levine, Ryan Leighton, Ed Suslovic, Paul Bradbury, and Mike Foley, **the motion passed unanimously by all those present.**

Board members should send feedback to Greg Jordan who will pass it on to the Executive Committee with the expectation that it be brought back to the next Board meeting and, possibly, a resolution produced.

9. Future Agenda Items: Add Collective Bargaining Agreement (June/August); Gorham Connector

- Comprehensive Review of Board Policies (2022)
- Cost-Revenue Allocation Policies-Procedures (2022)
- Metro Strategic Planning Effort (2022-2023)

10. Upcoming meetings

- Executive Committee – June 8, 2022 at 3:30 p.m.
- Ridership Committee – Ridership June 16, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.
- Board of Directors - June 23, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.
- Finance Committee – August 3, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

11. Adjournment

John Thompson moved, seconded by Nat Tupper, to adjourn. With no objection by any member present, **Mike Foley, Acting Chair & Vice President, closed the meeting at 5:03 p.m.**