



## MEETING MINUTES

April 09, 2024, 10:00 AM

- A. Call to order:** Mayor Thomas P. Koch (Quincy) called the meeting to order with at 10:02 AM. The Chair led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance, and a Moment of Silence for those in uniform keeping the peace around the globe.
- B. March 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes:** The draft meeting minutes having previously been distributed, Aaron Clausen (Lynn) moved to approve the minutes as presented. Hon. Shaunna O’Connell (Taunton) seconded the motion. The motion was approved without objection via an electronic vote.
- C. 1-year Update from MBTA General Manager Phillip Eng:** Chair Kock introduced the General Manager (GM), and thanked him for his outreach and for listening to the MBTA Advisory Board, its members, and municipal concerns. He praised the working relationship between the two organizations, and the GM’s communication style. The Chair noted that he believes that Mr. Eng is the right person at the right time to lead the T.

GM Eng began his remarks by noting that today is day 365 of his tenure, and thanked the MBTA Advisory Board., GM Eng noted there has been tremendous amounts of change in the last year, but that more is needed. He noted that the culture shift, workforce changes, and management team changes were important. HE suggested that the use of public dollars required wise and prudent investments, and his desire to continue to do so. Safety is paramount, of course.

Workforce: the GM noted that in the past year a record number of personnel were hired, especially field personnel and operators. The need for in-house management capabilities were obvious, especially for 3<sup>rd</sup> part private contractors. The number of diversions has been record setting. 30 diversions have taken place, and each one has ended on time and with their goals achieved. On track improvement programs, competition has increased and

pricing is good, given that the industry knows that these projects will be completed on time and on budget. Safety, State of good repair, track improvements, and power fixes have been the priority. Blue Line diversion work is underway to complete work prior to the Sumner Tunnel work planned by the highway department this summer. Restriction-free trackage is the goal, and the internal management resources needed from the workforce are critical to complete this. The GM is excited about new hires, given that they can be trained in certain ways, to become the leaders of the MBTA in the future.

Safety Department: The department is growing under the leadership of Tim Lesniak, and it is beginning to address corrective action plans in an open and transparent way. The relationship with the Department of Public Utilities is better, and based on open dialog.

Quality Control: This group continues to work on the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) corrective actions plans, and will continue to do so. There is a ton of back-office work being done in facilities, yards, depots, and other non-public facing areas, including worker environment areas like breakrooms, garages, etc. MBYA workers deserve safe, efficient work areas.

Heavy Rail cars: There is a large focus on getting the new cars onto the property and in service from CRRC. The team is working hard to keep quality standards high and attained. CRRC and its contractors are dedicated to completing the contract and getting the work done in a consistent manner. With every new car commissioned, an older one is retired. This helps the maintenance staff focus on new vehicles instead of spending long, long hours keeping 70+ year old cars running. The GM wants to review vehicle procurement, including bus procurements. The FTA is concerned that there are insufficient vendors to build electric transit buses, and the need for customization on federally funded bus procurements. The same is true for subway cars. There needs to be a federal standard that allows for a certain amount of customization, but at a lower cost and with better quality.

Bus Service Levels: The GM is excited about hiring to bring service levels back to pre-COVID levels. There is a need for better enforcement of bus lanes and bus stops to improve service levels, and service quality. This is helpful for safety, employees, service, frequency, and many other areas. Bus service is critical to the region.

Commuter Rail: The GM is proud of the service that is currently running. On time performance is robust and improving all the time on average. Ridership is returning to pre-pandemic levels. This suggests that frequency, reliability, safety, predictability, and punctuality delivered consistently will bring back ridership. Keolis is working on the labor concerns that have been publicly expressed.

Accessibility: The need to bring stations into ADA compliance systemwide is just as important as anything else. It is a commitment that remains solid. It is modernization. Symphony Station on the Green Line rebuild will be out for procurement soon. It will make this station accessible and better for all customers.

Low Income Fares: The GM is excited to roll out this important program to allow more people to use the system. The roll out to every mode will be critical to making it successful. IT will also help increase ridership.

Sustainability: Efforts continue to decarbonize the footprint of the authority. Additionally, improvements in reliability will help bring folks out of private cars and onto public transportation. Travelers have choices, and the Authority is committed to becoming the mode of choice.

The GM thanked the Administration and the MBTA Advisory Board for its open dialogs to address challenges. He noted that as the MBTA makes improvements, it will uncover things that also need fixing, and the T is committed to fixing. He thanked cities and towns for their dedication, commitment, and patience. This concluded the GM's remarks. The Chair facilitated questions and comments from members:

Bruce Leicher (Harvard) noted that parking is getting to be back in short supply at Stations on the Fitchburg Line. The GM responded that this is a good challenge. He committed to looking at last mile/first mile programs, and ways to get people out of cars. He suggested that the T should look at real-time parking management and alert systems. He noted that as frequency increases, grade crossings and other local infrastructure will be put under stress. The T will examine all of this.

Matt Moran (Boston) asked about bus lanes and enforcement. The GM suggested that enforcement and technology are under consideration and that a discussion is needed at a higher level. He also noted that education is very important, especially for drivers who idle in bus stops or lanes. Using education to prevent this can help. He thanked municipalities for their partnership.

Mayor Melinda Barrett (Haverhill) asked about the rebuild of a railroad overpass on the Bradford side of the Haverhill line. She asked about the timing of this and the length of the project. She also asked about the need for alternative transportation. The GM thanked the Mayor for bringing this up. He mentioned that there will be alternative shuttle bus service between the stations. He also noted that project delivery needs to improve at the MBTA, and that communication and robust outreach to municipalities effected by construction needs to improve especially in advance of construction. He also noted that once he and his team became aware of this, it was reexamined to do construction better with better techniques. While there is little that can be done for the Haverhill project at this stage, things will improve in the future.

Susan Barrett (Lexington) asked when bus service levels will return to pre-COVID level. She also asked about the proposed MBTA Academy in the House budget. The GM noted that large class of bus operators recently graduated, and will begin work soon. He noted that this will not be enough to bring the levels back to where they need to be. However, this is the goal. It will take time. He

committed to responding to the town at a later date. With respect to the line item, he noted that this is consistent with his approach and partnership with labor partners. Training from day one is critical and this proposal may assist that. More details are needed on the specifics, but additional training is always welcome. Investments in the future and workforce are always welcome.

Dan Salvucci (Whitman) asked about safety concerns at Whitman Station. Sometimes individuals drive or walk around gates. What can be done to forestall this and keep folks off the right of way especially at stations with crossings. The GM noted that he will investigate this. He has experience from the LIRR on this topic, but that additional investigation is needed. Grade Crossing safety is critical.

Duncan Allen (Needham) followed on about bus, and asked for a high-level update on BNRD and where that project is. The GM noted that this is still the vision but that it is under continuous review. He noted that robust communication is needed, especially with cities and towns.

Brian Kane (Executive Director) asked a question from the chat posited by Kevin Kalkut (Norfolk) with respect to the Foxboro Line. The GM asked that he needs to review this matter with his team.

B. Kane asked for a high-level update for the CIP and Operating Budgets. The GM noted that he is reviewing everything with his team. He noted that late projects must be brought back on schedule, and that those in panning are done on time and on budget. He noted that the Authority must be held accountable internally. This means better internal support is needed in terms of project management, contracting, etc. He noted that such investments internally will save money in the long term as projects are completed on time and on budget. Things are improving, but there is much work to do. He noted that while at LIRR they completed a \$2.6b project, and 96% of outages were delivered on time and under budget This is the goal here as well.

The Chair thanked the GM for his time. He noted that members do not need to wait for meetings to ask questions, and to reach out to the Executive Director at any time. The Chair noted that fiscal challenges await, and that we will work together. The GM departed.

**D. Executive Director's Report:** B. Kane gave the report:

- May 14<sup>th</sup> 10AM: MBTA Advisory Board meeting
- June 11<sup>th</sup> 10AM: MBTA Advisory Board meeting
- On 3/14/24 the Commuter Rail Committee- met with MBTA Executive Director of Commuter Rail Mike Muller and Keolis Commuter Services CEO Abdellah Chajai. They provided the committee an update on recent ridership, on time performance, and other related trends. They also previewed Spring 2024 schedule changes.
- Upcoming Committee meetings:
  - 04/26/24- Capital Budget Oversight Committee, 1 PM
  - 05/03/24- Capital Budget Oversight Committee, 1 PM
  - 05/08/24- Ferry Committee, 10 AM
  - 05/09/24- Commuter Rail Committee, 2 PM
  - 05/10/24- Capital Budget Oversight Committee, 1 PM
  - 05/13/24- Budget & Audit Committee, 10AM
  - Municipal Diversions update, 2PM
  - 05/14/24- Full MBTA Advisory Board, 10AM
- Fare Changes Review Committee: The report and recommendation on the Fare Changes Review Committee were approved by the full board at its March 12 meeting. These recommendations and report were provided to the T's Finance and Audit Committee at its March 14 meeting, and to the full MBTA Board of Directors on March 28.
- Capital Budget Oversight Committee: The MBTA has delayed the publication of the FY25-29 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) from March 14 until April 25. The committee will begin its oversight work starting the following day on April 26, and will meet on May 3 and May 10 to consider the CIP and provide direction to staff on the text of a report

and recommendation. The Committee's report will be considered by the full MBTA Advisory Board at its May 14 meeting.

- Operating Budget Oversight Committee: The MBTA will present the Operating Budget to the full MBTA Advisory Board at its May 14 meeting. The Operating Budget Oversight Committee will begin its efforts later that week and continue until early June. Once dates and times are confirmed, they will be reported. The Committee's report will be considered by the full MBTA Advisory Board at its June 11 meeting.
  - The Transportation Funding Task Force met on 2/29, 3/14, and 4/3. It will continue to meet monthly until December. B. Kane is honored to represent the member communities of the MBTA Advisory Board on this important task force.
  - B. Kane finished by noting that he will be away from April 12 to 19 with limited connectivity.
- E. Old/New Business:** There was none.
- F. Adjourn:** With all business transacted, the Chair requested a motion to adjourn. D. Salvucci moved to adjourn; a motion with D. Allen seconded. This motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:59 AM

*Note: These meeting minutes were approved by vote of the MBTA Advisory Board at its 05/14/24 meeting.*

Attendees

Abington	Kevin Donovan	Duxbury	Brian Glennon
Acton		Essex	East Bridgewater
Amesbury		Everett	Easton
Andover		Fitchburg	
Arlington	Lenard Diggins	Foxborough	
Ashburnham		Framingham	
Ashby		Franklin	
Ashland	Rob Scherer	Freetown	
Attleboro	Catherine DeSimone	Georgetown	
Auburn		Gloucester	
Ayer		Grafton	
Bedford		Groton	
Bellingham		Groveland	
Belmont		Halifax	
Berkley		Hamilton	
Beverly	Darlene Wynne	Hanover	Jim Hoyes
Billerica		Hanson	
Boston	Matt Moran	Harvard	Bruce Leichter
Bourne		Haverhill	Melinda Barrett Christine Lindberg
Boxborough		Hingham	
Boxford		Holbrook	
Braintree		Holden	
Bridgewater	Michael Dutton Robert Rulli	Holliston	
Brockton	Alan Castaline	Hopkinton	
Brookline	Amy Ingles	Hull	
Burlington		Ipswich	
Cambridge	Susanne Rasmussen Andy Reker	Kingston	
Canton		Lakeville	
Carlisle		Lancaster	
Carver		Lawrence	
Chelmsford		Leicester	
Chelsea	John DePriest	Leominster	
Cohasset	Corey Evans	Lexington	Susan Barrett
Concord	Terri Ackerman	Lincoln	
Danvers		Littleton	
Dedham		Lowell	
Dover		Lunenburg	
Dracut		Lynn	Aaron Claussen



Lynnfield		Randolph	
Malden		Raynham	
Manchester		Reading	
Mansfield	Greg Guimond	Rehoboth	
Marblehead		Revere	
Marlborough	Dan Albert	Rochester	
Marshfield		Rockland	
Maynard	Chet Osbourne	Rockport	
Medfield		Rowley	
Medford	Todd Blake	Salem	Brendan Linard
Medway	Gus Murby	Salisbury	
Melrose	Lauren Grymek	Saugus	
Merrimac	Bill Andrulitis	Scituate	Karen Calufield
Methuen		Seekonk	
Middleborough		Sherborn	
Middleton		Shirley	
Millbury		Shrewsbury	
Millis		Somerville	Brad Rawson
Milton		Southborough	
Nahant		Sterling	
Natick	Morgan Griffiths	Stoneham	Raymie Parker
Needham	Duncan Allen	Stoughton	Debra Roberts
Newbury		Stow	
Newburyport	Sean Reardon	Sudbury	
Newton	David Koses	Sutton	
Norfolk	Kevin Kulkut	Swampscott	
North Andover		Taunton	Shaunna O'Connell
N. Attleborough		Tewksbury	
North Reading		Topsfield	
Northborough		Townsend	Theresa Morse
Northbridge		Tyngsborough	
Norton		Upton	
Norwell	Andy Reardon	Watertown	Steve Magoon
Norwood		Wayland	
Paxton		Wakefield	
Peabody		Walpole	
Pembroke		Waltham	
Plymouth		Wareham	Alan Slavin
Plympton		Wellesley	Colette Aufranc
Princeton		Wenham	
Quincy	Thomas P. Koch Frank Tramontozzi	West Boylston	

W. Bridgewater		Whitman	
Westborough		Winchester	
West Newbury		Wilmington	Frank West
Westford		Winthrop	
Westminster		Woburn	
Weston		Worcester	Todd Kirrane
Westwood	Steve Olanoff	Wrentham	
Weymouth	Owen MacDonald		

**Other Attendees**

Brian Kane	Executive Director		