



COMMUTER RAIL COMMITTEE

May 11, 2022

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

DRAFT Minutes

- A. The meeting **came to order** at 10:03AM, Rob Scherer (Ashland), Chair, presiding.
- B. The Chair led a discussion on the **minutes of the February 11, 2022 and April 14, 2022 committee meetings**. Following this discussion, Greg Guimond (Marshfield)- moved to approve the February 11, 2022 minutes as amended. Rich Prone (Duxbury) seconded this motion, which was approved unanimously. Colette Aufranc (Wellesley) moved to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2022 meeting as amended. Alan Castaline (Brockton) seconded this motion, which was also approved unanimously.
- C. At the request of the Chair, Brian Kane (Executive Director) discussed with the committee the desirability **electing a Chair and Vice Chair** for the committee for FY2023. Rob Scherer magnanimously agreed to return as committee Chair, and Steve Olanoff (Westwood) mentioned an interest in being Vice Chair.
- D. The Chair then facilitated a discussion among members about the Committee's February meeting, where the MBTA's Executive Director of Commuter Rail, Michael Muller, and Keolis Commuter Service's General Manager appeared and spoke with committee members. In addition, **a set of questions** from the committee to the MBTA/Keolis were discussed. These questions are:

- Please explain the new policy requiring a switch of trains for those utilizing the last train of the evening on the Middleborough/Lakeville, Old Colony, Needham, and Rockport/Newburyport lines. Given that a one-seat ride is preferable, why was this policy adopted, what are the criteria for measuring its success, and under what circumstances would a return to terminal departures for all lines be considered?
- With respect to Commuter Rail stations and structured parking facilities, what is the maintenance schedule for each community's station/garages? Are engineering inspections carried out on a regular basis of stations/garages? If so at what frequency and can they please be shared with host communities? If not, why not and how can municipalities request and support such safety inspections?
- Cleanliness of the rail right of way: In general, in many communities there appears to be increased rubbish and debris adjacent to the tracks. Some of this debris appears to be related to on-going maintenance and upgrade projects, and seems to be construction related, or left behind by MBTA contractors. What is the schedule for cleaning the Commuter Rail ROW and adjacent areas? How can cities and towns assist the Authority and its contractors to ensure that the ROW is left in a debris-free condition following maintenance and other work?
- With respect to the upcoming launch of the South Coast Rail (SCR) program, and new service to New Bedford and Fall River what is the expected service plan? Can the Authority and its vendors guarantee

that sufficient seats will be available for current Middleborough/Lakeville line riders once SCR comes online? How can member communities along this route be made aware of pending changes, and comment upon them?

- What is the timeline for starting the conversion to a regional rail model? Which lines/routes will be converted first, and how can the Authority and its vendors guarantee continuity of service as the switch-over takes place?
- The Authority operates some special event trains now for New England Patriots games, certain concerts, and other events. What are the criteria used to determine when a special event train is added? How can member communities work with the Authority and its vendors to apply for a special event train for local events, and/or special activities where such a service may be appropriate?
- What is the MBTA's marketing and communications plan to attract riders back to Commuter Rail? What, if any, changes to the overall price of commuter (parking and fares) are being considered to attract riders, and reduce congestion on the region's highways and on local municipal streets?
- How close is the current schedule to the pre-Covid schedule in number of trains per day per line? When and how will all lines/routes be returned to pre-Covid train numbers per line and route?
- What is the MBTA's policy and/or approach on making all Commuter Rail Stations 100% accessible? What is its strategy to deploying full-

length high platforms or other step-free access to trains at all stations in all cities and towns?

- Does the MBTA have a uniform design standard for bike racks at all Commuter Rail stations? If not, what is the timeline to adopt the industry-best-practice bike rack design and, and to implement it going forward at all stations throughout the system?
- What is the Authority and/or its contractor's cleaning and beautification schedule for its Commuter Rail Stations? How can municipalities partner with the Authority/Keolis to assist in keeping stations clean, attractive, and supportive of municipal downtowns or other areas?
- What is the plan for ensuring last-train departure time uniformity on the north and south sides?
- The MBTA and its contractors must become better at communicating with cities and towns and the MBTA Advisory Board about disruptions, and around coordinating efforts with local officials when stations, routes or lines will have service interpretations. Please alert the MBTA Advisory Board's staff, local elected officials, and other stakeholders in a timely fashion, and provide a contact for local elected/appointed officials to ask questions in advance.
- Safety, frequency and punctuality are of paramount importance. What is the Authority and/or its contractor's strategies to ensure that the Commuter Rail system becomes continually safer, more frequent, and more punctual?

- E. Duxbury Resolution:** The Full Advisory Board, at its March meeting, referred the matter of a resolution from the Town of Duxbury to the Commuter Rail Committee. The resolution seeks the Advisory Board's support for a plan wherein the Authority would offer special trains following the completion of Boston red Sox baseball games from Lansdown Station to Kingston/Plymouth station. The Chair facilitated a discussion on this matter. Many members of the committee expressed concern about special trains only for one route (i.e. Kingston/Plymouth) and not more populated areas of the south side such as Brockton, Bridgewater State University, or Dorchester/Hyde Park via the Fairmount Line. Members also discussed the need for the MBTA to develop a comprehensive strategy for all special trains, the possibility of baseball trains in 2023, and marketing opportunities to attract overall ridership to return to trains. Rich Prone (Duxbury) reiterated the support of South Shore communities for special baseball trains, the benefits for citizens of South Shore towns attending Red Sox games, and the ease of use to operate such a train. Following a thorough discussion, Rich Prone moved to approve the resolution as presented, and recommend to the full Advisory Board that it also support it. Greg Guimond (Marshfield) seconded the motion. On a vote, the motion failed by a vote of 2 yes and 5 no.
- F. Adjourn-** With all business discussed, Roy Epstein moved to adjourn the committee's meeting. The meeting ended at 10:44AM



THE MBTA
ADVISORY BOARD

Members Present (a-z by municipality):

Ashland	Rob Scherer
Belmont	Roy Epstein
Brockton	Alan Castaline
Duxbury	Rich Prone
Marshfield	Greg Guimond
Wellesley	Colette Aufranc
Westwood	Steve Olanoff

Staff

Brian Kane	Executive Director
Amira Patterson	Transportation Planner

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