



## MEETING MINUTES

March 12, 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. December 5, 2023 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.
- C. Legislative Update:** Dewey Square Group- Legislative advisors: This item was postponed until later in the meeting.
- D. Discussion and action with respect to a report and recommendation from the Fare Changes Review Committee:** Brian Kane (Executive Director) gave the report on behalf of the committee. Mayors Squaglia (Fitchburg) and Verga (Gloucester) were recognized for co-chairing the meeting. The other committee members were also thanked. The committee met 4 times to review the proposed fare changes presented by the MBTA. The three proposed changes are the introduction of a low-income fare for qualifying individuals aged 26-64, the replacement of change tickets with CharlieCards, and the expansion of \$10 weekend commuter rail passes to holidays and long weekends. To qualify for the low-income fare, the MBTA would confirm that individuals are enrolled in certain other anti-poverty programs. Change tickets are no longer supported by the distributor and require replacement. Kane noted that the Advisory Board has a statutory requirement to review fare changes and recommend a course of action. The committee reviewed the proposed changes on behalf of the Advisory Board and provided a report to all members for their consideration, and recommends approval of the changes as recommended, albeit with certain reservations.

With respect to the low-income fare, Kane noted that the Advisory Board funded the 2019 MIT study that has been referenced much during this process, that found that low-income SNAP recipients in the study who were provided with a 50% discount on bus and subway took more trips saw major benefits to their lives. The report does call out the massive cost of the low-income fare, and that it lacks a long-term funding plan. The program will cost \$23 to \$62 million by 2029, and of this only \$45 million is programmed in the Governor's budget and even this is not guaranteed. There are questions about adding costs at this time. Nevertheless, the committee suggests that the benefits to low-income folks and the entire region outweigh the cost factors. As such, the committee recommends approval. Kane ended by thanking the committee members for their service. The chair facilitated questions:

- Robert Scherer (Ashland) thanked his fellow committee members and B. Kane for his efforts. He noted that low-income people in commuter rail communities will be helped.
- Susan Barrett (Lexington) also thanked the committee and noted her agreement. She suggested that it will specifically help those aged 26 to 64.
- Lenard Diggins (Arlington) suggested that a footnote be added to the report referencing the MIT study.
- Colette Aufranc (Wellesley) noted that the discussion to secure long-term funding for the T should include total cost, include the cost of this important program.
- Brad Rawson (Somerville) echoed his colleague's accolades. He observed that there will be additional material soon based on a small-scale study on a regional low-income fare program in Somerville for up to 500 people.
- Duncan Allen (Needham) noted that the committee also reviewed similar program in other cities in the United States, and that such programs are common and many others are being considered.

With all questions answered, D. Allen made a motion to accept the March 8, 2024 report of the Fare Changes Review Committee, and recommend that the MBTA Board of Directors approve the fare changes as presented on January 25, 2024. Furthermore, the MBTA Advisory Board cautions that

long-term, sustainable, and dedicated funding is required to support these fare changes, and MBTA operations. Alan Castaline (Brockton) seconded this motion, which was approved by a vote of 44-0-2.

**E. Legislative Update:** This item was then taken up out of order. Denis Kennedy and Matthew Mariano of Dewey Square Group provided a legislative update to the Board. B. Kane introduced them.

- Denis Kennedy began by discussing the revenue situation on Beacon Hill. He suggested that there is great pessimism in the legislature, and that for the past 8 months revenue is down compared to projections and historical levels. Currently collections are below \$245 million projections.
- The Governor made \$375 million in cuts to the budget in January 2024. Kennedy noted that there is an expectation of at least a \$1billion shortfall in FY25.
- He continued that there are multiple priorities for those on Beacon Hill. He noted that the legislature has already appropriated \$700 million for emergency sheltering, which is expected to increase to \$900 million by year's end.
- Matthew Mariano continued the presentation by discussing several bills that are of interest to Advisory Board members. He suggested that Senator Barret's bill with respect to MBTA safety has an extension before a final decision is needed by the committee on May 23. The MBTA Advisory Board's benefits bill was reported favorably out of committee.
- B. Kane noted that this briefing came at the request of several members who wanted an update on legislation and the political climate.
- S. Barret asked about strategies to help manage citizens in cities and towns who request more service either in the form of town meeting warrants, select board resolutions, or petitions? D. Kennedy suggested that requests for service are in no way binding, and that requests such as those described tend not to result in much.
- Matt Moran (Boston) asked about camera enforcement of bus lanes, bus stops, and other infrastructure that prevent MBTA buses and other buses

from pulling to curbs. D. Kennedy suggested that they have not seen any legislation specifically for camera enforcement of bus infrastructure.

- B. Rawson suggested that reliable enforcement offers a financial benefit to the system because if vehicles are not stuck in traffic, individual buses can make more trips and thus be more efficient.

**F. Budget & Audit Committee Update:** Colette Aufranc (Wellesly) gave the report:

- The committee elected Lia Fabian of Lakeville as vice chair.
- The committee received audited financial statements for 2021 and 2022 and accepted them. This brings the organization up to date with audits. They were clean with no management letters or findings.
- The committee also approved a budget for 2024 and recommend it to the Executive Committee. This budget brings the organization into a surplus for the first time in three years, as part of a plan approved by the Board three years ago.
- C. Aufranc also noted that the Budget & Audit Committee negotiated and made funding available for an employment agreement between the body and Brian Kane to continue to serve as Executive Director for the period March 1, 2024 to February 28, 2027. The Budget & Audit Committee forwarded this agreement and recommended its approval to the Executive Committee. She noted that the Executive Director oversees and manages multiple independent contractors to assist him in running the organization.

**G. Executive Committee Update:** C. Aufranc also gave this update. The Executive Committee received and accepted the audits for 2021 and 2022. It also received, accepted, and approved the internal budget for 2024, and the employment contract for Brian Kane. It also commissioned the audit for the year ended December 31, 2023.

**H. Executive Director's Report:** B. Kane gave the report. He noted the presence of the Board's officers and thanked them for volunteering. He expressed his thanks to all the committees for their efforts.

- The Board will meet next on April 9, May 14 and June 11, 2024. The Operating Budget Oversight Committee will begin its work in the coming

months to complete its work.

- The Capital Budget Committee will do its work in late April and early May. These will depend on when the MBTA Board of Directors meetings are scheduled.
- B. Kane noted that under the auspices of the Rapid Transit Committee and at the suggestion of its Chair, Matt Moran of Boston, the MBTA is now offering a monthly briefing to municipalities on upcoming diversions, lessons learned, and other related items. This committee will next meet on April 8.
- Kane continued that the Commuter Rail Committee will meet on March 14 at 2PM. At this meeting, the MBTA will preview Spring schedule changes. This is new and a positive step to let cities and towns know about changes.
- Kane further continued that the CIP's publication has been delayed, which will delay the Board's review. More information will follow. This will cause the Ferry and Climate & Clean Energy Committees to change their schedules.
- Kane ended his remarks by noting that he will be away April 12 to 19.
- Dan Salvucci (Whitman) asked about who is responsible for removing a monument at the T station for a resident who died at the station. B. Kane noted that he will find out.

**I. Old/New Business:** There was none.

**J. Adjourn:** With all business transacted, the Chair requested a motion to adjourn. D. Salvucci moved to adjourn; a motion with S. Barrett seconded. This motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:49 AM.

Note: These minutes were approved at the meeting of the 4/9/24 meeting of the Advisory Board.

## Attendees

Abington	Kevin Donovan	Essex	
Acton	David Martin	Everett	Jay Monty
Amesbury		Fitchburg	Hon. Sam Squailia
Andover	Paul Materazzo	Foxborough	
Arlington	Lenard Diggins	Framingham	Mike Tusino
Ashburnham		Franklin	
Ashby		Freetown	
Ashland	Rob Scherer	Georgetown	
Attleboro		Gloucester	Hon. Greg Verga Gregg Cademartori
Auburn		Grafton	
Ayer		Groton	
Bedford		Groveland	
Bellingham		Halifax	
Belmont		Hamilton	
Berkley		Hanover	
Beverly	Darlene Wynn	Hanson	
Billerica		Harvard	
Boston	Matt Moran	Haverhill	
Bourne		Hingham	
Boxborough		Holbrook	Katie Goldrick
Boxford		Holden	
Braintree	Hon. Erin Joyce	Holliston	
Bridgewater	Michael Dutton	Hopkinton	
Brockton	Alan Castaline	Hull	
Brookline		Ipswich	Michael Dougherty
Burlington		Kingston	
Cambridge	Andy Reker	Lakeville	
Canton	Chris Podgerski	Lancaster	
Carlisle		Lawrence	
Carver		Leicester	
Chelmsford		Leominster	
Chelsea		Lexington	Susan Barrett
Cohasset	Corey Evans	Lincoln	
Concord	Mark Howell	Littleton	
Danvers		Lowell	
Dedham		Lunenburg	
Dover		Lynn	Aaron Claussen
Dracut		Lynnfield	
Duxbury	Brian Glennon	Malden	
East Bridgewater		Manchester	

Easton		Mansfield	
Marblehead		Rochester	
Marlborough		Rockland	
Marshfield	Greg Guimond	Rockport	
Maynard	Chester Osborne	Rowley	
Medfield		Salem	Brendan Linard
Medford	Hon. Breanna Lungo-Koehn Todd Blake	Salisbury	
Medway		Saugus	
Melrose		Scituate	Karen Canfield
Merrimac		Seekonk	Bill Andrulitis
Methuen		Sherborn	
Middleborough		Shirley	
Middleton		Shrewsbury	
Millbury		Somerville	Brad Rawson
Millis		Southborough	
Milton		Sterling	
Nahant		Stoneham	Raymie Parker
Natick		Stoughton	
Needham	Duncan Allen	Stow	
Newbury		Sudbury	
Newburyport	Hon. Sean Reardon	Sutton	
Newton	David Koses	Swampscott	
Norfolk	Kevin Kalkut	Taunton	Hon. Shaunna O'Connell
North Andover		Tewksbury	
N. Attleborough		Topsfield	
North Reading		Townsend	
Northborough		Tyngsborough	
Northbridge		Upton	
Norton		Watertown	
Norwell	Andy Reardon	Wayland	
Norwood		Wakefield	
Paxton		Walpole	
Peabody		Waltham	
Pembroke		Wareham	Alan Slavin
Plymouth		Wellesley	Colette Aufranc
Plympton		Wenham	
Princeton		West Boylston	
Quincy	Hon. Thomas Koch Frank Tramontozzi	W. Bridgewater	
Randolph		West Newbury	

Raynham		Westborough	
Reading		Westford	
Rehoboth		Westminster	
Revere		Weston	
Westwood	Steve Olanoff	Winthrop	
Weymouth	Owen MacDonald	Woburn	John Cashell Tina Cassidy
Whitman	Dan Salvucci	Worcester	Todd Kirrane
Winchester		Wrentham	
Wilmington	Frank West		