

TPAG Meeting Minutes September 23, 2020

Attendees: Nancy Garr-Colzie; Carolyn Foley, PBSTM; Sue Moriarty, MASS; Mike Kennedy, CLW; Bill Clark, Worcester Yellow Cab; Mark Binnall; Mary Haroyen; Francesca Abbey; Connie Mellis, CMRPC; Sharon Strzalkowski; Kathy Kulesza; Nona Haroyen

Meeting minutes from Aug meeting were accepted as presented.

WRAs **Southbridge-Dudley-Webster shuttle** began 5 weeks ago and has had good ridership. This is a grant funded service and connects two popular WRTA routes. Riders can now travel between Southbridge and Webster without having to travel through Worcester. The route connects two campuses of Harrington Hospital as well as several other popular destinations.

WRTA, in partnership with **Via** has launched a demand response service in **Westborough**. This service will serve Westborough as well as the Westborough and Southborough commuter rail stations. This grant funded service will replace the WRAs community shuttle service in Westborough.

Paratransit Report was read to the group. Trips are still being provided by serving one passenger at a time and not grouping trips. Ridership is growing but still below typical levels. Personnel changes continue in the office and Carolyn is now the manager of paratransit and customer service.

Customer Service report was not available.

Riders Action Council (formerly Riders Advisory Committee) met in July and discussed bus cleanliness.

Transportation Advocacy Coalition met and discussed the new Westborough service operated by Via. Also discussed was that the disability representative on the WRTA's Advisory Board will be vacated soon and they are looking for a replacement.

WRTA Advisory Board met virtually last week. Several personnel changes were announced. Many people attended to discuss the Zero Fare initiative including the Chamber of Commerce, the Worcester Health Department, the Health Foundation and Sen Harriette Chandler who all spoke in favor of making the WRTA a fare free service permanently. It was pointed out that MassDOT would not be supportive of this. Board members did not discuss resuming fares. Several WRTA board members expressed concerns about the confusion to the public if fare collection resumed but then needed to be discontinued if a surge in COVID-19 cases occurred.

Nomination of Officers was opened. Three additional people were nominated and accepted. Mike Kennedy, Kathy Kulesza, Sharon Strzalkowski. Francesca Abbey was nominated but declined the nomination. Pamela Alvin was contacted after the meeting and accepted the nomination.

Elections will take place at the Oct meeting.
The full ballot is

Chair Mark Binnall
 Nancy Garr-Colzie

Vice-Chair Mark Binnall

Exec Board Pamela Alvin
 Joe Bellil
 Mark Binnall
 Nancy Garr-Colzie
 Mary Haroyan
 Mike Kennedy
 Kathy Kulesza
 Sharon Strzalkowski

Meeting Calendar

The group discussed the meeting calendar and agreed to meet Sept, Oct, Dec, Feb, April and June.

New Business

The WRTA Advisory Board will have two vacant positions. They are the member who represents riders and the member who represents people with disabilities. Mike Kennedy has begun the process to be appointed as the disability representative. The rider representative position will be vacated in Oct.