

**MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (MART)
MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 21, 2017
MART MAINTENANCE FACILITY
1427R WATER STREET
FITCHBURG, MA 01420**

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:37 a.m.

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: (constituting a quorum)

Mike Nicholson (representing Mayor)	Gardner
James Lanciani (representing Mayor)	Leominster
Mayor Stephen DiNatale	Fitchburg
Selina Shaw (representing Selectmen)	Boxborough
Selectperson Phyllis Luck	Lunenburg
Kenneth F. Troup (representing Selectmen)	Bolton
Selectperson Heather Billings	Westminster
Jan Robbins (representing Selectman)	Ashburnham
Alexandra Turner (representing Selectmen)	Lancaster
Tim Bragan (representing Selectman)	Harvard

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Keith Bergman (representing Selectmen)	Littleton
Robert Pontbriand (representing Selectman)	Ayer
Selectman Austin Cyganiewicz	Winchendon
Brian Bullock (representing Selectmen)	Hubbardston
Roland Hamel (representing Selectmen)	Royalston
Alyson Toole (representing Selectmen)	Stow
Richard Hatch (representing Selectmen)	Shirley
Carter Terenzini (representing Selectman)	Templeton
Greg Dumass (representing Selectmen)	Sterling
Shaun Suhoski (representing Selectmen)	Athol
No Representative	Ashby
No Representative	Hardwick

STAFF PRESENT:

Mohammed Khan, Bruno Fisher, James Sluss, Bonnie Mahoney, Jessica Lashua, Benilda Martinez, Adam Gromelski, and Keary Connors

GUESTS PRESENT:

Heather Lemieux	Lunenburg
Phil Rocca	Management of Transportation Service
Andy Divoll	Management of Transportation Service
Melissa L'Ecuyer	Management of Transportation Service

II. General Comments
III. Approval of Minutes

A. September 12, 2017

RESOLUTION- Ken Troup of Bolton moved that the Advisory Board of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority approves the September 12, 2017 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

IV. Financial Matters

A. Status of State Funding:

1. FY2018 State Budget Allocations for RTA's Reduced
Mohammed stated the State budget for the RTA's has been reduced. The impact to MART will be about \$110,000.
2. FY2018 Earmark for Athol/Orange
Mohammed stated the Earmark for Athol/Orange has been reduced from \$400,000 to \$250,000 this year and next year it will be zero.

B. Status of Federal Funding

Mohammed stated that MART will receive about \$50,000 more in Federal funding than last year. Also the FTA finally closed MART's ADA Audit from 2016.

C. Budget and Expenditures Report year to date

James went over the budget commentary with the Board. MART's 3% incentive program with HST was converted over to a management fee. In October MART achieved 15% shared rides which earned \$74,000 incentive per month from HST, the Brokerage is moving in a positive direction. The transit side has a loss of \$215,000. The loss on the transit side is the missing \$50,000 part of earmark for Athol/Orange and also \$140,000 in additional legal fees for TLT mediation. Next mediation meeting is scheduled for January 2018.

Tim Bragan of Harvard asked what the potential downside of the lawsuit is.

Bruno stated TLT originally submitted a claim for \$900,000, so it could be as high as that or less. TLT has no documentation to back up their claim. If there is a judgment MART will have to pay it because insurance was not involved.

Tim Bragan asked did MART hold back any payment from TLT.

Bruno stated all payments were made.

V. Administrative Matters

A. Election of Officers

Nominated: Mayor Dean Mazzarella, Chairman
Mayor Stephen DiNatale, Vice-Chairman

Floor nominations were solicited by the Chairperson and closed. There were none.

RESOLUTION – Mike Nicholson of Gardner moved that the Advisory Board of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority approves to elect Mayor Dean Mazzarella as Chairperson and Mayor Stephen DiNatale as Vice Chairperson. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

B. Implementation of Cost of Living Increase for Staff effective January 1, 2018

RESOLUTION-Selina Shaw of Boxborough moved that the Advisory Board of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority approves to hold cost of living increase for staff effective January 1, 2018 until reimbursement disparities to the council on aging in MART communities have been rectified and the contracts have been approved by the communities. The cost of living raise will be retro-active to January 1, 2018. The motion was seconded and passed. (Harvard, Lunenburg, Ashburnham, Boxborough, Westminster, Lancaster and Fitchburg voting yes)

James stated he recommends giving the staff a 2% cost of living adjustment. The cost of living increase is included in FY2018 budget.

Selina Shaw of Boxborough asked that we delay a vote on the cost of living increase until reimbursement disparities to the council on aging have been rectified and the contracts have been approved by the communities. (see item F. COA Transportation for additional conversation)

C. Status/Update on Ayer Commuter Rail Parking Facility and Depot Square Improvements

Bruno stated the building in Ayer will be demolished by the middle of December and the project will go out to bid over the winter with construction starting in the spring of 2018.

D. Status/Update on Fixed Route Services to Devens Area

Bruno stated the service was a pilot service over the summer. We have about 100 people per a week. Employers in the area are trying to align their shifts so that employees can use the shuttle service. In October the weekend service was changed to on-demand service.

E. Request for Shuttle Service from the Town of Littleton, Effective Fall 2017

Bruno stated the contract was awarded to CTC for shuttle operation, the service should start January 2018. Littleton will be billed all the expenses but the Board needs to authorize MART to enter into a contract with CTC for this shuttle service.

RESOLUTION-Tim Bragan of Harvard moved that the Advisory Board of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority approves MART to enter into a contract with CTC to provide the shuttle services and the cost will be paid for by Littleton. Effective January 2018. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

F. COA Transportation Status

Bruno stated the contracts are done and will go out to the communities today November 21, 2017.

Selina stated now the Selectmen, insurance companies and town's legal counsel will need to review it. And then it will need to be brought back to the Board at the next advisory meeting. She also stated Boxborough should be reimbursed for dispatching cost. This is a town expense even though we contract dispatching services out, the town should still be reimbursed for these expenses. It should make no difference if we contract the service out or pay an employee. We are still waiting to be made whole for FY2017 like we were told we would be by the administration.

Mo stated that the Board approved that MART would pay all COA expenses for FY2017 and that has been done and is completed.

Selina stated she is still awaiting reimbursement for dispatching expense from FY2017 in the amount of \$6,000 for CTC dispatching. CTC dispatching is a direct expense of the town and it should make no difference whether we contract that service out or pay an employee.

Mo stated MART is accountable and needs to make sure the expenses the towns submit are transit related expenses only.

Bruno stated the dispatching service provided by CTC is something the town of Boxborough procured on their own.

Mo stated MART needs to make sure that all money paid out qualifies as a transit expense.

Selina asked to be shown in writing where the CTC expense does not qualify as a reimbursable expense.

Mo stated there is nothing in writing.

Selina stated if there is nothing in writing then there is no basis for denying the payment.

Tim stated the CTC expense was paid in FY215 and FY16.

Mo stated that yes we paid the expense because we had an understanding that the COA services was done by the town not a consultant.

Alexandra Turner of Lancaster stated most towns have suffered losses because of the changes that MART implemented to the Council on Aging bills/reimbursements. We have been awaiting a new contract for over a year, let's get the contracts done before we move forward with new budgets.

Mo stated all you are doing is holding the staff hostage by denying them a cost of living increase.

Alexandra stated that is not true; we think the staff is doing an excellent job. Fiscal year 2017 is over and we are still waiting for an approved contract.

Selina stated in FY2015 and FY2016 MART paid the CTC dispatching cost and now in FY2017 MART is refusing to pay the CTC cost because MART didn't procure the services. MART didn't procure the services in FY2015 or FY2016 either.

Alexandra stated the motion was to delay not deny.

Tim stated the Board is making MART do their due diligence and making MART accountable to get the contracts done after waiting for over a year. These issues need to be resolved.

Mo stated all Council on Aging billing needs to stay within the 1/3 rule, that means only 33% of dispatching cost can be administrative cost. Councils on Aging can only bill for time used to arrange transportation, dispatch and administration for transportation.

James stated in FY2017 the Council on Aging bills were paid in full except Boxborough because of the CTC issue.

Mo stated the money we pay is for services for the elderly and handicap. Administrative cost cannot be more than the drivers' cost. We cannot justify this to the Federal or State Government.

Selina disputes that dispatch is not an indirect cost and asked to see the industry standards. She stated she would like to see all the statements MART has made back up by documentation.

Bruno stated the new contract will go out today with a cover letter explaining all the changes.

Selina asked if MART has reached an agreement with MIIA on the terms of the insurance because if MIIA still has issues with the terms the towns will be disappointed, also MART has had a year to work on this agreement.

Bruno stated all comments from the communities are incorporated in the new contract.

Ken Troup stated that he doesn't like the idea of punishing all employees; maybe the agenda item for the next meeting should be resolving the contracts.

Tim stated we are delaying not preventing the employees for getting a cost of living increase. There increase will be retro to January 1, 2018. The Administration has to deal with this issue; it is time for it to be resolved.

Alexandra stated this item has been on the agenda for over a year. This issue is having a huge impact on the towns and the council on aging. I support the cost of living raise for staff and suggest we have a meeting in December to resolve this issue.

Bruno stated there are no real industry standards for this, some RTA's pay for all council on aging expenses and some pay nothing at all.

Selina stated you refer to industry standard and then you also talk about dispatch being an administrative cost not an operational cost, I would disagree with that as well. I would like to see some definitions, provide some evidence of that, in terms of best practices.

Heather Billings asked how we can implement a contract that hasn't been signed yet.

Bruno stated we cannot reimburse costs that are not transportation related (wheels on the road, people being driven around) and insurance needs to be transferred over to the town. The administrative cost will be 33%.

Selina said this is where I would like to see something on the dispatching cost, because you consider that an indirect cost where as we consider it a direct cost.

James stated for Federal/NTD dispatch is not a direct cost of operating. What they consider direct is really the driver and the cost of the maintenance of the vehicle. This is an applicable rule when FTA/State comes in and does our triennial review. The OMB master circular has all these rules. Dispatching is not a direct cost because it is not linear to the vehicle use.

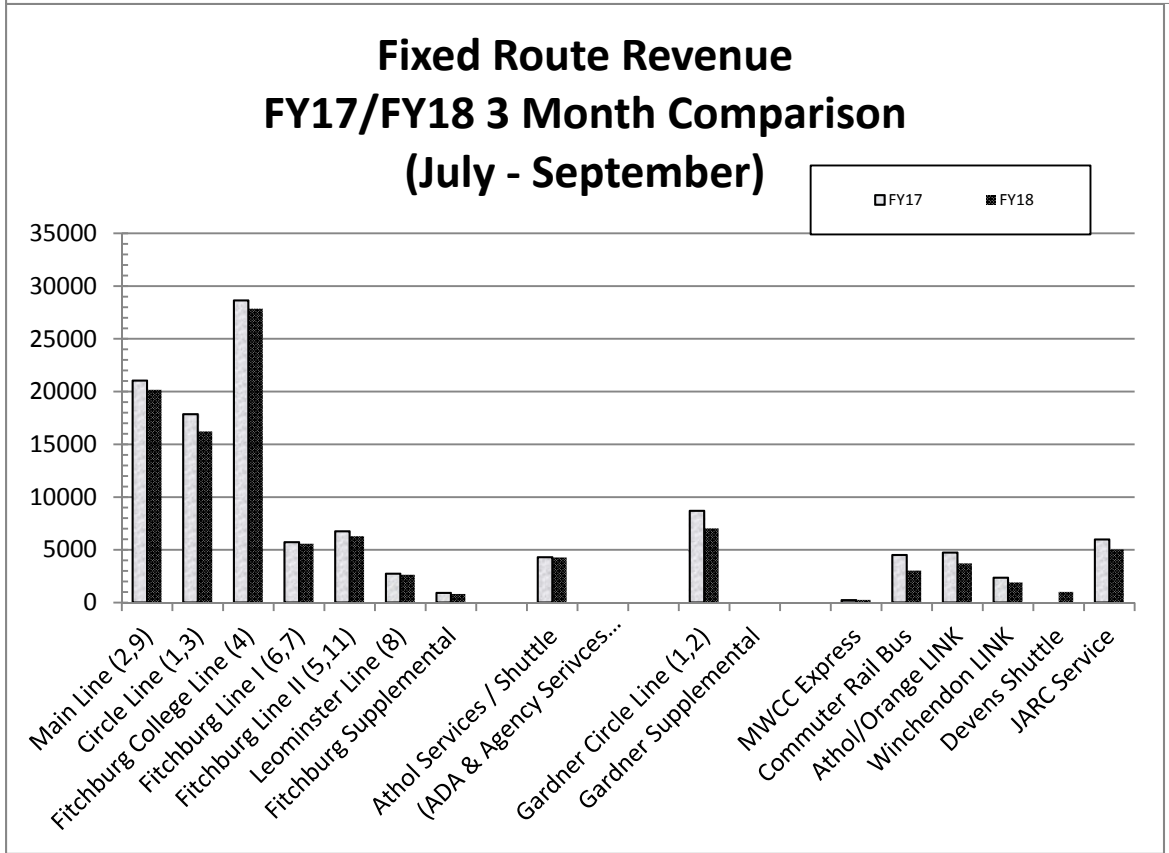
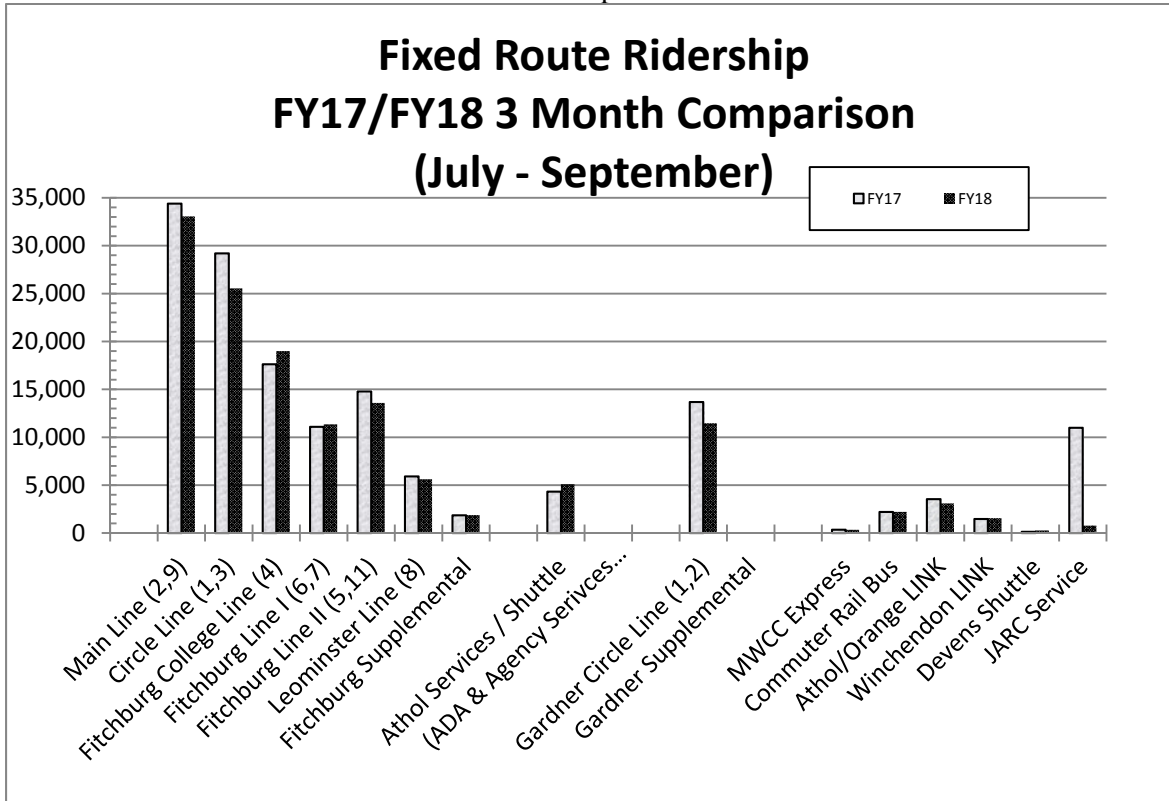
RESOLUTION -Tim Bragan of Harvard moved that the Advisory Board of the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority agrees to meet on Tuesday, December 19, 2017 to resolve the Council on Aging's contract. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VI.

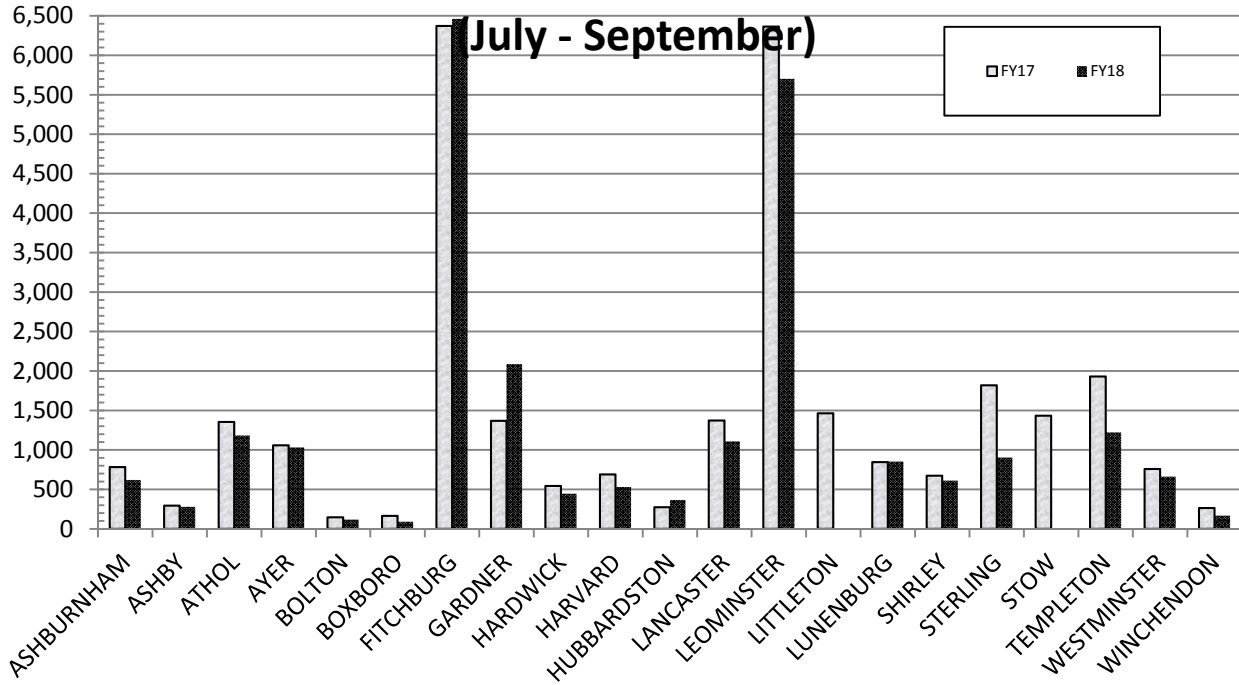
Operational Services

A. MART Transit Operation Status:

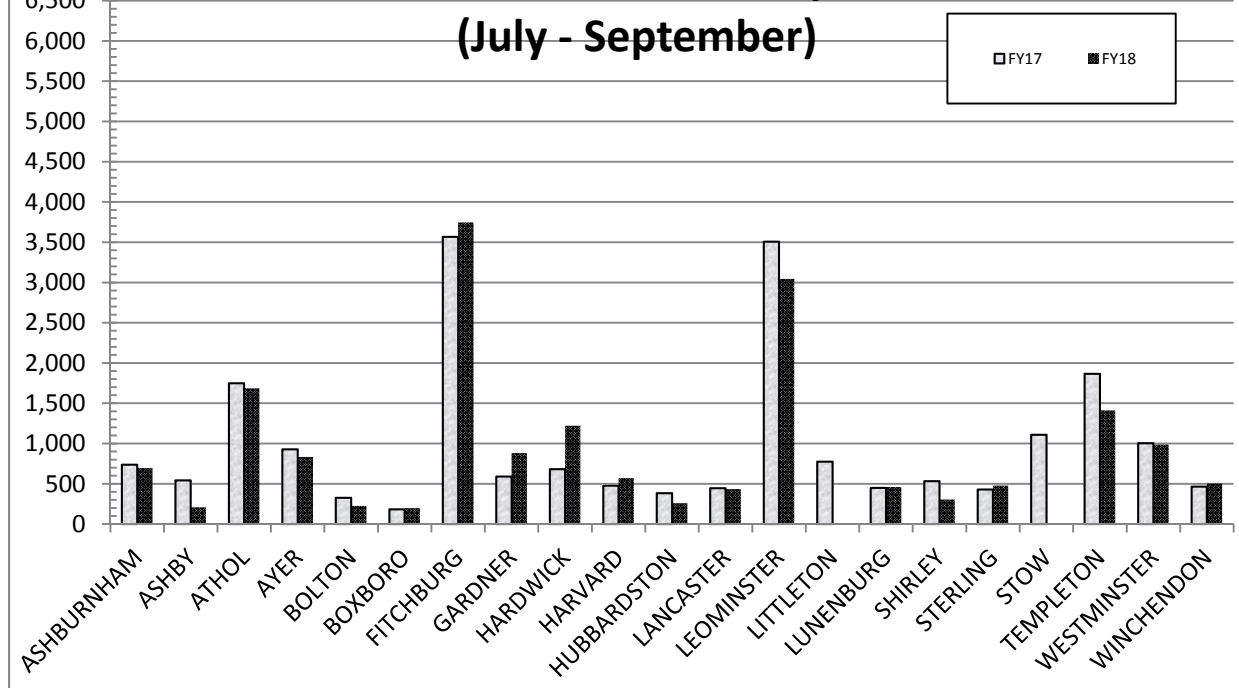
1. Revenue and Ridership



Council On Aging Ridership FY17/FY18 3 Month Comparison



Council On Aging Revenue FY16/FY17 3 Month Comparison



2. Adjustment of Fixed Route Services
3. Introduction of New Service

B. HST Brokerage Operation

Department of Developmental Services

MART continues to provide broker transportation services for the Department of Developmental Services. MART provides services in the Pioneer Valley area, Central/West region which includes North and South Central areas, Metro Boston region including the North and South Shore areas.

MART is currently transporting approximately 6000 consumers to 175 various day programs across the above mentions areas using 63 vendors.

Department of Mental Health

MART is currently providing DMH services for five regions across the state. We utilize 16 contractors to transport approximately 600 clients to 14 various DMH clubhouses.

Department of Public Health EI Program

MART continues to manage transportation services for the Department of Public Health (DPH) Early Intervention Program (EIP) in the Pioneer Valley, North and South Central, and the Greater Boston areas. MART is currently managing transportation for approximately 1300 children from birth to age three to 91 active EIP Programs with the majority of the service being provided in the Greater Boston Area. This is accomplished through contract with 17 private transportation companies.

Mass Health Transportation Program

MART continues to provide brokerage services for the Mass Health transportation for the Greater Metro Boston, Pioneer Valley, North Central and the South Central areas.

MART currently services the transportation needs of the Mass Health consumers in two hundred and twenty-three (223) cities and towns. Transportation averages approximately 8500 one-way trips per day with the highest volume in the Metro Boston area.

MART is currently contracted with approximately 200 transportation providers for the above mentioned areas and assigns work via a low cost bid system.

In October 2013, MART started providing transportation services for a new program called Integrated Care Options (ICO). This service is for dual enrolled Medicaid recipients whereas the member is able to choose to change their insurance coverage from MassHealth to an ICO. Under MART's HST Brokerage contract we are required to provide a 90 day continuity of care period for the members choosing this option and bill transportation cost to the appropriate ICO. There are currently two major companies for the members to choose from Commonwealth Care Alliance and Network Health. MART utilizes our MassHealth transportation providers and assigns the trips via the bid system

Other Brokerage Services

MART also provides brokerage services on a smaller scale for the Mass Rehab Commission and the Mass Commission for the Blind, this is primarily a demand response service with transportation requested being processed by the agency through the HST Office and MART then bids out the trips via a low cost bid system. Both of these programs combined average approximately 900 to 1,000 one way trips on a monthly basis.

VII. Other Business

VIII. Adjournment

V. The meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.