

MART Finance Committee Meeting Minutes  
Remotely  
December 4, 2023 10:30 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mayor Michael Nicholson	Gardner
Ken Troup	Bolton
Richard Maki	Sterling
Robert Pontbriand	Ayer

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Melissa L'Ecuyer (MTS)

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Bruno Fisher, James Sluss, Scott Rich, Benilda Martinez, Jessica Lashua, Kathy Marean and Keary Connors.

- Call to Order  
The meeting was called to order at 10:31 a.m.
- General / Public Comments
- Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – September 25, 2023

**RESOLUTION- Robert Pontbriand of Ayer moved to approve the minutes from September 25, 2023. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Roll call was done.

Mayor Michael Nicholson	yes
Ken Troup	yes
Richard Maki	yes
Robert Pontbriand	yes

- FY2024 Financials
  - Four Month Financial Update
  - Full Year Financial Projection

James Sluss informed the Committee that there is no deficit and no surplus at this time. He then went over key drivers document (attached) MART has been working on many cost reductions including janitorial, IT and security. MART will also have a second price increase to Subscription Service, which is not FTA funded, early in 2024.

The brokerage has earned \$600,000 of its incentive so far this year. They have also seen a large increase because of enhanced chair car service. They are doing an excellent job streamlining this new service.

Transit ridership is down along with COA ridership. The Boston shuttle needs to be reviewed and revised. Worcester shuttle has seen increased ridership.

Bruno Fisher informed the Committee that MART received \$2.4 million from the State. With this money the State wants MART to have increased weekend service including Sunday, increase frequency and later evening service. MART is looking at adding Sunday service and increasing frequency.

MART will also be applying for some transit innovations grants, which will help get transit services to rural communities. MART is looking at services from Winchendon, Ashburnham and Templeton to Gardner, and a health care express service that will run from Athol Hospital to Gardner Hospital.

- Proposed Six Month Fare Free Fixed Route and ADA (MassDOT Funded)  
All RTA's received money to run fare free from January 1, 2024-June 30, 2024.  
MART is hoping fare free services will increase ridership.

- Fin Comm Review / Recommendation for Advisory Board

**RESOLUTION-Ken Troup of Bolton moved to recommend to the MART Advisory Board that MART's fixed route and ADA be fare free until June 30, 2024. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Roll call was done.

Mayor Michael Nicholson	yes
Ken Troup	yes
Richard Maki	yes
Robert Pontbriand	yes

- FY23 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)

- Fin Comm Review and Recommendation to Advisory Board

James informed the Finance Committee that MART is looking at a 2% increase for all employees. This amount has been built into the budget.

**RESOLUTION- Richard Maki of Sterling moved to recommend to the MART Advisory Board a 2% increase for all MART employees. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Roll call was done.

Mayor Michael Nicholson	yes
Ken Troup	yes
Richard Maki	yes
Robert Pontbriand	yes

- Update: Fare Reduction, Student Fare Free and Free Regional Transfer

- Other Business
    - Items Not Reasonably Anticipated to be Discussed
- MART has received a \$100,000 grant to do a comprehensive transit study of all our routes and a master plan.
- Adjournment
    - The meeting was adjourned at 11:19 a.m.