

**BUTLER TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
BUTLER TRANSIT AUTHORITY AT 130 HOLLYWOOD DRIVE  
April 23, 2024**

Charles Savannah  
Tricia Kradel  
Joseph Hasychak  
Chris Rearick  
David Johnston  
Lance Calvert

John H. Paul, Executive Director  
Rebecca Black, Lutz, Pawk & Black  
Ryan Saeler, Butler Media Group  
Eddie Trizzino, Butler Eagle  
Kelly Stewart  
Tiffany Fosnaught

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Chris Rearick called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm with a moment of silence followed by the pledge of allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:** Tiffany called the roll. Charles Savannah, Joseph Hasychak, Tricia Kradel, Chris Rearick, Lance Calvert and David Johnston were all present.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING:** Charles Savannah motioned to approve the minutes from the March 2024 Board Meeting as presented. This motion was seconded by Joseph Hasychak. Roll call indicated all ayes.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA:** None.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

- **Committee Reports (TOE- Terminal, Office and Equipment, Public Relations, Sub-Contractor, Capital Improvements and Expansion)** – The Personnel Committee met prior to the meeting and their recommendations will be discussed in the Executive Session.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**MARKETING/PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN 2024-25-** Kelly presented BTA's 2024-2025 proposed Marketing/Public Relations Plan. Some of the highlighted topics included: BTA's main goal is building more ridership and awareness of BTA's system. General campaigns: "This is How We Roll", "Love Butler Transit", an Event Campaign focused on BTA's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Sales Promotions- free Commuter Rides and RideBTA Discount offers, Targeted Marketing- Seniors 65+ and Youth 7-17 and Miscellaneous Promotions/Marketing Events- promotional products, Community- Transportation Committee, Transit Employee Appreciation Day, Rider Appreciation Day, Thanksgiving Food Drive and Spirit of Christmas Parade. Kelly went through each promotion in detail and reviewed the costs and why certain ways of advertising work better than others since past promotions have been able to be tracked for followings by customers. Kelly shared that she has spoken with the website designer and BTA should be able to utilize the banner on the website as a means for showcasing the campaigns. Charles Savannah asked if BTA is required to check seniors for age verification before supplying senior passes. Kelly explained the process and confirmed that BTA must verify age before providing a senior pass. Charles then asked if BTA is reimbursed for senior trips. John explained that the funding is provided through the lottery and authorities used to be paid based on the number of senior trips. Now authorities are paid based on statistics/formulas and the funding flows through Act 44 funds in the operational budget. Charles asked what BTA's percentage of senior riders on the local service is. John did not have the numbers readily available but estimated it at between 14% and 18%. Chris Rearick asked what platforms are used with digital advertising/third party companies. Kelly discussed that it varies. She shared some of the different companies that BTA uses. There was a brief discussion regarding the return of workers vs hybrid vs remote working. BTA offers trip-based passes instead of monthly passes for commuters for that reason. BTA still continues to struggle to regain commuter ridership. Tricia Kradel questioned the marketing target of youth 7-17. John explained the struggles that BTA has had in the past regarding offering service to schools. John also explained that BTA has offered Summer Discount Passes in the past. Sales were not as strong as expected. The Board commended Kelly on a job well done. Charles Savannah made a motion to accept BTA's 2024-25 Marketing/Public Relations Plan as presented. David Johnston seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes.

**2024-25 BTA OPERATIONAL BUDGET- MAILED SEPARATELY-** Tiffany explained how the budget pages are laid out and then proceeded to go through the lines and share how the new budget was calculated. Some of the highlighted areas were: most of the increases were 3%, some of the additional costs beyond 3% include monthly IT managed services, Elavon credit card charges with the new farebox system, C-Sched schedule changes, utility costs and fuel costs for the buses (the CNG Plant uses gas and electricity to produce the CNG), gas and electric costs will be increased significantly based on the new pricing for the new suppliers (as provided by the RFP response for each) and other materials and supplies include the continuous repairs and parts needed for the old bus wash system that is in desperate need of replacement. Tiffany reviewed the fares and the funding resources and how they are computed. The different revenue sources have different rules for obtaining figures. David Johnston commented on the percentage of utility costs vs the total administrative costs. There was a brief discussion regarding the gas utility error from the prior year. Tricia Kradel questioned the cell phone/wifi costs. John explained that BTA offers wifi services on both commuter and local services. Chris Rearick asked how the CARES Funding and CRSSA Funds will supplement services. John and Tiffany shared that once they are depleted then the American Relief Funds will be available. John then discussed how the 2024-25 State Operating Funds are being handled currently and how legislation may allow for more. Tiffany did not include those figures since there are not guaranteed as of yet. Charles Savannah made a motion to approve BTA's 2024-45 Operational Budget as presented. Lance Calvert seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes.

**2024-25 BTA OPERATIONAL LOCAL MATCH RESOLUTION-** John discussed BTA's 2024-25 Local Match Resolution and then explained what this entails. David Johnston made a motion to approve BTA's 2024-45 Local Match Resolution as presented and Lance Calvert seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes.

**BTA FARE INCREASE TOOL 2024-25-** BTA is required by State Rules to annually review and calculate whether a fare increase is justifiable and necessary. BTA has not had a fare increase since 2012. BTA's policy also states that BTA will only increase in \$0.25 increments (to avoid passengers having to worry with dimes, nickels and pennies). John utilized BTA's fare increase tool (using the inflation rate-2020-2024). It is up 36% and this tool concludes that a fare increase is recommended. BTA is proposing a \$0.25 increase for cash paying passengers starting July 1, 2024. This would take current fares (base fare) from \$1.25 to \$1.50. BTA does not plan on raising commuter fares or discount passes. BTA will advertise and will hold a public hearing regarding this proposed fare increase as required. Chris Rearick made a motion to allow BTA to proceed with a \$0.25 base fare increase starting July 1, 2024. Joseph Hasychak seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes.

**CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY- FARES-** Rebecca reported that BTA is starting to have multiple cases of passengers boarding the buses and not having enough money for the fare. There needs to be a policy for how to handle these matters so that the drivers and the other passengers do not have a bad experience. Rebecca had several suggestions of how to handle these situations. John shared that other authorities in east Pennsylvania are already using AI as a means to facilitate the problem. Everyone discussed the issues that are resulting from these problems. John stated that this is a problem that is nationwide. No action was taken. Rebecca is going to gather more information and develop some options to present to the Board at the next meeting. Rebecca still recommended BTA place a placard that states that fares are to be paid in full when boarding.

**BTA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS 2024-25-** Five years ago PennDOT evaluated BTA and provided performance standards. BTA is proposing to adopt the Performance Standards as provided by PennDOT. John read them aloud. Joseph Hasychak made a motion to adopt BTA's PennDOT Performance Standards as provided. Lance Calvert seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes.

**TITLE VI PROGRAM-** Rebecca reviewed BTA's Title VI program policy and the Federal checklist that pertains to this as well. BTA's Title VI Program has all of the necessary requirements. David Johnston made a motion to adopt BTA's Title VI Program as discussed. Joseph Hasychak seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes.

**SEPTEMBER 2024 BOARD MEETING FROM THE 10<sup>th</sup> TO THE 17<sup>th</sup> –** John shared that he has a scheduling conflict and would like to move the September Board Meeting from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup>. Charles Savannah made a motion to allow BTA's September 2024 Board Meeting to be moved from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> and Lance Calvert seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes.

**NEW LIFT PROJECT BAY #2-** John stated that BTA has received the proposal for the new lift for Bay #2. It came in under the projected budget. The award was to Fred L Burns Inc in the amount of \$599,000 and allowance number one for permitting \$15,000. Rebecca has reviewed the documents. Charles Savannah made a motion to approve Fred L Burns for \$599,000 and permitting for \$15,000 regarding the new lift in Bay #2. David Johnston seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes.

**FARE BOX PROJECT-** BTA was in the bid for RFP with Washington County. Rebecca reviewed the documents. BTA is requesting 15 fareboxes at \$2,199/ea, additional cashboxes 1 @ \$1,750/ea and safety deposit equipment (drop vault) for \$10,300- grand total of \$45,035. Joseph Hasychak made motion to approve the new fareboxes, cashboxes and safety deposit equipment as presented for a total of \$45,035. Tricia Kradel seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes. Charles Savannah asked when BTA plans on purchasing and installing this equipment. John stated that BTA would like to have everything in place by July 1, 2024.

**ELECTRIC PROVIDER-** Tiffany stated that BTA went out for RFP for electric rates at all locations and BTA only received one response. BTA's current provider is IGS and IGS was the only responder. BTA's current electric rates are \$4.3 cents/kWh for the Park n Ride and \$4.65 cents/kWh for the Office, CNG Facility and Terminal. IGS proposed \$6.2 cents/kWh for the Park n Ride and \$7.13 cents/kWh for the Office CNG Facility and Terminal. Joseph Hasychak made a motion to approve the new IGS electric rates as presented. Lance Calvert seconded the motion. Roll Call indicated all ayes.

**NATURAL GAS PROVIDER-** Tiffany stated that BTA went out for RFP for natural gas rates at all locations and BTA only received one response. BTA's current provider is Direct Energy (Snyder Bros) and the current rate is \$2.59/mcf for the Office, CNG Facility and the Terminal. The only proposal received was from Mid-Atlantic at a rate of \$2.98/mcf. Joseph Hasychak made a motion to approve the new Mid-Atlantic natural gas rates as presented. David Johnston seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes.

**INVEST ACT 44 RESERVES WITH PLGIT-** John is requesting to move funds from Nextier to PLGIT to gain more interest. Joseph Hasychak made a motion to allow John to move funds from the local account (Nextier) to PLGIT (Pennsylvania Local Government Investment Trust). Charles Savannah seconded the motion. John provided approximate interest rates and he is looking to move \$1,000,000+. Roll call indicated all ayes.

**BUS COMMUNICATIONS- NEW RADIOS-** As discussed at BTA's last Board meeting, BTA's communication tower for the radios located at Alameda is failing. The County wanted BTA to switch to the tower at Sunnyview. BTA looked at purchasing new equipment for the tower and using the old radios versus using the County's equipment and purchasing new radios. If BTA buys the tower equipment then BTA is responsible for maintaining and installing the equipment. BTA is recommending purchasing new radios for the buses at total cost of \$43,528.78 and using the County's tower and equipment. This would be funded out of Capital funds. Charles Savannah made a motion to approve the purchase of new radios for the buses at a total cost of \$43,528.78 and Joseph Hasychak seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes.

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT-** John stated that BTA will go into Executive Session later to discuss the Personnel Committee Report and will reconvene to approve and answer any questions.

**FINANCIAL REPORT/STATEMENT-** Tiffany presented the March 2024 financial reports for approval. David Johnston made a motion to approve the March 2024 financial reports as presented. Tricia Kradel seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes.

**APPROVAL OF THE CHECKS-** Tiffany asked for approval of check numbers 539-542 from the Project Checking Account. Joseph Hasychak made a motion to approve check numbers 539-542 from the Project Checking Account and Lance Calvert seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes. Tiffany asked for approval of check numbers 28912 through 29033 from the Regular Checking Account. Joseph Hasychak made a motion to approve check numbers 28912 through 29033 from the Regular checking account and Charles Savannah seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT-** Evening and day-time service trips for March 2024 totaled an increase of 673 trips from March 2023.

Commuter service total trips were 1,409 for March 2024. An increase of 146 trips from March 2023. Correction- there were only an additional 250 commuter trips in February.

The next regular scheduled board meeting is Tuesday May 14, 2024 at 5:00pm at the BTA Transit Center Board room at 130 Hollywood Drive.

**QUESTIONS FROM MEDIA/VISITORS-** Eddie requested a copy of the budget. Eddie asked what a farebox is and John answered the question appropriately. John also discussed the fact that BTA will be reverting back to a drop box system. The fare increase was briefly discussed. Ryan asked about the policy regarding the fare increase. John explained how the policy works. Ryan asked who will be attending the public hearing. John stated that he will be attending with Kelly and any public that chooses to. The procedure for responding to the fare increase and all of the different ways that can be used to send comments regarding the fare increase was also discussed.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION-** BTA Board Members went into Executive Session at 6:20pm and returned at 6:34pm.

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT-** Joseph Hasychak made a motion to approve and implement the recommendations of the Personnel Committee and Tricia Kradel seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes. Ryan asked what the recommendations were. John shared that the wage increases for BTA Staff will be between 0% and 7%. Ryan asked how many employees BTA currently has. Tiffany answered that BTA currently has 12 employees.

Minutes of the Meeting  
April 23, 2024

**ADJOURNMENT** – Charles Savannah made a motion to adjourn at 6:40pm and David Johnston seconded the motion. Roll call indicated all ayes.