

RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MINUTES OF Monday, April 18, 2016

Board Members Present: Mayor Scott Avedisian; Stephen Durkee; Director Peter Alviti; Princess Sirleaf Bomba; Stephanie Ogidan Preston and Maureen Martin.

Absent: Margaret Holland McDuff and Mark Susa.

Also Present: Raymond Studley, CEO; Benjamin Salzillo, In-House Legal; John McCann, Outside Counsel; Victoria Catalano, Recording Secretary; and other members of RIPTA's staff, and members of the public whose names are on the sign-in sheet.

Agenda Item 1: Approval of the February 22, 2016 and the March 28, 2016 Board Minutes

Ms. Martin makes a motion to approve the February 22, 2016 Board meeting minutes as presented. Director Alviti seconds the motion and it passes unanimously.

Director Alviti makes a motion to approve the March 28, 2016 Board meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Durkee seconds the motion and it passes unanimously.

Agenda Item 2: Public Comment

(Board members take public comments under advisement, but do not respond except for clarifications. Members may follow-up on public comments in writing post-meeting as permitted by applicable law.)

Mayor Avedisian invites Barbara Henry to speak. Ms. Henry states she would like to start on a very positive note. She states she was not aware that the RIPTA buses had an audio announcement; she only heard it one time where it announced RIPTA does not allow profanity on a bus, and she thought that was wonderful because sometimes we hear inappropriate language that we don't want our children to hear, or that we don't want to hear. She states she commended the driver on the 31 bus for playing it twice. She states that all buses should play this and not have a stigma of certain areas or specific busses only. She did appreciate the audio announcement and said it made a difference when the driver played it, the language and the negativity stopped. On April 6 she was on the 33 bus and there was no audio announcements and she called in and spoke to a RIPTA employee about it. Ms. Henry explained to the employee that the driver did not make any announcement or the bus did not have any audio announcements; Ms. Henry told the employee it is crucial the audio announcements are made because she is blind. The employee responded that she was sorry; Ms. Henry stated that the announcements are very important to people and asked that it be repaired or looked at. Ms. Henry stated the same day she went to purchase new tickets for the Ride program and the credit card machine was not working and also mentioned this to the employee who stated their supervisor was nearby and described Ms. Henry as a blind woman to her supervisor and Ms. Henry stated she was very upset that she said that and hung up.

Mayor Avedisian states that the situation will be referred to Mr. Pereira.

Mayor Avedisian invites Robert Sanchas to speak. Mr. Sanchas wanted to commend RIPTA on the new app for the Ride program; he states with a new app a lot of times there are little kinks and problems and he would like to make suggestions to improve it. If someone is issued a taxi it does not clear right away so if you have a van coming afterwards it just keeps saying a taxi is scheduled from four hours ago. It does not state which taxi company is coming, which can help if there is a reason to contact the company to find out if they are running late, because sometimes it's just simpler to call the taxi company to find out. If the app could state which taxi company, that would be excellent; if it can't that's fine. More importantly, if you look at advance schedules you have the option to delete a ride; he would like to see a button or scroll option for your next ride. On the weekends it does not reset, and sometimes during the day it will reset for a Ride van right before it comes. It would be helpful to see all your scheduled rides so that you can plan better knowing whether a ride is going to be late so you aren't standing outside in snow or rain for the 30 minute window. He states certain times of the day he believes RIPTA receives hundreds or thousands of calls and it can take 15-20 minutes to get through to a reservationist that is why he likes the app – he uses it every day, it really makes a difference.

Mayor Avedisian and Mr. Durkee state they will get this information to the team and that they appreciate his comments - many people just give negative feedback.

Mayor Avedisian invites Don Rhodes to speak. Mr. Rhodes states that RIPTA Riders Alliance is looking forward to being part of the stakeholders that are going to take part in RIPTA's strategic five-year plan. Sometimes in the past they are part of the plan after it has already been done and they feel that with the diversity of ridership that they should be part of the five-year plan at its inception. He hopes this is an example of some of the innovation that was referred to at the last board meeting.

Mayor Avedisian invites Tom Cute, President/Business Agent of the Amalgamated Transit Union 618 to speak. Mr. Cute states he recently became aware of a bill in the General Assembly regarding Uber and Lift and that he spoke to Senator Paiva-Weed about putting some protective language in that bill carving out that Uber and Lift were prohibited from doing private transit work. He states that it's bad when cabs show up for a wheelchair passenger and don't have a lift. Some of the cab drivers are vetted, they have background checks, drug and alcohol tests, safety and sensitive training, to deal with the most vulnerable citizens in our state and he is looking forward to having Senator Paiva-Weed introduce an amendment to that bill. It's positive to protect those riders and prevent interlopers coming in from companies who don't consider their drivers employees. Around the country they are treated as contractors.

Additionally, he states there are two buses now with turning announcements recently installed to let pedestrians know when a bus is turning. It is probably state-of-the-art, and he does not know of any other transit system around the area that is currently has it, and if it's a success he suggests all the busses be retrofitted to have that announcement.

The last item he has is about the 52 line. Drivers have contacted him regarding passengers' concerns along the Branch Avenue corridor between Douglas Avenue and Charles Street. Supposedly there are plans to amend the service there and he states those people deserve to have transit service and we look forward to working with the scheduling and planning department to make sure those riders are not abandoned.

Mayor Avedisian invites Joe Cole, RIPTA driver, to speak next. Mr. Cole wants to address the 52 line with the public hearings beginning. It is an important line that runs Charles Street,

makes a left on Branch and goes all the way down Douglas. He doesn't know exactly what the planning department will say of what they are going to do, but he states in reality they are going to eliminate Branch Avenue all together and it is a big area for transportation. It also carries Bryant University that is also on the UPass which helps that line as far as the ability to keep it on the road. He drove it Sunday and there were quite a few people who rode the bus and they get off on Branch Avenue – you have Price Rite, McDonalds, housing, funeral homes, etc. If you eliminate that line there is no way for these people to get where they have to go on Branch Avenue and they will be forced to walk from either Douglas or Charles. He heard that planning may deviate the 58 line to run through Woodland Road to go down there, but all that is going to do is touch on Branch Avenue near Route 146 and then it will go back onto Route 146; it will not help the people on that line at all and he feels that then it will be said that nobody is riding it and that will eliminate that part of the line also. It was looked at to be eliminated in 2014 and he actively worked against it and it was kept in service. Also the 58 does not run on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, which means there would be no service there at all. On a Saturday or Sunday the only service on the corner of Charles and Branch would be the 51 line. A lot of people use the Home Depot and Walmart; there is a lot in that area, and the line has been there for a long time and needs to stay. He states the seniors will start paying in July and you are going to eliminate a bus line, it makes no sense to him.

Mayor Avedisian welcomes Arthur Morelli of the RIPTA Riders Alliance to speak. Mr. Morelli wants to talk about security in Kennedy Plaza. He states that on Sunday afternoon April 3 he walked into the terminal and there was a body in a white blanket from head to toe, 3 feet in front of the doors that say "no admittance". There was a half sandwich and lots of debris scattered around. There were people sleeping or nodding off on the benches and more people sleeping or wasted sitting on the window ledge in the front foyer. On Sunday afternoon, April 10 in the terminal all service windows were closed, RIPTA, Peter Pan and Greyhound. There were no employees visible, there was scattered debris all over the floor and it was chaos. A man was sleeping on the ledge of the front window in the entrance of the foyer. Mr. Morelli states he took a bus to Lincoln Mall, and came back to Kennedy Plaza later to change busses and he saw the same man there sleeping. Yesterday, Sunday afternoon, April 17 there was a big improvement on cleanliness. There were two men walking around with pails and tongs picking up debris. A male standing at the G-stop was shouting maniacal rants and pointing his middle finger at the sky; he lunged his head at a woman and was swearing at her. Another fellow was in the middle of the plaza looking down and all around talking loudly to himself. On April 5 a man's wallet was robbed in the bathroom; it was 4:30 in the afternoon, and someone came up behind him, punched him in the face and at the same time took his wallet from his back pocket. There are security officers circling the federal building daily, security officers at the Civic Center, Dunkin Donuts Center, Providence Place Mall, Providence Public Library, even picturesque Garden City has security officers. They had the same problem in Times Square, Michael Bloomberg, who is lauded as a visionary, spent enormous amounts of taxpayers' dollars and made Times Square into a pedestrian mall, saying that to have a great city you have to have open spaces. That brought in panhandlers, and costumed characters who did little skits and sang and when they were done they would surround the tourists and demand \$20 a piece. Mayor Bill DeBlasio was going to then spend enormous amounts of money to deconstruct Times Square. But instead they upped the security patrol and they have no more problems. They are keeping New York as the number one tourist attraction in the country, despite the terrorists and 9/11.

Agenda Item 3: CEO Report

Mayor Avedisian welcomes Mr. Studley to present the CEO report. Mr. Studley states that we have the FTA coming in tomorrow with a site visit for bus safety assessment. They will be assessing the buses themselves, and we have a day planned in Kennedy Plaza; they will walk the Plaza with us give us an assessment once they are done. They will be on our property all week, and we have a briefing in the morning. The good part about it is, through the FAST Act and through some Circulars that we have seen, FTA wants to take on a more active role with safety and security, specifically on the bus side. Most rail systems have police departments or some sort of transit police, and now they are focusing on bus systems. That should be a good week for us and we will be bringing the assessments back to the Board.

Mr. Durkee asks for further information. Mr. Studley states he doesn't have further information at this time as it is a new program. The FTA called him and asked if RIPTA would voluntarily commit to it and he said absolutely. They will review the bus design, the bus system itself, not operationally. Today they are at a seminar with Mr. Pereira, Mr. Tierney and our safety officer Mr. Vendetti, which is why they are not here today. Tomorrow they will meet with me and will begin production and will provide a report for you. They do have an agenda, but it is vague, so Mr. Studley does not know the depth of what it will entail. They will definitely see Kennedy Plaza. Mr. Studley states he has had some conversations with several security agencies throughout the country; one specifically that watches 14 or 15 different transit properties is putting together a portfolio package and Mr. Studley will meet with the head of that agency as well and have them give us an assessment of Kennedy Plaza. As the gentleman just spoke about, one issue that people need to understand is that Kennedy Plaza is a public space; it is not a mall, it is not a federal building, it is a public square that we lease from the City of Providence. Mr. Studley has had many conversations with the City, the security leaders, the downtown improvement district – is it a police presence that is needed or is it a security presence? – probably a little bit of both. Again, a security officer in the State of Rhode Island does not have arrest powers, so if in fact that security officer sees an assault taking place, he or she doesn't have the ability to physically arrest them. They would still require a police response to come and do that. He thinks that we could work within those guidelines to try and format something that is going to create a safer environment; he knows that the police department is understaffed, and he knows they are attempting to increase their footprint down there, and with the summer months coming we need to get a bigger security presence there.

Mayor Avedisian states this dovetails to some of the conversations they have had regarding looking at a transit police force; what would that look like? Who would run it? There is already a police force at the airport and there has been some discussion on whether that would be expanded to include rail stations and bus hubs as well.

Mr. Durkee says Amtrak has police as well. Mayor Avedisian states they do and it is one of the reasons why with a multi-hub downtown the presence of Amtrak uniformed police officers is very helpful. We have had a lot of discussions with Providence about police staffing in Kennedy Plaza.

Mr. Studley states the City and Providence Police are doing their best; they just don't have the manpower. It also dovetails into some of the items Director Alvit is working on with DOT and increased commuter rail. How do you do that - improving quality collectively through the airport, the bus system and the rail system and come up with some dedicated system of security – and whether it is an actual police department. In some states, they allow transit security police officers to carry weapons; but is that the right answer? Coming from my background, the sort of training needed to carry a weapon is huge - especially in Kennedy Plaza which is a small area and very pedestrian heavy.

Mayor Avedisian states it still comes down to there has been a push from a number of agencies to do private security there, but they don't have arrest powers and whoever they detain has to be turned over to the Providence Police, because they won't have an ability to be armed. So

they are lots of issues with that plan and he states that Mr. Studley will continue discussions with other transit organizations as to whether or not transit police actually become something viable for the future.

Mr. Durkee asks about Gateway Newport, are there similar security problems there? Mayor Avedisian responds that the biggest issue in the Gateway is the amount of people in the summer, dealing with real seasonal falloff.

Mr. Studley says discussions with the City have focused on the facility itself in Providence and whether we can get some security inside that building. It is public square space, but how do we secure RIPTA property?

Director Alviti asks if there are any discussions or has the possibility of municipal agreements been explored where the state would fund full-time positions in each one of the municipalities where we would need that added presence to provide security at each local area.

Mayor Avedisian states that has been talked about, such as what type of details would be used. Mr. Studley states we are very limited in the use of federal money, which we rely heavily on - as does DOT. Director Alviti asks has it been looked at - what the cost would be to provide the level of security that we think is necessary at each location through inter-municipal agreements? Mr. Studley states we have, and we have looked at Providence multiple times, we have their Detail rate; we just don't have the money to do it.

Director Alviti asks if we have a plan that - we need this level of detail and if we were to do it with a municipality, it would cost this much. He states he would be interested in seeing it.

Mayor Avedisian responds that it may need to be updated, because the rates of details may have changed in the last year.

Mr. Durkee states there are probably several ways to do this, and as we anticipate growing - to a southern hub, to a northern hub and KP will still be there - we need to get our arms around it; and perhaps the state will have to fund it differently. Mr. Studley states that one of the things he looked at when he was first here was CSA grant money available for a 3-year liaison position for a law enforcement officer to be specifically assigned to the transit agencies, and applicable to DOT as well. It was a 3-year grant to provide funding to transit agencies and DOTs, and the grant program expired and it was a cautionary model where that municipality along with the transit agency would absorb that. It has dried up and he still works with TSA but they do not see it coming back in the future.

Director Alviti states that rather than create an entirely new kind of work force; if we can add to the work forces where the infrastructure is there - the training, the gun training - we might be able to do it that way.

Ms. Martin agrees with Mr. Durkee that this is something that is not going away, no matter how hard RIPTA works you always have the dark cloud hanging over and we really don't have a lot of control over it. Mr. Durkee states there is a financial cost to that, which we need to understand.

Mr. Studley states that they are pursuing a discussion and working with GSA and DHS on that. It creates an avenue of funding because of the number of people and the actual infrastructure we have in that area, and going up to the state house makes it even more viable to say that FEMA label that area as a critical infrastructure cluster.

Agenda Item 4: Fall Service Changes

Mayor Avedisian welcomes Seth Morgan of the Planning Department. Mr. Morgan states that we as an agency change our service schedules about 3 times a year, what we call the choose-up. Normally the choose-ups do not come before the board but there are some significant changes being slated for the fall 2016 choose up and we wanted to make sure to give you a

preview of that – we have hearings scheduled for next week and this presentation is the preliminary version of what we will be showing at those public hearings. Mr. Morgan states there has been an ongoing conversation with URI and RIC about their new nursing school which is going to be in the jewelry district; we also have other new growth in the jewelry district that really needs a new service approach. The new service creates some opportunities to improve service in other adjacent areas of the city. We are looking at an approach on how to improve service both in the jewelry district and further abroad. We had a 2012 Comprehensive Operational Analysis that looked at the whole network, using an outside consultant, that basically said what is working and what is not, and what needs to be done differently. In the future as a planning department we would like to start using our in-house skill set to do a region by region look at our system, one at a time without using consultants, to keep that process going forward. There was a recommendation from the 2012 COA that was not implemented and is included in this set of proposals. There are 4 goals from the customer perspective that we are trying to achieve with this program: the first goal is to access new destinations – provide new access to retail, education and employment centers. We are trying to improve the usefulness of the system by improving connections and frequencies in a lot of corridors and to improve our productivity; to get the greatest value for our limited taxpayer dollars and we are trying to protect our current customers. A lot of people rely on the system and we want to make sure that people are not abandoned. The presentation is in 3 sections because it does not involve a lot of changes and is by geographic region, so one section per region.

The first region is East Providence where we are looking to reorganize routes, provide better connections to the East Side of Providence and provide some new access to jobs and retail opportunities in Seekonk. There are 5 total routes in this area, all of which originate in Kennedy Plaza, two head across the East Side and then the Henderson Bridge into East Providence before heading north to Pawtucket and South Attleboro, they are the 35 and 78. They run about every 40-60 minutes depending on time of day and route. Then we have 3 routes that come across 195 and go to the south or the east, the 32, 33 and 34, and they run every 30-60 minutes. There are opportunities in this region that we would like to take advantage of. First, there is a high demand for a high-frequency East Side trunk connection from East Providence across the East Side and into Kennedy Plaza. We think that is an unmet need because there is a lot of density in that corridor. There are also a lot of jobs and a lot of shopping opportunities in Seekonk; just over the line, where many of our riders are currently going by taking the bus as far as they can and then walking. We think improving access there is really important to Rhode Islanders. We also have a large new medical complex going in on Wampanoag Trail that we would like to improve access to. We would also like to offer some weekend service in the southwest part of East Providence. There are a number of routes in this area that have marginal performance that we would like to make better. We have two scenarios for this region that we want to present to the public and get feedback on which one is preferred. There are a number of changes we are proposing for either scenario: those changes include taking Route 33 off of 195 and taking it across the Henderson Bridge to establish this heightened frequency trunk service, and also pulling Routes 32 and 34 off 195. The express routes on 195 were tried a number of years ago to try and improve the appeal of those routes, but in practice they are a dead miles because they are not able to pick people up along the way, and they have not improved ridership that much. It's only about 5 minutes longer to take those other routes. We would also remove service in a section of Warren Avenue which is a segment about ½ mile long just because it is a very hard segment to preserve service to while doing some of the other changes we want to do with the network. The rest of Route 32 and 34 depends on which scenario. Under scenario A, we would take 32 up across the Henderson Bridge and add it to that trunk service and we would also extend it out towards Seekonk past the Lifespan healthcare complex and to Seekonk Square.

Mr. Durkee asks if Seekonk Square is where Target is located. Mr. Morgan responds it is.

Mr. Morgan continues that we connect it onto Route 34 at the Evergreen Apartments, and since they are now connected we merged the service into a single route – rebranded Route 34. The Route 32 names goes away, but all the segments are still covered. Under this scenario all 4 of these routes would operate every 45 minutes on weekdays for a combined frequency in the trunk running from East Providence to downtown Providence every 11 to 12 minutes; which is a lot more appealing than the 0-40 that we have today in terms of attracting riders. Under scenario B we would extend Route 32 up to Wampanoag Plaza and also across to Seekonk Square via the Lifespan complex. We would extend Route 34 out from Evergreen Apartments to Seekonk Square. This creates a circular pattern with Route 32 and 34 doing both halves of the circle from Wampanoag Plaza to Seekonk Square. In particular to note under this plan Route 32 and 34 would not go into Providence, which is a change in how we do business, but each of these 5 routes would operate every 40 minutes and would have a combined trunk, even without route 32 and 34, of every 13-14 minutes. So 32 and 34 riders wishing to go to Providence would make a transfer at the 13-14 minute frequency for service heading into the City.

Mr. Morgan continues with region 2 - on the East Side we would provide better connection to the growing jewelry district and more service overall. Routes 32, 33 and 34 coming across 195; and route 35 and 78 coming across the Henderson Bridge and Angell and Waterman Streets to Kennedy Plaza. Route 92 serving Fox Point coming across Kennedy Plaza and over to Rhode Island College and Route 40 coming from Butler Hospital and Elmgrove Avenue across Angell and Waterman into Kennedy Plaza. We see opportunity in this area, first a lot of growth in the jewelry district, the nursing school, the Brown Medical School and we think there is an opportunity to create new connections from that new growth area to the East Side as well as over to RIC and the west side. We also think there is a high demand for high frequency reliable service on Angell and Waterman Streets; a high density area where we think we would potentially attract a lot of ridership. Elmgrove Avenue is also a fairly high density area that doesn't currently support a very high level of service. We think more frequent service there might be justified. Again we have two scenarios and there are a number of changes we are proposing for both scenarios. It includes taking the 32, 33, and 34 off 195 and taking them across the Henderson Bridge and creating that high frequency trunk on Angell and Waterman Streets. We would also have Route 92 come out of the tunnel and go straight across Point Street to the nursing school, jewelry district and the up to Kennedy Plaza to create that east to west side connection over to the growth area in the jewelry district. We would also pull Route 40 off Angell and Waterman Street because that quarter is now over-served and the question of what happens to the rest of Route 40 depends on which scenario we pick. The first option would be to extend Route 92 up to connect to the remaining section of Route 40 and have every other Route 92 bus extend up to the hospital for a 40 minute service compared to a 60 minute service today. The other scenario would be to keep Route 40 as an independent route but have it go down through the Fox Point neighborhood to preserve that Fox Point-Brown connection that otherwise might not be available.

The third region would be the Branch and Douglas proposed changes which is one of the last remaining recommendations of the 2012 COA which we have not yet implemented. This involves getting better frequency on the outer Douglas Avenue and more reliable trip times for the 58 and easier to understand network design. The current network has route 50 running the intersection of Douglas every 20 minutes, Route 52 running the outer section every 42 minutes and coming across Branch Avenue and down Charles to the Plaza. Also Route 58 coming from Smithfield across Mineral Spring and then down 146 to Kennedy Plaza. A number of opportunities; first connecting Douglas inner and outer because if you are on Douglas Avenue and the fact the bus doesn't go all the way down Douglas is counterintuitive. You would expect

a bus on Douglas to keep going down Douglas. It also is an opportunity to standardize the frequency, outer Douglas runs every 43 minutes which is hard to keep in your head when the next bus is coming, we try to strive for even frequencies whenever we can. We also have the opportunity to avoid peak-hour delay on 146 for Route 58 which creates some irregularity in the peak hour. The proposed change is to take Route 58 off the freeway, have it come down Woodward, Branch and Charles instead and that will increase the reliability of the service during the peak hour and provide additional coverage on Branch Ave, although it somewhat increases the Headway. Then we would extend Route 50 out Douglas to create a single Douglas Ave route every 20 minutes on the intersection as far as Shaws; every 40 minutes out to Bryant University. This leaves a short ½ mile section of Branch Avenue which doesn't really make sense to keep in the route just for that section, the maximum walking distance from any stop along Branch either a replacement stop on Woodward or Douglas is about 1/3 of a mile and we think it will be good for customers overall.

Mr. Morgan states this is a presentation that will be given with more detail to the public shortly and where we hope to solicit feedback and see which options people prefer and move ahead.

Mr. Durkee states that the East Providence enhanced quarter concept is really good and should be looked for the entire system. Mr. Durkee further asks if Angell and Waterman can handle that much bus traffic.

Mr. Morgan responds yes, the traffic on those streets is not that bad right now, during most times of day, which is why we are confident that it won't slow down the busses.

Ms. Martin inquires about the Branch Avenue section and whether it is the same section we heard about during public comment.

Mr. Morgan responds yes, it is the same section. It is a little bit shorter than what was discussed, we are not taking stops off all of Branch Avenue, we are just eliminating a ½ mile long piece and it is at an angle so the neighborhoods around it are fairly close to either Douglas or Woodward; but there is a section that would no longer have service.

Ms. Martin inquires if it is known how many riders would be affected. Mr. Morgan responds that it is about 93 unique passengers a day and if the bridge on Veazey Street is cleared for bus use we will be able to pull this in a little bit further so it will be an even shorter distance.

Mayor Avedisian inquires of the dates of the hearing and requests Mr. Morgan to email it to the Board.

Ms. Bomba inquires what the anticipated increase in the ridership will be in Elmgrove. Mr. Morgan responds there is no firm projection of that. We based the idea that it's a high demand corridor largely based on the current ridership we see on the 35 and 78 even given that it has irregular frequency, it's a popular service and the demographics of the area suggest that it would be a popular area for better transit service. We do not have a way of predicting exactly how much better.

Ms. Preston inquires of the comparison with the current ridership in Elmgrove and that area with a cutback, slight cutback. Mr. Morgan responds he is not sure.

Director Alvit requests a copy of the PowerPoint and other report material to be sent to the DOT. Mayor Avedisian requests Mr. Morgan to get it out to members of the Board as soon as it is finalized.

Ms. Martin comments to Mr. Morgan and the Planning Department that it was a great presentation and it was easy to understand the options.

Ms. Preston asks how will you be sure you are reaching the folks that this would impact because there are so many changes? You have public hearings which people have to know about and have to show up for, but how will you be sure that you won't hear about it after the fact - that you are reaching the folks that this would affect.

Ms. Polichetti responds that on our website and on social media we are reminding people that if they can't come to the hearings we still want to hear from them and they have a couple of options: they can phone in during the day, they can email us or they can snail mail us.

Ms. Preston suggests that the process involve a sense for the ridership in each of the routes and that you set some threshold that you have to hear from. Such as if you heard from 1 percent and you are making this change, we have an opportunity to prevent the negative backside which would be changing it and then hearing from people afterwards, how do you set your sample size to be sure that you are doing what is a positive change for most.

Director Alviti states that would come with a good ridership analysis. Mayor Avedisian responds that during the COA they will identify who the regular passengers are on a regular basis. A discussion ensues between the board members about how the changes can affect riders.

Ms. Polichetti continues that there are digital displays on the busses and in Kennedy Plaza and a text description and as soon as the presentation is complete it will go up on the web and there are also targeted email blasts. We ask people to sign up by their route to get all the pertinent information about the routes they are interested in. That is targeted outreach and the information is on our digital boards on our busses, our website, our display in Kennedy Plaza. We will probably do more outreach with handouts as well, you do not have to be at the hearing to be heard.

Mr. Morgan states it's a challenge because people don't always comment if they like what is going on but then get a lot of negative feedback and we don't go forward with a change and then we hear from people who then comment - why didn't you do that?

Ms. Preston adds or tell us what will help you do what you want to do, so that will invite people to say please do this because I want to be able to get to Seekonk, I can't get to Target and this will allow me to.

Director Alviti comments if it might be helpful to show what the existing pattern of in ridership is and the resultant pattern in ridership so that people can see that you are in fact are providing the same level of service to the various areas that are being impacted by the changes.

Agenda Item 5: Customer Satisfactory Survey

Mayor Avedisian invites Mr. Polichetti to continue with the Customer Satisfaction Survey as it dovetails the previous discussion. Mayor Avedisian states that this will be distributed at the same time as the other process which is an outreach effort to get people to not only comment on their RIPTA experience but on the service changes as well.

Ms. Polichetti states that this is our 4th annual customer satisfaction survey with the American Bus Benchmarking Group which is a consortium of about 18-20 like-sized transit agencies in the United States and the survey which is primarily intended to be an on-line survey. It went up a couple of weeks ago and it will run through May 3. We are focused on getting as many people as possible to take the survey. We are utilizing our community resource team to reach out to our UPass partners, our ECO pass partners, community centers and remind people that this is the roughly month-long period where you can take the survey; we really do want to hear from people. Because it's an online survey we reformatted it in-house and we know that not everyone has access to the web so there are copies on the back table if anyone wants a copy of the printed version – in English and Spanish. Ms. Polichetti states that there are also hard copies in the customer service windows and also there will be some street outreach with the hard copies; community centers and also people can call our customer service reps who will read them the questions and log their answers right on the online portal. We hopefully made it accessible to anyone who is interested, we brought these surveys with us last week when we had community outreach in Newport for a proposed change on our Flex service on Aquidneck

Island and we will bring them with us everywhere we go until May 3rd. The more people who respond the better the information we have, the broader the spectrum of participants.

Ms. Bomba asks about colleges and schools. Ms. Polichetti responds that we have included the colleges, we were getting ready to ask the high school students and will talk to the Providence Schools to see if they feel that would be appropriate. They are very computer savvy and would probably go online. We will make sure that it's okay to reach out to them directly.

Mayor Avedisian states that last time we did this and people got responses when someone asked a question, people saw good feedback and we had good percentages since it was a good experience for people the last time.

Director Alviti inquires if any increases in ridership were noted after it was done last time. Mr. Studley responds that there was not a difference in ridership. One thing we are trying to target is the people who don't ride to tell us why they don't, to try to reach into that market as well. Mr. Studley states that is where your increase in ridership will come from, whether it's commuter rail or bus – why aren't you riding? - what are the reasons - it's not frequent, it's not safe, it's not efficient – whatever that reason - to try then to craft your marketing to that.

Director Alviti states it's important to have that feedback that you do this and then have the answers serve as the feedback loop into operational changes and have those operational changes engaging ridership response. To refine the system as you go along and hopefully target things each time around that does increase ridership.

Mr. Studley responds that is what is done with the results as a partner with ABBG and we benchmark against those other agencies. Two years ago we did the clearinghouse study with the other agencies to get all the different factors from every agency to see where you are with satisfaction and why you have poor ridership. When we put it into that format and then bring it back it is great for us and other agencies.

Director Alviti states he wants to have a discussion between RIPTA and RIDOT about the difference in peak hour traffic while schools are out, to try and target that market to both reduce the congestion we have on highways while increasing ridership, to develop programs and some services that could target those areas.

Further discussion about the launch of the customer survey and Ms. Polichetti states that the survey started about 2 ½ weeks ago and is on our website with a giant banner and a red and green light and a thumbs up/thumbs down; it is also pinned on our Facebook page, and we constantly remind people to take the survey.

Ms. Preston recommends adding a flyer/sticker at the bus stops to remind people to take the survey on their phone while they are waiting for their bus.

Ms. Polichetti comments that there are about 4000 stops and not sure we would be able to do that; Mr. Bannister comments that there are scrolling signs in Kennedy Plaza reminding people of the survey.

Mr. Durkee states that the point is good that as many points where we can reach people the better, not every stop, but high capacity stops. Ms. Preston also states that perhaps it could be added to the audio announcements.

Agenda Item 6: Preliminary Look at 50th Anniversary

Mayor Avedisian states that the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority was created 50 years ago and there was a discussion about what we wanted to do to talk about 50 years of transporting people. Mayor Avedisian invites Ms Polichetti to talk about the plan. Ms. Polichetti states that there is a fascinating history and for those who may remember we have had many incarnations – we were United Electric Railways, and we were privately held the United Transit Company and then in 1966 we were created and chartered as RIPTA by the Rhode Island General

Assembly; we began operations on July 1, 1966 as RIPTA. We are still in the early planning stages but wanted to share with the board some of the things we are discussing – how to make a celebration of 50 years of service to the community and recognizing our passengers and our drivers this year. Because of economics and being cognizant of some of the challenges our passengers have, we are trying to think of a year-long commemoration without spending a lot of money - such as working with media partners, and have a commemorative logo created that would be at virtually no cost to the agency, but would be a way to brand our schedules, our outreach materials for the year. So if you were visiting Rhode Island and you picked up a schedule you would see that this is RIPTA's 50th anniversary. We would incorporate the logo in limited edition t-shirts, with some handed out as promotional material and some sold online; we have had a soft launch of our online store recently. We would have other promotional materials as well, we would probably wrap 3 busses with a commemorative bus wrap as a way to promote transit use in the state and as a thank you to our customers with bus stop blitzes with promotional rates. We are going to do something to thank our employees and we are still working on details that would hit all shifts. There is discussion among the board members about ways to do that. In the spirit of giving back, we take part in many causes all year long with the Food Drives, Pink Out on May 6 for the Gloria Gemma cancer research organization and we are working with a company to have Christmas ornaments made and those would be sold and the proceeds would go to a statewide charity to be determined. We also love to enlist our passengers and the public when we can and the July/August monthly bus pass will look very different – very colorful, bright and beautiful and it was designed in response to an online contest.

Agenda Item 7: **Executive Session to consider, discuss and act upon such matters as may be closed to the public pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(1) regarding employee job performance; and 42-46-5(a)(2) regarding issues related to collective bargaining.**

Mayor Avedisian states next item on the agenda is a personnel matter and the subject was notified in writing of his or her right to have the discussion in an open meeting and declined to have the discussion in an open meeting. Mayor Avedisian reads the law to go into Executive Session. Mr. Durkee makes the motion to enter into Executive Session and the motion is seconded by Director Alvit and a roll call vote was taken. The motion to convene into Executive Session passes unanimously.

Agenda Item 8: **Adjournment**

Mayor Avedisian asks for a motion to seal the Executive Session minutes. Director Alvit makes a motion to seal the minutes from Executive Session and Ms. Bomba seconds the motion and it passes unanimously.

Mr. McCann states that according to the General Laws Sec. 42-46-4(b) the board has unanimously voted to keep all notes taken in Executive Session regarding the personnel matter confidential so as not to jeopardize any strategy, negotiation, or investigation undertaken pursuant to discussions conducted under Sec. 42-46-5(a).

Ms. Preston makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Martin seconds the motion and it passes unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Catalano
Recording Secretary

DRAFT