



MINUTES

Meeting of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Board of Directors

September 28, 2023, AT 9:00 A.M.

10 Park Plaza, 2nd Floor Board Room, Suite 2890
Boston, MA 02116

Public participation and comment occurred via written communication, voice message and in-person public comment.

This meeting was broadcast virtually.

**BOARD MEMBERS
PARTICIPATING IN-
PERSON:**

Chair Tom Glynn, Director Robert Butler, Director Mary Skelton Roberts, Director Chanda Smart, Acting Secretary Monica Tibbitts-Nutt

**BOARD MEMBERS
PARTICIPATING
REMOTELY:**

Director Charlie Sisitsky

**BOARD MEMBERS
ABSENT:**

Director Eric Goodwine, Director Thomas Koch, Director Tom McGee

**Others Presenting and/or
Participating for Various
Portions of the Meeting:**

General Manager Phillip Eng, Chief Operating Officer Ryan Coholan, MassDOT Chief Safety Officer Pat Lavin, Senior Advisor for Capital, Operations and Safety Rod Brooks, Chief Safety Officer Tim Lesniak, Senior Director of Maintenance of Way Jody Ray, Chief of Infrastructure Doug Connett, Chief of Quality, Compliance, and Oversight Meredith Sandberg, Chief Engineer Sam Zhou

Others Present:

General Counsel Douglas McGarrah, Chief Counsel Kevin Scanlon, Counsel- Corporate Governance Noah Potash

OPEN OF MEETING/Call to order by the Chair

Chair Tom Glynn called the meeting of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority ("MBTA") Board to order at 9:00 a.m. Noah Potash called the roll of the MBTA Board of Directors participating, being a quorum of the MBTA Board:

Chair Glynn	Yes
Director Butler	Yes
Director Sisitsky	Yes
Director Skelton Roberts	Yes
Director Smart	Yes
Director Tibbits-Nutt	Yes

Acting Secretary of Transportation Monica Tibbits-Nutt welcomed the newly appointed board members and discussed ongoing climate initiatives. She also mentioned restructuring of the MBTA's leadership structure and additional funds for capital improvements in the FY24 budget, which will make the system safer, more reliable, and more resilient. Director Skelton Roberts said she was delighted to be there and thanked the advocacy community. She added that she was a lifelong public transit rider and looked forward to working with the Board. Director Sisitsky said it was a pleasure to be there and that he looked forward to working with the Board and bringing information about the western suburbs.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Chair Glynn said that the first item on the agenda was an executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining. He said that he had determined that an open meeting could have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the MBTA. He noted that the Board would return to open session following the discussion.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was by roll call:

VOTED:

To enter executive session to discuss strategy with regard to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body.

Chair Glynn	Yes
Director Butler	Yes

Director Sisitsky	Yes
Director Skelton Roberts	Yes
Director Smart	Yes
Director Tibbits-Nutt	Yes

Note: The Board entered executive session at 9:08 a.m. and returned to open session at 9:29 a.m. Director Butler recused himself and did not participate.

OPEN SESSION/Public Comment Period #1

Martha London of the Mass Senior Action Council spoke on behalf of seniors reliant on public transit, expressing support for a low-income fare and stating that seniors are underserved by the RIDE.

Steven Siritsky of Jamaica Plain discussed wait times and overcrowding on the route 1 bus and suggested the implementation of priority infrastructure, enforcement of traffic laws, and switching to a frequency scheduling model. He then criticized slow subway speeds and disabled trains. He concluded his comments by requesting greater transparency and criticizing recent tax cuts.

Garrett Waldman welcomed the new board members and said the MBTA should work on reducing the number of out-of-system vehicle miles traveled.

2. Consent Agenda

Chair Glynn explained that the approval of the August meeting minutes would be voted separately from the other items as the new members were not present at the August meeting.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was by roll call:

VOTED:

To approve the minutes of the August 24, 2023 meeting of the MBTA Board of Directors.

Chair Glynn	Yes
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Director Butler	Yes
Director Sisitsky	Abstain
Director Skelton Roberts	Abstain
Director Smart	Yes
Director Tibbits-Nutt	Abstain

He then explained that a vote to adopt the consent agenda would authorize the General Manager to enter into Collective Bargaining Agreements with the MBTA Police Association and the Superior Officers Association.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was by roll call:

VOTED:

To adopt the consent agenda.

Chair Glynn	Yes
Director Sisitsky	Yes
Director Skelton Roberts	Yes
Director Smart	Yes
Director Tibbits-Nutt	Yes

REPORTS

3. Report from the General Manager

General Manager Phillip Eng delivered his report, discussing recent organizational changes and introducing the leadership team. He then discussed coordination with the fire department regarding standpipes and reviewed the September 11th extreme weather event in Leominster. Chief Operating Officer Ryan Coholan provided more details on flooding in Leominster, explaining the extensive work that the team conducted to halt service, make repairs, and restore passenger and freight rail service by September 18th.

The General Manager presented the fall/winter commuter rail schedule, which extends late night service, adds peak trains and express service, and increases weekend frequency on the Newburyport/Rockport Line. He announced that the Foxboro commuter

rail pilot will be made permanent with support from the Kraft Group. Mr. Eng then reviewed Operation Lifesaver and improvements to grade crossings. He provided workforce updates, noting 1002 year-to-date hires and work to speed up the hiring process. Mr. Eng discussed work on the Red Line Ashmont and Mattapan lines and modernizing the MBTA with contactless card readers. He concluded by recognizing National Hispanic Latino Heritage Month. Chair Glynn asked if the recent track conditions on the Green Line Extension (“GLX”) were unusual, and Mr. Eng said that they were unusual and further investigation was needed. Director Butler asked if the restricted Red Line tracks were new, and the General Manager said that they were mostly the oldest infrastructure. Director Butler asked if the GLX issues should fall on the contractor and Mr. Eng said the GLX team was responsible but that more information was needed. Director Skelton Roberts asked about building redundancy into the system to prepare for climate events and about informing the public about safety projects. The General Manager discussed the importance of the bus network. Director Smart asked about recent FTA letters and Mr. Eng discussed the stoppage of lone worker access to the Right-of-Way per FTA guidance.

ACTIONS & PRESENTATIONS

4. Safety Programs Update

MassDOT Chief Safety Officer Pat Lavin began the update on Safety Programs by discussing the safety organization, his own background, and interaction with other agencies. Senior Advisor for Capital, Operations, and Safety Rod Brooks then discussed his professional background. Chief Safety Officer Tim Lesniak discussed the organization of the safety department and noted Department of Public Utilities (“DPU”) approval of the Transit Safety Plan. Chair Glynn asked about increases in

budget and staffing in response to the Safety Management Inspection (“SMI”). Mr. Lesniak discussed the changes and said he could return with precise figures. He then reviewed progress on standpipe systems and recent near misses, noting that reported near misses appear to be spiking. Director Butler asked if staff are looking at other agencies’ approaches and Mr. Lesniak said that while they have not compared statistics, they have looked at responses to near misses. Director Butler asked about using transponders on Right-of-Way workers and Mr. Lavin said that they would be looking into how the technology has advanced. Mr. Brooks discussed the importance of re-writing the Right-of-Way manual. Mr. Lesniak discussed the response to the September 14th Immediate Action Letter. Director Butler asked if the recent near misses involved MBTA workers or contractors and Mr. Lesniak said they all involved MBTA workers. Director Skelton Roberts asked about the balance between safety and providing a basic level of service and Mr. Lesniak discussed re-writing the Right-of-Way manual and Mr. Eng discussed the approach to maintenance work.

Note: Director Sisitsky left the meeting at approximately 11:02 a.m.

5. Maintenance of Way Reports

Chief of Infrastructure Doug Connett outlined the work of the Maintenance of Way department and coordination with other entities. He reviewed key enhancement areas and ongoing and future actions. He then discussed areas for further improvement. Director Butler asked if there are limitations on companies that can assess track geometry and Mr. Connett said that there are many companies that can do the work. Senior Director of Maintenance of Way Jody Ray noted that there are

limitations in some areas of the MBTA's network, especially older subway tunnels. Mr. Connett said that they are looking at improving their ability to do some work in-house.

6. Safety Management Inspection Update

Acting Chief of Quality, Compliance and Oversight Meredith Sandberg presented an update on the Safety Management Inspection, providing a brief overview of her office's work and reporting on finding closure progress. She discussed progress on the recent Immediate Action Letter and noted that 6 findings have been closed along with 4 corrective action plans, with more closures pending. She concluded by summarizing overall SMI response progress. Director Smart asked if there are enough track workers to comply with FTA guidance and the General Manager acknowledged the need to grow the Maintenance of Way team.

Public Comment Period #2

Caitlin Allen Connelly of A Better City acknowledged challenges from years of underinvestment but said that the struggling service impacts riders. She said drastic measures were needed and asked for the MBTA to provide a timeline for completion of trackwork and transparency about funding needs.

Dan MacElhenney complained about the lack of restrooms in subway stations and discussed ADA compliance.

Jarred Johnson of TransitMatters discussed the quality of service over the past year and said it has eroded public confidence. He noted some progress but said it didn't outweigh degraded service. He said that after 30 years of austerity funding, the MBTA needed to request sufficient resources.

7. South Coast Rail Update

Chief Engineer Sam Zhou introduced himself and Chief Operating Officer Ryan Coholan for an update on South Coast Rail. Mr. Coholan described Phase 1 of the project, including 36 miles of Right-of-Way work and several new stations. He discussed project safety, especially grade crossings and regional education. Mr. Coholan discussed community engagement and reviewed construction accomplishments and work completed to date. He provided an overview of the current status, noting that the Fall River line is substantially complete, with the Middleborough/New Bedford line at 85%. He said that Automatic Train Control (“ATC”) and Positive Train Control (“PTC”) testing would continue into the spring and be followed by a qualification period. He concluded by discussing next steps, including station completions, fire and safety training, safety certification of the system, and FRA simulated service demonstrations. Chair Glynn asked about the schedule for revenue service and Mr. Coholan said that they expect to begin revenue service in Summer 2024.

Adjournment

Chair Glynn requested a motion to adjourn the MBTA Board meeting.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was by roll call:

VOTED: to adjourn at 12:05 p.m.

Chair Glynn	Yes
Director Butler	Yes
Director Skelton Roberts	Yes
Director Smart	Yes
Director Tibbits-Nutt	Yes

Documents relied upon for this meeting:

- September 28, 2023 Agenda
- Minutes of August 24, 2023 Board Meeting
- GM Report to Board 09.28.2023_Final
- 9. MBTA-MassDOT Safety Overview

- 20230928_ MOW Department Final
- 9. QCO Update SEP Board 2023
- SCR Project Update to Board 092823 revised