



Charles D. Baker, Governor  
Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor  
Stephanie Pollack, MassDOT Secretary & CEO



May 23, 2016

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to share the news that Frank DePaola, who has served as your General Manager since last February, plans to retire after his current term expires on June 30. As some of you know, Frank has been battling cancer for months and he has now come to the conclusion that he cannot focus adequately on his health and the treatment he needs while carrying out the heavy responsibilities of the GM's job. While we will miss Frank's steady hand and expertise at the MBTA, health and family come first and I know that you all join me in wishing Frank well as he refocuses his considerable energy and optimism on his own needs.

Under the MBTA reform legislation enacted last year, as Secretary of Transportation I am responsible for hiring the MBTA's GM and so I am naming Chief Administrator Brian Shortsleeve as Acting General Manager effective July 1. As of that date, Chief Operating Officer Jeffrey Gonneville has also agreed to take on additional responsibilities including oversight of the MBTA's safety and systemwide accessibility departments. I will be consulting with Brian and Jeff, the members of the Fiscal and Management Control Board and MassDOT board and other MBTA leaders as we establish a longer-term plan for the leadership transition at the MBTA.

While I will be back in touch soon with more information on this transition, today I want to focus on thanking Frank for his years of service not only to the MBTA but to the Commonwealth in his prior positions at the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and Massachusetts Water Resources Authority.

Last year in February the members of the then-Massachusetts Department of Transportation Board asked me to help identify someone who could serve on an interim basis as General Manager of the MBTA. The GM had resigned abruptly, rapid transit and commuter rail service were still struggling under the weight of the winter's snow and ice and the T needed leadership that could begin the recovery process immediately. By happenstance, it was almost exactly four years after Frank, then Assistant General Manager for Design and Construction at the MBTA, had been named MassDOT Highway Administrator in the wake of a tunnel light fixture collapse in one of the Central Artery tunnels. Now we needed him to head back to the MBTA to help the authority recover from the devastating winter of 2015, re-focus on customer service and operating performance and develop and implement a winter resiliency program. When I walked into Frank's office to ask if he'd step in as interim GM, he showed me the work he had already begun not just on recovering service but on planning for a springtime push to get a head start on repairs that would be needed before the next winter. I knew I had the right guy.

A few months later, after the MBTA Expert Panel recommended changes to MBTA leadership and governance and the Legislature responded with important new reform legislation creating the Fiscal Management and Control Board, Frank agreed to stay on as General Manager and to launch a new leadership structure in which the GM would share responsibility with a Chief Administrator who is responsible for the fiscal and managerial side of the T. Since last summer, Frank, Chief Administrator Brian Shortsleeve and Chief Operating Officer Jeff Gonneville have worked together to ensure that the MBTA is run safely and reliably, focuses on improving service to its customers and uses both operating and capital budget resources responsibly and effectively.

I want to thank Frank for his willingness to step up and serve, whether at the MBTA or MassDOT, whether as Highway Administrator, acting Secretary, MassDOT Chief Operating Officer (a role that lasted roughly one month) or MBTA GM. He has brought to his service a deep knowledge of engineering, project delivery and all operational aspects of the agencies. And in carrying out his responsibilities over the years, Frank has gained the respect of not only his colleagues inside MassDOT and the MBTA but of elected officials on Beacon Hill and in cities and towns around the Commonwealth. Frank is respected and even beloved and he will be missed.

As I noted earlier, I will be back in touch soon with more information on this leadership transition and I realize that many of you will be concerned because the MBTA is once again in the position of having interim leadership. Both I and the members of the Fiscal and Management Control Board are keenly aware that it has been far too long since the MBTA has had stable leadership for more than a handful of years. While Frank, Brian and Jeff have made admirable progress on stabilizing the management of the authority and implementing important changes and reforms, much work remains to be done. In the coming weeks, I will be talking with MBTA leadership and staff and with key stakeholders outside the authority and working closely with FMCB and MassDOT Board members to develop a transition plan that will ensure continued progress in the near-term while laying the groundwork for the stable, long-term leadership and governance that will help the MBTA to once again become one of the safest, most reliable and customer-focused and best maintained transit agencies in the United States. Thank you for the work you do every day and the effort that I know you will continue to put into achieving these objectives.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Pollack  
Secretary and CEO