

Cape Ann Transportation Authority
Board Meeting
December 4, 2023
2:00pm

Attendance: Mayor Greg Verga, Mitchell Vieira, Gil Frieden, Stephen Crane, Joe Domelowicz, ADA Representative Jay Smiledge, Board Counsel Liz O'Connor, Interim Administrator, Shona Norman, Jackie LaFlam

Meeting held virtually via zoom.

Called to order by Mayor Verga at 2:00pm

Roll call Gloucester, Rockport, Essex, Ipswich, Hamilton, Jay Smiledge

Candidate for Administrator Position

Felicia Webb was introduced to all and she explained her experience in the many roles in transportation.

Felicia explained her roll at VTA as Director of Transit Operations and what changed for her as to why she wanted to come back to CATA.

Felicia was interviewed by each member of the Advisory Board with different concerns of what she would bring to CATA.

Joe: What has changed since you left CATA for VTA?

She stated she didn't realize how much she enjoyed being at CATA more so than at VTA. Being away from here she also realized just how much the value of her work at CATA meant to her. The services she implemented while at CATA gave her meaning to her position at CATA and she values that.

Gil Frieden from Essex asked her if she could get more people on the buses in Essex and if she could he is happy to have her back. What can you bring back to CATA that you may have learned from VTA?

Felicia stated VTA used more technology and different scheduling plans looking at data. CATA would benefit from more technology and using the data to upgrade the services

Stephen Crane: He had two concerns. What service options could we implement? There is a gap in school age children and would like to see new services. Also, Fleet Electrification.

Felicia stated at this time that CATA On Demand is only in Gloucester. We could look into additional service and open it up to everyone with what is the best use of the funding. On demand service would be better than fixed route service for what you are looking to implement. As far as electric buses, VTA has 50% of electric buses, new technology and its still evolving. CATA is limited because there are only 3 manufacturing companies who makes 30 ft buses and only one that makes electric buses and it's a Chinese company and we can't order from. She said because CATA is small geographically they could work and we would have to find the funding for them.

Jay Smiledge: Was happy to see Felicia. He had a few concerns about On Demand and the ADA fixed route. He feels On Demand service quality has decreased because of the times and always running late and not reliable. He is hoping you that Felicia can bring it back to more user friendly. Jay was also

concerned about getting more low step buses for ADA and Dial a Ride, it is too difficult for ADA riders to get on and off the high step buses, would like them more Disabled friendly.

Felicia responded to the bus concerns and mentioned ADA buses are procured through a grant and they just started low buses and we can apply for replacement low floor buses and we will address those issues. She said that would be an easy fix for CATA.

She said the On Demand issues, she would have to look at data to see if we need a third bus as well as look at different providers. There seems to be some issues with VIA, she did explain how it works.

Mitchell Vieira: Felicia, what would your focus be on coming back to CATA?

Felicia's response:

Financial and where we are at with funding.

Budget with operations, state services and ridership

Having a relationship with the operations company and better communication with them. A lot of problems can be avoided by communicating so she will have monthly meetings so everyone is on the same page.

Mayor Verga asked what is the process of considering the position for Felicia.

Mitch said deliberation with each member of the Board and the Board has the ability to take action then make a motion to appoint Felicia as the Administrator of CATA.

Mayor Verga's response was it's refreshing to hear you were interested in coming back to CATA.

Joe said Felicia is a good fit for CATA.

Liz had no concerns at all, she's very happy to see her return.

Shona said I hope she does come back.

Jackie is ecstatic and hoping she will back.

Gil also said she is a great fit.

Stephen is new to our Board but the feedback is a nice reflection on Felicia.

Jay had a few questions on the Audit report and financial issues, and wants to be sure this won't happen again.

Mayor Verga said they decided to go with an outside auditor due to difficulty between prior and current auditor.

Jay indicated the union wanted to be present for Board Meetings.

Mayor Verga said these meetings are open to the public.

Mitch said he believes Felicia is a good fit for CATA and he brought her on originally and she has done some great things for CATA.

Mayor Verga said he has been waiting patiently and is pleased that Felicia wants to come back.

Motion to appoint Felicia Webb as Cape Ann Transportation Authority's Administrator as December 18,2023

By Mitch Vieira

Seconded by Joe Domelowicz

Roll call vote

Vote: Unanimous

Mayor Verga: I move that the CATA Advisory Board to adjourn at 2:50pm

Seconded Mitch Vieira

Roll Call Vote

All in Favor