



Thursday, March 5, 2026

ADVISORY BOARD

MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Board Members Attending:

Georgetown: Frank O'Connor

Merrimack: Mitch Kostoulakos

Newbury: Kristen Grubbs

North Andover: Andrew Shapiro

Riders' Representative: Jessica Ramos

Haverhill: Christine Lindberg

Methuen: Kathleen Colwell

Newburyport: Sean Finn

Salisbury: Adrienne Linnell

In Miss Gove's absence, Ms. Colwell served as acting Chair. She called the meeting to order at 8:39 a.m.

1. **Welcome & Introductions:** Ms. Colwell welcomed the Board members and everyone in attendance and invited them to introduce themselves.
2. **Approval of Minutes of the Meeting of February 6, 2026:** Ms. Colwell called for a motion to approve the minutes of the Advisory Board meeting of February 5, 2026. So moved by Ms. Grubbs of Newbury, seconded by Mr. O'Connor of Georgetown. Vote to approve: Unanimous, with abstentions from North Andover and Salisbury.
3. **Advisory Board Committees Reports:**
 - a. *Fixed Route Service Committee:* Mr. Shapiro, Chair of this sub-committee, reported that the committee met recently to review and discuss two new bus routes, #25 Methuen crosstown and #28 to Salem, New Hampshire. The committee voted unanimously to recommend that the full Board adopt the new routes as presented. After a description of the routes by Mr. Berger, Ms. Colwell asked if there was a motion to approve the new routes. Mr. Shapiro of North Andover so moved; seconded by Ms. Lindberg of Haverhill. Vote to approve: Unanimous.
 - b. *Ferry Service Committee:* Mr. Berger reported that a meeting was being planned between all relevant parties within the next month to coordinate and organize the next steps that will be necessary to move the project along.
 - c. *Paratransit Service Committee:* There is no current report but they are planning to meet prior to the May or June Board meeting.
 - d. *Finance and Audit Committee:* Mr. Shapiro of North Andover stated that they are planning to meet in late April to review the upcoming FY2027 budget.
 - e. *Administrator Performance & Compensation Committee:* Ms. Colwell reported that they will meet prior to the June meeting to review Mr. Berger's performance and status.

- 4. City and Town Reports:** Cities and Towns are invited to report any upcoming projects that may benefit from MeVa transportation services.
- a. Mr. Shapiro of North Andover reported that there is a 300-unit project being considered for the Mill Districts. There has also been development of additional units at Merrimack College, with the potential for more across the street.
 - b. Ms. Lindberg of Haverhill pointed out that the new parking garage on Merrimack Street will be opening soon. The garage will have 660 parking spaces available.
 - c. Mr. Kostoulakos of Merrimac reported a new condo development on MeVa's bus route 17. The Select Board is also advocating for more mobile homes to satisfy the need for affordable housing in the town.
 - d. Ms. Grubbs of Newbury reported that a 44-unit townhouse development is going in near exit 81 off Route 95 in Byfield. It's located near the town offices, post office and library. Chapter 40B single-family home condos are planned about a mile from there. The COA is conducting a study concerning constructing a new building for their headquarters near the library. There are additional projects being discussed and planned for the other side of town and for Plum Island.
 - e. Mr. Finn of Newburyport mentioned the "Kmart project" at Port Plaza Landing which will include a five-story building containing 212 rental units, and is expected to include 53 Chapter 40B affordable housing units.
 - f. Ms. Colwell of Methuen spoke about a proposed Choice Hotel, planned to have 122 rooms on Pleasant Valley Street, serving both short-term guests and long-term business travelers. She also spoke of approximately 150 residential units housed in three buildings near Pelham Street.
- 5. Final MeVa Comprehensive Regional Transit Plan (CRTP):** Mr. Berger pointed out that the executive summary of the finalized plan was included in each Board member's packet today. He reported that AECOM, who was hired to help all 15 RTAs update their plans, stated that MeVa's Board and Team were the most engaged of all RTAs with responses and suggestions. The full report is available on our website: MeVa.com.
- 6. Administrator's Report:** Mr. Berger briefly updated the board members about Administration, Operations, Finance, Planning and Outreach. Please refer to his Administrator's Report dated March 5, 2026, for details.
- 7. Update from MVPC:** Elizabeth Maldari from MVPC updated the members on current activities. For planning updates, please see their website at www.mvpc.org
- 8. Other Business:** There was no other business presented.
- 9. Confirm Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 7, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. at MeVa Headquarters in the main conference room.
- 10. Adjournment:** Ms. Colwell asked for a motion to adjourn at 9:42 a.m. So moved by Mr. O'Connor of Georgetown; seconded by Mr. Kostoulakos of Merrimac; Vote to adjourn: Unanimous.