

MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL  
TRANSIT AUTHORITY

(A Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION,  
AND SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

(WITH INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT THEREON)

**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
(A Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

Year Ended June 30, 2023

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# Bruce D. Norling, CPA, P.C.

## INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Advisory Board  
Merrimack Valley Regional Transit authority  
Haverhill, Massachusetts

### **Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements**

#### ***Opinions***

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Merrimack Regional Transit Authority (the Authority), a component unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, as of and for the year ended June 30, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Authority's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities and the aggregate discretely presented component unit of the Authority, as of June 30, 2023, and the respective changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

#### ***Basis for Opinions***

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Authority, and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

#### ***Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements***

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

#### ***Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements***

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards*, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

### ***Required Supplementary Information***

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the management's discussion and analysis on pages 4-7 and required supplementary information on pages 29-31 be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information, because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

### ***Supplementary Information***

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming opinions on the financial statements that collectively comprise the Authority's basic financial statements. The accompanying combining and individual nonmajor fund financial statements and schedule of expenditures of federal awards, as required by Title 2 U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements*

*for Federal Awards*, are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the basic financial statements or to the basic financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the combining and individual nonmajor fund financial statements and the schedule of expenditures of federal awards are fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the basic financial statements as a whole.

**Other Reporting Required by *Government Auditing Standards***

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated March 7, 2024, on our consideration of the Authority's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Authority's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

*Bruce D. Norling, CPA, P.C.*

March 7, 2024  
Sudbury, Massachusetts

# MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

(A Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

## Required Supplementary Information

### Management's Discussion and Analysis – Unaudited

#### Financial Highlights

The assets of the Authority exceed its liabilities at the close of the most recent fiscal year by \$59,196,382. The Authority's total net position increased by \$2,641,311 mainly due to the acquisition of capital grant assets. The Authority's expenses, except for depreciation and amortization, are fully funded annually through a combination of federal, state, and local assistance.

The Authority's net position consists of its investment in capital assets (e.g., land, buildings, vehicles, and other equipment). The Authority uses these capital assets to provide fixed route and paratransit services to individuals within its service area; consequently, these net assets are not available for future spending. Although the Authority's investment in capital assets is reported as net of related debt, it should be noted that the resources needed to repay any related debt outstanding must be provided from other sources, since the capital assets themselves cannot be used to liquidate these liabilities.

Key factors in the changes in revenues and expenses are as follows:

- Passenger fares for the entire fiscal year was \$0.00, as the MeVa Advisory Board voted to go fare free starting in March, 2022.
- Total operating expenses, excluding depreciation, increased by \$2,188,916, or 10.6%, due to increased levels of service provided in order to keep up with growing demand.
- Revenues from assessments from member municipalities increased by 2.5% as allowed by law.
- Federal operating assistance, inclusive of COVID relief funds (CARES, ARPA) and state contract assistance increased. Federal capital assistance and state capital assistance increased.

#### Capital Assets and Debt

The Authority's capital assets as of June 30, 2023 amounted to \$60,010,216 (net of accumulated depreciation). This investment in capital assets includes land, buildings and improvements, transportation equipment, office, and other equipment.

Capital asset additions and adjustments during the fiscal include the following:

Transit equipment	\$ 3,552,707
Construction in progress	3,138,320
Bus stop signs	130,504
Service equipment	90,493
	<u>\$ 6,912,024</u>

The Authority acquires its capital assets under federal capital grants and state matching funds.

At year-end, the Authority had \$10,800,000 of revenue anticipation notes outstanding, an increase of \$600,000 over the prior year.

# MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

(A Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

## Required Supplementary Information

### Management's Discussion and Analysis – Unaudited

#### **Economic Factors and Next Year's Budgets**

Funding the Authority's net cost of service consists of non-capital expenses less all non-capital revenues, except member municipality assessments and operating assistance from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The net cost of service is funded through assessments to member municipalities, which may increase by no more than 2.5% annually plus the members' share of any new services. The State provides State Operating Assistance currently as opposed to reimbursing.

Looking forward, over the past year, MeVa has successfully secured non-traditional discretionary funding sources, including a \$500,000 grant from the Barr Foundation, a \$400,000 grant from MassDOT's Shared Streets and Spaces program, \$100,000 from MassDOT's Community Access Grant program, and \$8,000 from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's Workforce Safety Grant program. These funding sources will help MeVa replace the more traditional fare revenue, while also helping set MeVa up with previously untapped revenue streams

During the Fiscal Year, the Authority completed a number of capital projects, including:

- Purchase eight (8) new 35-ft transit buses, which allows MeVa to keep its fleet in a state of good repair.
- Completed Riverbank Stabilization construction project, which secured MeVa's administrative, maintenance and operations campus in order to stave off the effects of erosion and land displacement for generations to come.
- Repairs and equipment for MeVa Headquarter in Bradford, including new flooring, furniture, roof, and other repairs.
- Engineering for reuse of McGovern Intermodal Transportation Center to serve as future hub of MeVa's Lawrence-based operations.
- Acquired and installed nineteen (19) signature bus shelters equipped with solar-powered lighting and benches in Lawrence (15) and Amesbury (4).
- Replace one (1) Model Year 2017 Supervisory Vehicle.

During the Fiscal Year, the Authority implemented route redesign to streamline routes and make them more bidirectional, in order to better respect MeVa riders' time. This allows for more intuitive location of the bus route. MeVa also renumbered all Lawrence-based routes from numbers in the 30s and 40s, often with confusing letter suffixes to simple, single digit route numbers (e.g. the 39B is now the 9), MeVa decreased headways in Lawrence to 30 minutes all day, implemented the first direct service to Groveland, streamlined the seasonal beach bus to travel express via highway from Lawrence, and added paratransit service to Rowley.

During the Fiscal Year, the Authority received authorization from the NERAC board to decommission assets consisting of one Evacuation bus, and two Evacuation vans after (18) years of service. MeVa also transferred six MCI over the road coaches to transit authorities in New Hampshire and Maine, which relieved an insurance, maintenance and storage burden for an asset that did not fit the core mission.

# MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

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## Required Supplementary Information

### Management's Discussion and Analysis – Unaudited

In May 2022, the Advisory Board adopted the FY 2023 Budget to take effect on July 1, 2022. The FY 2022 Annual Audit was accepted by the Advisory Board and posted to the Authority's website. The Five-Year 2023-2027 Capital Plan was adopted by the Advisory Board. The annual Revenue Anticipation Note (RAN) borrowing for Fiscal Year 2023 was completed in June 2022.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Authority will undertake these Capital Projects:

- Replace fourteen (14) Transit Buses (4 29-ft, 8 35-ft, and 2 Diesel/Electric Hybrid 35-ft GenFlex vehicles), which utilizes Flex (CMAQ) funding.
- Upgrade Automated Stop and Automated Vehicle Location software/hardware on all buses. Real-time information panels will be added to station amenities.
- Facility upgrades and planning for implementing the McGovern Center in Lawrence as MeVa's transit hub.
- Planning for introduction of low floor paratransit vehicles.
- Manufacture of two (2) solar-powered low-profile ferryboats for future deployment on the Merrimack River, utilizing FTA ferryboat discretionary funding.
- Continuation of service rebranding projects including bus wraps and on street signage. Route replanning will continue. In certain locations will implement transit signal priority for bus traffic in and out of main transfer facilities.

MeVa's Ridership has been a tremendous success, as MeVa is now well above pre-pandemic ridership figures and far outpacing the performance of other transit authorities. Through the end of December 2023, monthly fixed route ridership of 218,899 has grown as compared to December 2019, such that MeVa is now 60.7% above pre-COVID ridership (December 2019) of 136,175. On the paratransit side, December 2023 ridership of 7,867 exceeds pre-COVID (December 2019) ridership of 6,621 by 18.8%. Since going fare-free, while MeVa's ridership is way up, complaints are down by a third. During the same time period, the driver workforce has grown by over 40%, despite a national driver shortage.



**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

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## Required Supplementary Information

## Management's Discussion and Analysis - Unaudited

**Condensed Financial Information**

Condensed financial information as of and for the years ended June 30, 2023 and 2022 are as follows:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Current assets	\$ 8,530,906	\$ 10,225,302
Restricted and noncurrent assets	6,926,860	5,563,045
Capital assets, net	60,010,216	57,210,598
Total assets	<u>75,467,982</u>	<u>72,998,945</u>
Current liabilities	575,019	3,010,954
Restricted and noncurrent liabilities	14,652,208	12,510,568
Long term liabilities	<u>1,044,373</u>	<u>1,134,456</u>
Total liabilities	16,271,600	16,655,978
Net position:		
Invested in capital assets, net of related debt	60,010,216	57,210,598
Restricted	-	-
Unrestricted	<u>(813,834)</u>	<u>(655,527)</u>
Total net position	<u>\$ 59,196,382</u>	<u>\$ 56,555,071</u>
Operating revenue		
Revenue from transportation	\$ 4,229	\$ 561,084
Other	<u>1,212,800</u>	<u>1,224,973</u>
Total operating revenues	1,217,029	1,786,057
Operating expenses:		
Transportation services	20,989,976	18,329,343
Other operating expenses	<u>2,674,914</u>	<u>2,304,803</u>
Total operating expenses, excluding depreciation	23,664,890	20,634,146
Depreciation and amortization	<u>4,332,609</u>	<u>4,190,793</u>
Total operating expenses, including depreciation	<u>27,997,499</u>	<u>24,824,939</u>
Operating loss	<u>(26,780,470)</u>	<u>(23,038,882)</u>
Net nonoperating revenue	22,289,554	18,766,432
Loss before capital grants	(4,490,916)	(4,272,450)
Capital grants and contributions	6,912,024	6,116,104
Change in net position	2,421,108	1,843,654
Net position:		
Beginning of year	56,555,071	54,711,417
Prior period adjustment	<u>220,203</u>	<u>-</u>
End of year net position	<u>\$ 59,196,382</u>	<u>\$ 56,555,071</u>

**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

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## Statement of Net Position

June 30, 2023

**Assets and Deferred Outflow of Resources**

Current assets:	
Cash and cash equivalents (Note 3)	\$ 1,157,434
Receivables (Note 4)	7,201,329
Prepaid expenses	<u>172,143</u>
Total current assets	<u>8,530,906</u>
Restricted and noncurrent assets:	
Cash and cash equivalents (Note 3)	1,086,551
Capital assistance receivables (Note 4)	<u>2,642,221</u>
Total restricted assets	<u>3,728,772</u>
Receivables (Note 4)	2,967,549
Capital assets, net (Note 5)	<u>60,010,216</u>
Total restricted and noncurrent assets	<u>66,706,537</u>
Total Assets	<u>75,237,443</u>
Deferred outflow of resources related to pension plans	<u>230,539</u>
Total assets and deferred outflows of resources	<u>\$ 75,467,982</u>
Current liabilities:	<b>Liabilities</b>
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 341,126
Accrued interest payable	72,749
Revenue bond - current portion	<u>148,807</u>
Total current liabilities	562,682
Restricted and noncurrent liabilities:	
Accounts payable	2,907,296
Revenue bond – long term portion	12,337
Compensated absences	99,139
Unearned revenue	<u>845,773</u>
Total liabilities payable from restricted assets	<u>3,864,545</u>
Revenue anticipation notes (Note 7)	10,800,000
Net pension liability	<u>1,044,373</u>
Total restricted and noncurrent liabilities	<u>15,708,918</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>\$ 16,271,600</u>
	<b>Net Position</b>
Invested in capital assets, net of related debt	\$ 60,010,216
Restricted	-
Unrestricted (Note 20)	<u>(813,834)</u>
Total net position	<u>\$ 59,196,382</u>

*See accompanying notes to the financial statements*

**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

(A Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

## Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position

Year Ended June 30, 2023

Operating Revenues:	
Passenger fares	\$ 4,229
Terminal revenues	1,176,957
Other Income	<u>35,843</u>
Total operating revenues	<u>1,217,029</u>
Operating Expenses:	
Transit service	16,149,856
Maintenance	4,840,120
Terminal expenses	1,418,315
General Administration	1,098,292
GASB 68 Pension expense	<u>158,307</u>
	23,664,890
Depreciation	<u>4,332,609</u>
Total operating expenses	<u>27,997,499</u>
Operating loss	<u>(26,780,470)</u>
Nonoperating revenues (expense)	
Operating assistance grants	
Federal	10,113,108
Commonwealth of Massachusetts	7,922,759
Local Assessments	4,542,854
Interest income	30,121
Interest expense	<u>(319,288)</u>
Total non-operating revenues	<u>22,289,554</u>
Loss before capital grants	<u>(4,490,916)</u>
Capital Grants and Contributions	
Federal	5,114,898
Commonwealth of Massachusetts	<u>1,797,126</u>
Total capital contributions	6,912,024
Change in net position	2,421,108
Net position	
Beginning of year, as reported	56,555,071
Prior period adjustment	<u>220,203</u>
Beginning of year, as restated	<u>56,775,274</u>
Net position, end of year	<u>\$ 59,196,382</u>

*See accompanying notes to the financial statements*

**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

(A Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

## Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended June 30, 2023

Cash flows from operating activities:	
Passenger fares	\$ 4,229
Terminal revenues	1,176,957
Other cash receipts	35,843
Payments to operators	(21,002,271)
Payments to other vendors	(1,911,208)
Payments to employees for services	(586,698)
Net cash used in operating activities	<u>(22,283,148)</u>
Cash flows from non-capital financing activities:	
Proceeds from sale of revenue anticipation notes	10,800,000
Principal paid on revenue anticipation notes	(10,200,000)
Payments on credit line	(1,650,000)
Principal paid on revenue bond	(144,252)
Interest paid on debt	(315,429)
Operating and contract assistance	<u>22,976,648</u>
Net cash provided by non-capital financing activities	<u>21,466,967</u>
Cash flows from capital and related financing activities:	
Acquisition of capital assets	(6,912,024)
Capital contributions	
United States Department of Transportation	4,185,126
Commonwealth of Massachusetts	<u>1,401,746</u>
Net cash used by capital and related financing activities	<u>(1,325,152)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities:	
Interest income	<u>30,121</u>
Net cash provided by investing activities	<u>30,121</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents	(2,111,212)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	<u>3,268,646</u>
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	<u>\$ 1,157,434</u>
Reconciliation of operating loss to net cash used in operating activities:	
Operating loss	\$ (26,780,470)
Adjustments:	
Depreciation	4,332,609
Pension expense	158,307
Changes in assets and liabilities	
Receivables, net	397,927
Other assets	466,231
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	(857,752)
Net cash used in operating activities	<u>\$ (22,283,148)</u>

*See accompanying notes to the financial statements*

# MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

(A Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

## Notes to Financial Statements

June 30, 2023

### **Note 1. The Reporting Entity**

The Authority, a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (the Commonwealth), was established in accordance with Chapter 161B of the Massachusetts General Laws to provide a public transit system for the territory comprised of the cities of Lawrence, Haverhill, Methuen, Newburyport and Amesbury, and the towns of Andover, Rowley, Boxford, Merrimac, North Andover, Groveland, Newbury, West Newbury, Georgetown, Salisbury and North Reading. In accordance with requirements of Statement No. 14, *The Financial Reporting Entity, of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board* (GASB), the financial statements must present the Authority (the primary government) and its component units. Pursuant to this criteria, no component units were identified for inclusion in the accompanying financial statements. Additionally, the accompanying financial statements are incorporated into the financial statements of the Commonwealth as the Authority is a component unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

### **Note 2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

#### **A. Basis of Accounting**

The operations of the Authority are accounted for as an enterprise fund on an accrual basis in order to recognize the flow of economic resources. Under this basis, revenues are recognized in the period in which they are earned, expenses are recognized in the period in which they are incurred, depreciation of assets is recognized, and all assets and liabilities associated with the operation of the Authority are included in the Statements of Net Position. The principal revenues of the Authority are fare box revenues received from patrons and terminal revenues from parking facilities. The Authority also recognizes as operating revenue the rental fees received from vendors from operating leases of Authority property. Operating expenses for the Authority include the costs of operating mass transit and demand responsive services, administrative expenses, and depreciation on capital assets. All revenues and expenses not meeting this definition are reported as non-operating revenues and expenses.

#### **B. Budget**

The Authority must establish an operating budget each year so that the amount will equal the sum of (a) the aggregate of all annual appropriations for expenditures and transfers, less (b) the aggregate of all revenue and transfers projected to be received by the Authority, including available surplus funds. The budget for all operations of the Authority is prepared by the Administrator and is acted upon by the Advisory Board. The budget is prepared on the accrual basis. Depreciation is not recognized as an expense, but capital outlays are recognized as expenses for budgetary control purposes. These expenses are reclassified for the purpose of preparing financial reports in accordance with GAAP.

#### **C. Cash and Cash Equivalents**

Cash includes amounts in demand deposits. Cash equivalents include all highly liquid deposits with an original maturity of three months or less when purchased. These deposits are fully collateralized or covered by federal deposit insurance except as stated in Note 2. The carrying amount of the cash equivalents is fair value. For purposes of the statement of cash flows, the Authority considers all highly liquid investments purchased with a maturity of three months or less to be cash equivalents.

**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
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Notes to Financial Statements

June 30, 2023

**D. Compensated Absences**

Employees of the Authority are entitled to paid vacation, paid sick days and personal days off, depending on job classification, length of service and other factors. The Authority's policy is to recognize the costs of compensated absences when accrued, subject to accumulation limitations in accordance with personnel policies. The amount of the vested accrual at June 30, 2023 was \$99,139.

**E. Capital Assets**

Capital assets are stated at cost. Cost includes not only purchase price or construction cost, but also ancillary charges necessary to place the asset in condition for use. Capital assets are defined as assets with initial, individual costs exceeding \$5,000.

**F. Depreciation**

The Authority provides for depreciation using the straight-line method. Depreciation is intended to distribute the cost of depreciable properties over the following estimated average useful lives:

Buildings	20-40 years
Vehicles	5-12 years
Passenger Shelters	5 years
Furniture, fixtures and equipment	5-7 years

**G. Estimates**

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported in the financial statements and accompanying notes. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

**H. Concentration of Credit Risk**

Financial instruments which potentially subject the Authority to concentrations of credit risk consist principally of investments, cash equivalents and grants receivable. The Authority's cash equivalents were with various credit-worthy financial institutions; investments consisted of a collateralized repurchase agreement and grants receivable were due from Federal, State and local assessments. The Authority considers the credit risk associated with financial instruments to be minimal.

**I. Available Unrestricted Resources**

The Authority's policy is to utilize available unrestricted resources prior to restricted resources.

**J. Unearned Revenue**

Unearned revenue arises when assets are recorded before eligibility requirements have been met.

**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
(A Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

Notes to Financial Statements

June 30, 2023

**K. Reimbursed Cost of Service**

The legislative act under which the Authority was established provides, among other things, that the Commonwealth reimburse the Authority for the “net cost of service”, as defined. A portion of the amount not reimbursed is then assessed to the city and towns constituting the Authority. The “net cost of service”, as defined, does not include a charge for depreciation. It does, however, include debt service payments made in connection with long-term indebtedness. For financial reporting purposes, the Authority follows the generally accepted accounting method of depreciating the cost of property over its economic useful life.

**L. Statement of Net Position**

The statement of net position presents all of the Authority’s assets and liabilities, with the difference reported as net position. Net position is reported in three categories:

**Net investment in capital assets** consists of capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation and reduced by outstanding balances for bonds, notes and other debt that are attributed of the acquisition, construction or improvement of those assets.

**Restricted net position** results when constraints placed on net position use are either externally imposed by creditors, grantors, contributors, and the like, or imposed by law through enabling legislation.

**Unrestricted net position** consists of net position which does not meet the definition of the two preceding categories.

**M. Restricted Assets and Restricted Liabilities**

Restricted assets are restricted for the acquisition of capital assets and the reserve for extraordinary expense. Restricted liabilities are amounts payable from the restricted assets.

**N. Implementation of GASB Pronouncements**

During fiscal 2023, the following GASB Pronouncements were adopted and implemented, when necessary, by the Authority. The adoption of these statements did not have a material impact on the Authority’s financial statements.

- No. 91 – *Conduit Debt Obligations*
- No. 94 – *Public-Private and Public-Private Partnerships and Availability Payment Agreements*
- No. 96 – *Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements*
- No. 99 – *Omnibus 2022*
- No. 100 – *Accounting Change and Error Corrections*
- No. 101 – *Compensated Absences*

The GASB has not issued any further statements which require adoption subsequent to June 30, 2023.

**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
(A Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

Notes to Financial Statements

June 30, 2023

**O. Pension Plans**

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board has issued GASB Statement No. 68, *Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pensions* which changed the way in which the Authority reports its participation in its defined benefit pension plan. Among the changes, GASB Statement No. 68 requires the Authority to record a liability on the statement of net position for its unfunded pension plans' obligation. For purposes of measuring the Authority's net pension liability, deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions, and pension expense, information about the fiduciary net position of the Lawrence Retirement System (LRS) and additions to/deductions from the LRS's fiduciary position have been determined on the same basis as they are reported by LRS. For this purpose, benefit payments (including refunds of employee contributions) are recognized when due and payable in accordance with the benefit terms. Investments are reported at fair value.

**P. Deferred Outflows/Inflows of Resources**

The Authority accounts for certain transactions that result in the consumption or acquisition in one period that are applicable to future periods as deferred outflows and inflows, respectively, to distinguish them from assets and liabilities. For fiscal 2023, the Authority has reported deferred outflows that are related to its pension plan.

**Note 3. Cash and Cash Equivalents**

State and local statutes place certain limitations on the nature of deposits and investments available to the Authority. Deposits (including demand deposits, term deposits and certificates of deposit) in any one financial institution may not exceed certain levels without collateralization by the financial institutions involved. Investments can also be made in securities issued by or unconditionally guaranteed by the U.S. Government or Agencies that have a maturity of less than one year from the date of purchase, repurchase agreements guaranteed by such securities with maturity dates of no more than 90 days from the date of purchase and units in the Massachusetts Municipal Depository Trust ("MMDT"). Certain cash and investments are segregated from operating cash due to certain internal or external restrictions. These funds consist of those required by bond reserve requirements and state allowed reserves.

Custodial credit risk for deposits is the risk that in the event of a bank failure, the Authority's deposits may not be recovered. The Authority does not have a deposit policy for custodial risk. As of June 30, 2023 \$-0- of the Authority's bank balance of \$2,243,985 was exposed to custodial credit risk as uninsured and uncollateralized. This amount was collateralized, in part, by \$3,300,000 in letters of credit provided by the bank and FDIC insurance.



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**Note 4. Receivables**

The receivables for operating and capital assistance are disaggregated as follows:

United States Department of Transportation	
Direct federal grants	
CARES Act grant	\$ 895,960
Operating	644,945
Commonwealth of Massachusetts	
Operating grants	
Local operating assistance billed by the State to the communities constituting the Authority and paid by the State to the Authority	7,408,655
Due from Service Providers	1,003,368
Other	215,950
	<hr/>
Total Receivables	10,168,878
Less noncurrent receivables	2,967,549
	<hr/>
Current Receivables	<u>\$ 7,201,329</u>
Capital assistance	
Federal grants	1,060,831
Commonwealth of Massachusetts	1,581,390
	<hr/>
Total Capital Grant Receivables	<u>\$ 2,642,221</u>

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**Note 5. Capital Assets**

The following is a summary of changes in Capital Assets at June 30, 2023:

Capital assets not being depreciated:	Beginning balance	Additions	Disposals	Ending balance
Land	\$ 4,198,534	-	-	4,198,534
Construction in progress	<u>1,499,317</u>	<u>3,268,824</u>	<u>130,504</u>	<u>4,637,637</u>
Total capital assets not being depreciated	<u>5,697,851</u>	<u>3,268,824</u>	<u>130,504</u>	<u>8,836,171</u>
Other capital assets:				
Buildings and improvements	62,985,924	-	-	62,985,924
Buses - revenue vehicles	33,625,871	4,550,602	3,385,977	34,790,496
MAP vehicles	324,717	-	-	324,717
Service equipment	2,471,545	90,493	-	2,562,038
Electronic equipment	2,001,546	-	-	2,001,546
Passenger shelters	47,800	130,504	-	178,304
Furniture & fixtures	<u>401,496</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>401,496</u>
Total other capital assets at historical cost	<u>101,858,899</u>	<u>4,771,599</u>	<u>3,385,977</u>	<u>103,244,521</u>
Less accumulated depreciation for:				
Buildings and improvements	26,380,773	1,684,729	-	28,065,502
Buses - revenue vehicles	19,290,440	2,442,942	2,388,082	19,345,300
MAP vehicles	104,514	45,559	-	150,073
Service equipment	1,951,346	129,614	-	2,080,960
Electronic equipment	1,995,600	2,461	-	1,998,061
Passenger shelters	47,800	1,087	-	48,887
Furniture & fixtures	<u>355,476</u>	<u>26,217</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>381,693</u>
Total accumulated depreciation	<u>50,125,949</u>	<u>4,332,609</u>	<u>2,388,082</u>	<u>52,070,476</u>
Other capital assets, net	<u>51,732,950</u>	<u>438,990</u>	<u>997,895</u>	<u>51,174,045</u>
Total capital assets, net	<u>\$ 57,430,801</u>	<u>3,707,814</u>	<u>1,128,399</u>	<u>60,010,216</u>

**Note 6. Grants**

Under various sections of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the United States Department of Transportation approves capital grants to fund up to 80% of the Authority's capital improvement projects. The remaining portion of approximately 20% will be financed through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. Capital grants of the Authority are reported as revenue rather than contributed capital as required by GASB Statement No. 33, *Accounting and Financial Reporting for Nonexchange Transactions*. In addition, the Federal government may fund up to 80% of the Authority's preventative maintenance and complementary ADA services costs, as defined.

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The Authority has a contract with the Commonwealth for operating assistance as provided for in the enabling legislation under which the Commonwealth will pay the Authority a portion of its net cost of service. The amount of this contract assistance for fiscal year 2023 was \$7,922,759.

**Note 7. Revenue Anticipation Notes**

At June 30, 2023, the Authority had \$10,800,000 of revenue anticipation notes (RAN) outstanding. The RANs have a weighted average net interest cost (NIC) of 3.9027% and are due June 21, 2024.

	Outstanding at June 30 2022	Issued	Retired	Outstanding at June 30 2023
2.2733% revenue anticipation note	\$ 10,200,000	-	10,200,000	-
3.9027% revenue anticipation note	-	10,800,000	-	10,800,000
Total	\$ 10,200,000	10,800,000	10,200,000	10,800,000

The Authority uses the proceeds of these notes to fund its mass transit operations. The RAN is considered short term debt that is expected to be refinanced and is included in the accompanying Statement of Net Position as a noncurrent liability. All required payments with respect to these obligations are guaranteed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the entire duration of the notes.

**Note 8. Bank Credit Line**

The Authority has a revolving line of credit with TD Bank in the maximum amount of \$2,500,000 that is due on demand. The note contains a variable interest rate. The line also has a fee charge of 1/8% of the unused line. The loan is secured by the parity pledge of the Authority's revenues. The Authority owed \$-0- at June 30, 2023.

**Note 9. Unearned Revenue: Extraordinary Reserve and Stabilization Fund**

In accordance with Section 6 of Chapter 161B of the General Laws of the Commonwealth, the Authority is allowed to establish a reserve account for the purpose of meeting the cost of extraordinary expenses that are both unusual in nature and infrequent in occurrence. The total reserve amount may not exceed 20% of the prior year's local assessment and the annual funding cannot exceed 3% of the current year's local assessment. The accumulated aggregate reserve of \$229,307 (which represents approximately 5.26% of the applicable local assessment of \$4,354,496) is included in unearned revenue in the accompanying statement of net position.

Chapter 161B of the General Laws of the Commonwealth has been amended to allow the Authority to establish a stabilization fund, which can be accessed for capital improvements or to offset an unforeseen and dramatic loss of revenue within a fiscal year. The Authority maintains a stabilization fund in the amount of \$386,066 which is included in unearned revenue in the accompanying statement of net position.

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**Note 10. Revenue Bond**

Financing of \$2,000,000 for the McGovern Transportation Center was obtained through the Massachusetts Development and Finance Agency. This funding is in the form of a revenue bond that was effective July 1, 2004 and was interest-only at a rate of 4.99% through September 1, 2005. The bond converted to an amortization schedule with the first monthly payment of \$13,667 due on October 1, 2005. The initial interest rate was subject to change on July 1, 2009. The new rate is 3.341% with a monthly payment of \$12,661. The bond is secured by all net revenues generated by the parking garage. The bond also contains a debt service reserve fund requirement of \$150,000. The bond was paid off on July 12, 2023.

The principal and interest maturities of the bonds as of June 30, 2023 are as follows:

Fiscal Year(s):	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Interest</u>
2024	\$ 148,807	3,129
2025	12,337	324

**Note 11. Retirement Plans**

**General Information about the Pension Plan**

**Plan Description**

The Lawrence Retirement System (LRS) is multiple-employer, cost sharing, contributory defined benefit pension plan covering all employees of the government member units deemed eligible by the Lawrence Retirement Board (Board), with the exception of school department employees who serve in a teaching capacity. The pensions of such school employees are administered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Teachers Retirement System. Membership in the System is mandatory upon the commencement of employment for all permanent employees working a minimum of 20 hours per week. Participating member units include the City of Lawrence, the City of Lawrence School Department (Non Teachers), the Lawrence Housing Authority, and the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority.

The System is governed by a five-member Board who establish the policies under which the System operates. Board members also approve all of the System's financial transactions, including the approval of retirement benefits to members. The day-to-day operations of the System are managed by the Executive Director.

The System is a member of the Massachusetts Contributory Retirement System and is governed by Chapter 32 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC) is the state agency responsible for oversight of the Commonwealth's public retirement systems.

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Massachusetts contributory retirement system benefits are, with certain exceptions, uniform from system to system. The Plan provides for retirement allowance benefits up to a maximum of 80% of a member's highest three-year average annual rate of regular compensation for those hired to April 2, 2012. For persons who became members on or after April 2, 2012, average salary is the average annual rate of regular compensation received during the five consecutive years that produce the highest average, or, if greater, during the last five years (whether or not consecutive) preceding retirement. Benefit payments are based upon a member's age, length of creditable service, level of compensation, and group classification.

There are three classes of membership in the retirement system: group 1, group 2, and group 4. Group 1 consists of general employees which includes clerical and administrative positions. Group 2 consists of positions that have been specified as hazardous. Lastly, group 4 consists of police officers, firefighters, and other hazardous positions.

Any individual in Group 1 or Group 2 whose membership began before January 1, 1978, and who maintains an annuity savings fund account, is eligible to receive a superannuation retirement allowance at age 55 or later, regardless of how many years of credible service he or she has completed.

There are no minimum vesting requirements for individuals in Group 4.

Members in Groups 1 and 2, hired after January 1, 1978 and prior to April 2, 2012, are eligible to receive a superannuation retirement allowance upon the completion of 20 years of service or upon the completion of 10 years of service and upon reaching the age of 55.

Members in Groups 1 and 2, hired on or after April 2, 2012, are eligible to receive a superannuation retirement allowance upon the completion of 10 years of service and upon reaching the age of 60 (Group 1) or age 55 (Group 2).

A retirement allowance consists of two parts: an annuity and a pension. A member's accumulated total deductions and the interest they generate constitute the annuity. The differential between the total retirement benefit and the annuity is the pension.

Active members contribute between 5% and 9% of their gross compensation. The percentage rate is keyed to the date upon which an employee's membership commences. Members hired on or after January 1, 1979, contribute an additional 2% of annual regular compensation in excess of \$30,000. Deductions are deposited in the Annuity Savings Fund and earn interest at a rate determined by the PERAC actuary. When a member's retirement becomes effective, his/her deductions and related interest are transferred to the Annuity Reserve Fund. Any cost-of-living adjustments granted between 1981 and 1997 and any increase in other benefits imposed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' state law during those years are borne by the Commonwealth and are deposited into the Pension Fund. Cost-of-living adjustments granted after 1997 must be approved by the System and all costs are borne by the System.

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The pension portion of any retirement benefit is paid from the Pension Fund of the System. The governmental unit employing the member must annually appropriate and contribute the amount of current-year pension assessment. Chapter 32 of the MGL requires Massachusetts retirement systems to adopt funding schedules designed to reduce the unfunded actuarial liability of the system to zero no later than June 30, 2040. The System adopted Section 22d of Chapter 32 in April of 1989. The System's current funding schedule is designed to reduce the unfunded actuarial liability to zero by 2036.

Members who become permanently and totally disabled for further duty may be eligible to receive a disability retirement allowance. The amount of benefits to be received in such cases is dependent on several factors, including whether or not the disability is work related, the member's age, years of creditable service, level of compensation, veteran's status and group classification.

Employees who resign from service are entitled to request a refund of their accumulated total deductions.

Survivor benefits are extended to eligible beneficiaries of members whose death occurs prior to or following retirement.

### **Pension Liabilities, Pension expense and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions**

The Authority is required to pay into the Retirement System its share of the system-wide actuarially determined contribution, which is apportioned among the employers, based on active covered payroll. The Authority's contribution to the Retirement System for the year ended June 30, 2023 was \$117,096, which approximated its required contribution for the year.

At June 30, 2023, the Authority reported a liability of \$1,044,373 for its proportionate share of the net pension liability. The net pension liability was measured as of December 31, 2022, and the total pension liability used to calculate the net pension liability was determined by an actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2023. The Authority's proportion of the net pension liability was based on a projection of the long-term share of contributions to the pension plan relative to the projected contributions of all participating employers, actuarially determined. At December 31, 2022, the Authority's proportion of net pension liability was 0.49 percent.

Since LRS performs an actuarial valuation bi-annually, there are no reported amounts for changes in benefit terms differences between expected and actual experience and changes in assumptions as of December 31, 2022.

In the LRS financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2022, in addition to assets, the statement of fiduciary net position will sometimes report a separate section for deferred outflow of resources. This separate financial statement element, *deferred outflow of resources*, represents a consumption of fiduciary net position that applies to a future period (s) and so will not be recognized as an outflow of resources (deduction) until then.

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In addition to liabilities, the statement of fiduciary net position will sometimes report a separate section for deferred inflow of resources. This separate financial element, *deferred inflow of resources*, represents an acquisition of net position that applies to future period (s) and so will not be recognized as an inflow of resources (addition) until that time. The LRS did not have any items that qualify for reporting in this category.

For the year ended June 30, 2023 the Authority recognized pension expense of \$275,403. At June 30, 2023 the Authority reported deferred outflows related to pensions from the following sources:

	Deferred Outflows of Resources
Difference between projected and actual earnings on pension plan investments	\$ 230,539

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Amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources related to pensions will be recognized in pension expense as follows:

Year ended June 30:	2024	\$ 52,065
	2025	59,122
	2026	58,720
	2027	60,891
	2028	(259)

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**A. Actuarial Assumptions**

The total pension liability was determined by an actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2023, using the following actuarial assumptions, applied to all periods included in the measurement that was rolled back to December 31, 2022.

Actuarial cost method	Entry Age Normal
Amortization method	Payments increase at 3.67 percent
Asset valuation method	Market value of assets as of December 31, 2022
Inflation	2.4 percent per year
Projected salary increases	3.75% - 7.75% based on service
Investment rate of return	7.00%, net of net plan investment expense, including inflation
Mortality rates	Based on the RP-2014 Blue Collar Mortality Table with full generational mortality improvement using Scale MP-2020.
Disabled mortality rates	Based on the RP-2014 Blue Collar Mortality Table set forward one year with full generational mortality improvement using Scale MP-2020.

**B. Investment Policy**

The pension plan's policy in regard to the allocation of invested assets is established by PRIT. Plan assets are managed on a total return basis with a long-term objective of achieving a fully funded status for the benefits provided through the pension plan.



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The long term expected real rate of return on pension plan investments was determined using a building-block method in which best-estimate ranges of expected future real rates of return (expected returns, net of pension plan investment expense and inflation) are developed for each major asset class. These ranges are combined to produce the long-term expected rate of return by weighting the expected future real rates of return by the target asset allocation percentage and by adding expected inflation. Best estimates of geometric real rates of return for each major asset class included in the pension plan’s target allocation as of December 31, 2022 are summarized in the following table:

Asset Class	Target Allocation	Long-term Expected Real Rate of Return
Global Equity	38.00%	4.74%
Core Fixed Income	15.00%	2.10%
Value-Added Fixed Income	8.00%	5.20%
Private equity	15.00%	7.60%
Real Estate	10.00%	3.10%
Timberland	4.00%	4.40%
Portfolio Completion Strategies	<u>10.00%</u>	3.90%
Total	<u><u>100.00%</u></u>	

**C. Discount Rate**

The discount rate used to measure the total pension liability was 7.00 percent. The projection of cash flows used to determine the discount rate assumed that plan member contributions will be made at the current contribution rate and that contributions from employers will be made at actuarially determined contribution rates. Based on those assumptions, the pension plan’s fiduciary net position was projected to be available to make all projected future benefit payments of current plan members. Therefore, the long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was applied to all periods of projected benefit payments to determine the total pension liability.

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**D. Sensitivity of the Authority’s proportionate share of the net pension liability to changes in the discount rate**

The following presents the Authority’s proportionate share of the net pension liability calculated using the discount rate of 7.00 percent, as well as what the Authority’s proportionate share of the net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1-percentage-point lower (6.00 percent) or 1-percentage-point higher (8.00 percent) than the current rate:

	1% Decrease	Discount Rate	1% Increase
	6.00%	7.00%	8.00%
Authority's proportionate share of			
the net pension liability	\$ 1,323,475	\$ 1,044,373	\$ 792,191

**E. Changes in Assumptions and Plan Provisions**

Changes in Assumptions

The mortality improvement scale has been updated.

Changes in Plan Provisions

None.

**F. Pension plan fiduciary net position**

Detailed information about the pension plan’s fiduciary net position is available in the separately issued LRS financial report. Requests for copies of the report should be addressed to the System’s Board at 350 Merrimack Street, Suite 302, Lawrence, MA 01843.

**Other Pension Plans**

The Authority also administers a deferred compensation plan through which employees can participate in a voluntary, payroll-deducted retirement program created in accordance with Internal Revenue Code Section 457. The deferred compensation is not available to employees until termination, retirement, death, approved or unforeseeable emergency. All amounts of compensation deferred, property purchased with those amounts, and all income attributable to those amounts are held in trust for the exclusive benefit of participants and their beneficiaries.

**Note 12. Post-retirement health benefits**

The Advisory Board voted to establish a post-retirement health insurance plan. The plan is restricted to individuals that retire after a minimum of 25 years of service. The contribution is limited to 75% of the cost of the retiree’s post-retirement medical insurance premium. The Authority’s level of contribution has been set at an established level and is not subject to adjustment.

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**Note 13. Risk Management**

In conjunction with its normal operations, the Authority is exposed to various risks related to the damage or destruction of its assets from both natural and man-made occurrences, tort/liability claims, errors and omissions claims and professional liability claims. As a result of these exposures, the Authority has developed a comprehensive risk management program. There have been no significant reductions in coverage from the prior year and settlements have not exceeded insurance coverage for the current year or in any other year.

GASB Statement No. 10, *Accounting and Financial Reporting for Risk Financing and Related Insurance Issues*, requires that liabilities for self-insured claims be reported if it is probable that a loss has been incurred and the amount can be reasonably estimated. These losses include an estimate of claims that have been incurred but not reported. The estimated liability for all self-insured losses incurred but not reported is not material at June 30, 2023.

Health insurance benefits for employees are provided through a health maintenance organization. The Authority contributes 75% of the premium cost for employees. In 2023, expenditures for the Authority's share of health insurance contributions were \$81,463. The Authority purchases insurance for worker's compensation for its employees.

**Note 14. Commitments and Contingent Liabilities**

**A. Capital Investment Program**

The Authority's capital investment continuing program for mass transportation development has projects in service and in various stages of approval, planning, and implementation. The following table shows, as of June 30, 2023, capital projects costs approved, expenditures against these projects, and estimated costs to complete these projects, as well as the major funding sources.

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Approved project costs</u>	<u>Expenditures through June 30, 2023</u>	<u>Unexpended costs</u>
Federal grants	\$ 20,682,285	10,527,081	10,155,204
State and local sources	<u>6,465,380</u>	<u>3,708,217</u>	<u>2,757,163</u>
Total	<u>\$ 27,147,665</u>	<u>14,235,298</u>	<u>12,912,367</u>

The terms of the federal grant contracts require the Authority to, in part, utilize the equipment and facilities for the purposes specified in the grant agreement, maintain these items in operation for a specified time period, which normally approximates the useful life of the equipment, and to comply with the Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action programs required by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Failure to comply with these terms may jeopardize future funding and require the Authority to refund a portion of these grants to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). In management's opinion, no events have occurred that would result in the termination of the grants or require the refund of a significant amount of funds received under these grants.

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**B. Legal and Other**

The Authority is a defendant in various litigations. Although the outcomes of these matters are not presently determinable, in the opinion of the Authority’s management, the resolution of these matters will not have a material adverse effect on the financial condition of the Authority, except as noted.

The Authority participates in a number of federally assisted grant programs. These programs are subject to financial and compliance audits by the grantors or their representatives. In the opinion of the Authority’s management, liabilities resulting from such disallowed expenditures, if any, will not be material to the accompanying financial statements.

The Authority has entered into a five-year agreement for management services effective August 1, 2022. Annual fees start at \$253,584.

The State changed its methodology for reimbursing the Authority for local member community assessments presented in current and past audits. This change affected all Transit Authorities in the Commonwealth with the exception of the MBTA. MVRTA has accumulated \$2,527,111 in shortages going back to fiscal 2008. Discussions have been going on through the Authority’s representative, the Massachusetts Association of Regional Transit Authorities (MARTA). Little progress has been made in resolving this matter. The state changed the format of current reimbursement to two years in arrears.

**C. Fuel Contracts**

The Authority had the following contracts outstanding during the fiscal year:

<u>Product</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Gallons</u>	<u>Price</u>
Unleaded Gasoline	7/1/23 - 6/30/24	120,000	\$ 2.735
Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel	7/1/23 - 6/30/24	410,000	\$ 2.845

**Note 15. Net Investments in Capital Assets**

This balance is represented by the amount invested in capital assets net of related debt. It is comprised of the following:

Cost of Capital Assets Acquired	\$ 112,080,692
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	52,070,476
Less: Outstanding Debt Related to Capital Assets	<u>-</u>
	<u>\$ 60,010,216</u>

# **MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

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## Notes to Financial Statements

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### **Note 16. Transit Service**

The operation of the Authority's fixed route service and maintenance of the Authority's transportation property were performed by First Transit under the terms of an agreement whereby First Transit operated mass transit along such routes and according to such a schedule as defined by the Authority. First Transit has two operating subsidiaries, Merrimack Valley Area Transportation Company (MVATC) which operated the fixed route service and Special Transportation Services (STS) which operated the elderly and handicapped services. In return, the Authority agreed to pay First Transit a management fee and to reimburse MVATC and STS for all costs and expenses which were reasonable and necessary for the efficient operation of the services.

### **Note 17. The Lawrence Gateway Surface Parking Facility**

The parking area has been operational since November, 2010. The Authority is waiting for Aerojet Rocketdyne, Inc. to complete and receive approval from the US EPA on Aerojet's final plan for long term compliance monitoring. Once this plan is approved, the MVRTA and Aerojet will complete the process for the Authority to take title to the parking area land. As of June 30, 2023 there was no set date for EPA approval of Aerojet's compliance plans.

### **Note 18. Related Party**

The Authority is deemed to be a related part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation due to its status as a component unit. Related party transactions consisted of Operating Assistance of \$7,922,759; State Capital Assistance of \$2,695,211; and Local Assessments of \$4,354,496 to be paid to the Authority by the Commonwealth. Related party receivables consist of \$7,220,307 in operating assistance to be billed to the Communities constituting the Authority; and \$1,555,568 of State Capital Assistance.

### **Note 19. Executive Compensation**

Administration and Finance regulations, 801 CMR 53.00, on Executive Compensation require that the Authority disclose in the annual financial statements the "salaries and other compensation of its executive director, officers, board members and other highly compensated employees." Compensation is defined in the regulation, 801 CMR 53.04 (1) to include "base salary, bonuses, severance, retirement or deferred compensation packages and policies relative to the accrual and payment of sick and vacation time, including payouts for unused sick and vacation time." The administrator is the only individual for whom disclosure is required. Based on the above definition of compensation the administrator received \$150,880 during the fiscal year. The Administrator receives family health insurance and contributes 25% of the cost of the premium. Advisory board members and officers do not receive compensation.

### **Note 20. Unrestricted Net Position**

The balance in the Unrestricted Net Position on the Statement of Net Position reflects the effect of the presentation of the net pension liability required of (\$813,834) by GASB 68.

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**Note 21. COVID-19**

During fiscal 2020 the Coronavirus epidemic significantly affected the Authority's operations. Most brokerage and demand responsive services were discontinued, fare revenues were not collected and ridership decreased significantly. MVRTA was required to incur expenses for personal protection equipment, barriers and disinfectant related products and cleaning services. In response to the effects of COVID-19, the Coronavirus Aid Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) was signed into law. The purpose of that law was to help the Authority fully fund their revenue losses and cover the additional expenses require to protect employees and riders. The funding requires no local match.

In March of 2021 the American Rescue Plan Relief Act of 2021 (ARP) was enacted to provide ongoing assistance to ensure the ability of the Authority to provide services well into the future. The grant will assist with operating expenses related to maintaining day-to-day operations, cleaning and sanitization, combating the spread of pathogens on transit systems and maintaining critical staffing levels. The award to MVRTA was in the amount of \$5,825,882.

	<u>Grant Amount</u>	<u>Current Expenditures</u>	<u>Prior Expenditures</u>	<u>Remaining Balance</u>
Cares - Boston	\$16,914,813	4,295,960	11,276,149	1,342,704
American Rescue Plan	<u>5,825,882</u>	<u>841,828</u>	<u>75,267</u>	<u>4,908,787</u>
	<u><u>\$22,740,695</u></u>	<u><u>5,137,788</u></u>	<u><u>11,351,416</u></u>	<u><u>6,251,491</u></u>

**Note 22. Prior Period Adjustments**

A prior period adjustment was made to record MAP vehicles acquired by the Authority in FY22. The result of the adjustment is a \$220,203 increase in net position.

**Note 23. Subsequent Events**

The Authority has evaluated events subsequent to June 30, 2023 through March 7, 2024, the date on which the financial statements were available for issuance, and determined that, other than the payoff of the revenue bond (Note 10), there are no material items that would require recognition or disclosure in the Authority's financial statements.

**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

(A Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

## Required Supplementary Information (Unaudited)

## Schedule of the Authority's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability and Related Ratios

Last 10 Fiscal Years

	Authority's proportion of the net pension liability	Authority's proportionate share of the net pension liability	Authority's covered-employee payroll	liability as a percentage of its covered-employee payroll	Plan fiduciary net position as a percentage of total pension liability
2023	0.4900%	\$ 1,044,373	\$ 486,713	214.58%	58.85%
2022	0.4900%	\$ 760,880	\$ 406,663	187.10%	69.03%
2021	0.4900%	\$ 972,984	\$ 381,227	255.22%	58.89%
2020	0.3960%	\$ 857,315	\$ 381,227	224.88%	54.14%
2019	0.3680%	\$ 863,513	\$ 283,601	304.48%	48.46%
2018	0.3400%	\$ 722,785	\$ 243,141	297.27%	51.49%
2017	0.3400%	\$ 1,348,379	\$ 234,333	575.41%	46.80%
2016	0.3378%	\$ 783,431	\$ 240,671	325.52%	44.00%
2015	0.3360%	\$ 734,844	\$ 231,972	316.78%	45.22%

**Notes to Required Supplementary Information****Measurement Date**

The amounts presented in this schedule were determined as of December 31, 2022.

**Schedule Presentation**

This schedule is intended to present information for 10 years. Until a 10-year trend is compiled, information is presented for those years for which information is available.

**Changes Information**

Since the Lawrence Retirement System performs an actuarial valuation bi-annually, there are no reported amounts for the changes in benefit terms, differences between expected and actual experience and changes in assumptions as of December 31, 2022.

**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
(A Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)  
Required Supplementary Information (Unaudited)

Schedule of Pension Contributions

Last 10 Fiscal Years

	Actuarially required contribution	Contributions in relation to the actuarially required contribution	Contribution deficiency (excess)	Covered-employee payroll	Contributions as a percentage of its covered-employee payroll
2023 \$	117,096	117,096 \$	-	\$ 486,713	24.06%
2022 \$	112,966	112,966 \$	-	\$ 406,663	27.78%
2021 \$	107,259	107,259 \$	-	\$ 381,227	28.14%
2020 \$	83,528	83,517 \$	11	\$ 381,227	21.91%
2019 \$	75,178	75,336 \$	(158)	\$ 283,601	26.56%
2018 \$	66,833	66,559 \$	274	\$ 243,141	27.37%
2017 \$	228,498	228,529 \$	(31)	\$ 234,333	97.52%
2016 \$	61,757	61,757 \$	-	\$ 240,671	25.66%
2015 \$	58,440	58,440 \$	-	\$ 231,972	25.19%

**Notes to Required Supplementary Information Schedule**

**Presentation**

This schedule is intended to present information for 10 years. Until a 10 year trend is compiled, information is presented for those years for which information is available.

**Contributions**

The Authority is required to pay an annual appropriation as established by the Massachusetts Contributory Retirement System. The total appropriation includes the amounts to pay the pension portion of each member's retirement allowance, an amount to amortize the actuarially determined unfunded liability to zero in accordance with adopted early retirement incentive programs.



**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
(A Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2023

	<b>Federal CFDA Number</b>	<b>Pass-Through Entity Identifying Number</b>	<b>Passed Through to Subrecipients</b>	<b>Federal Expenditures</b>
<u>U.S. Department of Transportation</u>				
Federal Transit Cluster				
Direct Programs:				
Federal Transit - Formula Grants - Capital	20.507	MA-2022-011	\$ 78,803	\$ 6,612,037
Federal Transit - Formula Grants - Operating	20.507	MA-2022-011	-	4,975,320
Federal Transit - Cares Act	20.507	MA-2022-011	-	4,295,960
Federal Transit - ARPA	20.507	MA-2022-002	-	841,828
Bus and Bus Facilities Formula and Discretionary Programs	20.526	MA-2020-026	-	17,289
Total Federal Transit Cluster			78,803	16,742,434
Total Expenditures of Federal Awards			<u>\$ 78,803</u>	<u>\$ 16,742,434</u>

Notes to Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards

1. Definition of Reporting Entity

The accompanying Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards includes the federal grant activity. The information in this schedule is presented in accordance with the requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance Circular.

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

- a. Basis of Presentation – The accompanying Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards is presented using the accrual method of accounting.
- b. Contract Services – The Authority contracts with third parties to provide fixed route and demand response transportation services. The costs associated with these contracts that are funded with federal assistance are presented in the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards as disbursements. The Authority maintains a system to monitor the use of these funds by the contractors to assure compliance with applicable federal regulations.
- c. The Authority identified the larger Federal Programs (Type A programs) as those programs that exceed \$750,000. All other programs are labeled as Type B programs.
- d. The Authority did not use the 10% de minimus cost rate for any of its grants.

**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

(A Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

Schedule of Net Cost of Service (Unaudited)

Year Ended June 30, 2023

OPERATING COSTS

MVRTA administrative costs	\$ 1,098,292
Purchased services	
Fixed route	17,765,913
Demand responsive	3,224,063
Terminal expense	1,418,315
Debt service - interest	<u>319,288</u>
Total operating costs	23,825,871

FEDERAL OPERATING ASSISTANCE

FTA operating and administrative	10,113,108
Other federal	<u>-</u>
Total federal assistance	10,113,108

REVENUES

Operating	
Farebox revenue	4,229
Other Revenue	
Terminal revenues	1,176,957
Advertising	35,355
Interest income	30,120
Miscellaneous	<u>489</u>
Total revenues	1,247,150

NET OPERATING DEFICIT 12,465,613

ADJUSTMENTS -

NET COST OF SERVICE 12,465,613

NET COST OF SERVICE FUNDING

Local assessments	4,542,854
State contract assistance to be funded	7,922,759
Less: state operating assistance received	7,922,759
Balance requested from the State	-

UNREIMBURSED DEFICIT -

*See accompanying independent auditors' report*

**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

(A Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

Schedule of Allocation of Local Assessments (Unaudited)

June 30, 2023

The following table shows the local share that has been assessed upon each member municipality by the Commonwealth for fiscal year 2022 as well as the audited amount for fiscal 2023.

	Fiscal 2022 Assessment	Fiscal 2023 Audited
Amesbury	\$ 208,149	213,353
Andover	264,045	270,646
Boxford	2,789	58,838
Georgetown	45,051	60,754
Groveland	41,428	49,641
Haverhill	871,341	893,125
Lawrence	1,247,867	1,279,064
Merrimac	76,339	78,247
Methuen	907,315	929,998
Newbury	10,610	48,173
Newburyport	173,715	178,058
North Andover	219,612	225,102
North Reading	98,685	101,152
* Rowley	-	44,192
Salisbury	78,277	80,234
West Newbury	3,066	32,277
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Totals	<u>\$ 4,248,289</u>	<u>4,542,854</u>
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

\* No service was provided in Rowley in fiscal 2022.

# Bruce D. Norling, CPA, P.C.

## **INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING AND ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS BASED ON AN AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH *GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS***

The Advisory Board  
Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority  
Haverhill, Massachusetts

We have audited, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the financial statements of the business-type activities of Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (the Authority), as of and for the year ended June 30, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Authority's basic financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated March 7, 2024.

### **Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting**

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered the Authority's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements, on a timely basis. A material weakness is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or, significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that

we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses may exist that have not been identified.

### **Report on Compliance and Other Matters**

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Authority's financial statements are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

### **Purpose of this Report**

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Authority's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

*Bruce D. Norling, CPA, P.C.*

Sudbury, Massachusetts  
March 7, 2024

# Bruce D. Norling, CPA, P.C.

## INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON COMPLIANCE FOR EACH MAJOR PROGRAM AND ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER COMPLIANCE REQUIRED BY THE UNIFORM GUIDANCE

The Advisory Board  
Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority  
Haverhill, Massachusetts

### **Report on Compliance for Each Major Federal Program** ***Opinion on Each Major Program***

We have audited the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority's (the Authority) compliance with the types of compliance requirements identified as subject to audit in the *OMB Compliance Supplement* that could have a direct and material effect on each of the Authority's major federal programs for the year ended June 30, 2023 . The Authority's major federal programs are identified in the summary of auditors' results section of the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs.

In our opinion, the Authority complied, in all material respects with the types of compliance requirements referred to above that could have a direct and material effect on each of its major federal programs for the year ended June 30, 2023.

### ***Basis for Opinion on Each Major Federal Program***

We conducted our audit of compliance in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America; the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and the audit requirements of Title 2 U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance). Our responsibilities under those standards and the Uniform Guidance are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Compliance section of our report.

We are required to be independent of the Authority and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion on compliance for each major federal program. Our audit does not provide a legal determination of the Authority's compliance with the compliance requirements referred to above.

### ***Responsibilities of Management for Compliance***

Management is responsible for compliance with the requirements referred to above and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of effective internal control over compliance with the requirements of laws, statutes, regulations, rules, and provisions of contracts or grant agreements applicable to the Authority's federal programs.

## ***Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Compliance***

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether material noncompliance with the compliance requirements referred to above occurred, whether due to fraud or error, and express an opinion on the Authority's compliance based on our audit. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance will always detect material noncompliance when it exists. The risk of not detecting material noncompliance resulting from fraud is higher than for that resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Noncompliance with the compliance requirements referred to above is considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, it would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user of the report on compliance about the Authority's compliance with the requirements of each major federal program as a whole.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, *Government Auditing Standards*, and the Uniform Guidance, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material noncompliance, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the Authority's compliance with the compliance requirements referred to above and performing such other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.
- Obtain an understanding of the Authority's internal control over compliance relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances and to test and report on internal control over compliance in accordance with the Uniform Guidance, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control over compliance. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and any significant deficiencies and material weaknesses in internal control over compliance that we identified during the audit.

## **Report on Internal Control over Compliance**

*A deficiency in internal control over compliance* exists when the design or operation of a control over compliance does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, noncompliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program on a timely basis. *A material weakness in internal control over compliance* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control over compliance, such that there is a reasonable possibility that material noncompliance with a type of compliance requirement of a federal program will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. *A significant deficiency in internal control over compliance* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control over compliance with a type of compliance requirement of a

federal program that is less severe than a material weakness in internal control over compliance, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control over compliance was for the limited purpose described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of Compliance section above and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control over compliance that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal control over compliance. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control over compliance that we consider to be material weaknesses, as defined above. However, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in internal control over compliance may exist that were not identified.

Our audit was not designed for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over compliance. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.

The purpose of this report on internal control over compliance is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over compliance and the results of that testing based on the requirements of the Uniform Guidance. Accordingly, this report is not suitable for any other purpose.

*Bruce D. Norling, CPA, P.C.*

Sudbury, Massachusetts  
March 7, 2024



**MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
(a Component Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation)

Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs  
Year Ended June 30,

A. SUMMARY OF AUDITORS' RESULTS

1. The auditors' report expresses an unmodified opinion on the basic financial statements of the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (the Authority).
2. No significant deficiencies relating to the audit of the financial statements are reported in the Independent Auditors' Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*.
3. No instances of noncompliance material to the basic financial statements of the Authority were disclosed during the audit.
4. No significant deficiencies relating to the audit of the major federal award programs are reported in the Independent Auditors' Report on Compliance for Each Major Program and on Internal Control over Compliance Required by the Uniform Guidance and the Report on Expenditures of Federal Awards Required by the Uniform Guidance.
5. The auditors' report on compliance for the major federal award programs for the Authority expresses an unmodified opinion on all major federal programs.
6. Audit findings that are required to be reported in accordance with the Uniform Guidance are reported in Part C of this Schedule.
7. The Federal Transit Cluster which includes Federal Transit Formula Grants (CFDA No. 20.507) and Bus and Bus Facilities Formula Grants (CFDA No. 20.526).
8. The threshold for distinguishing Type A and B programs was \$750,000. Type A programs are those that exceed \$750,000.
9. The Authority was determined to be a low-risk auditee.

B. FINDINGS - FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AUDIT - NONE

C. FINDINGS - MAJOR FEDERAL AWARDS PROGRAMS AUDIT - NONE