

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:49 a.m. February 28, 2023

Board Members: Lucas (Chair), Biasiotta, Joyce, McCall, Welch

Not present: Koomar, Moss, Pellot, Weiss

Staff: Allen, Birdsong Terry, Burney, Caver, Ciesla, Clark, Coffey, Dangelo, Feinn, Ferrell, Fields, Fleig, Garofoli, Keshtkaren, Kirkland, Miller, Schipper, Steiner, Sutula, Talley, Vukmanic, Walker-Minor, Woodford, Young

Public: Bingaman, Friedman, Gibbons, Loh, Martin, McDonnell

The meeting was called to order at 9:49 a.m. There were five (5) board members present.

It was advised that notice of this meeting have been posted more than twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting, that the usual notification has been given the news media and other interested persons, and that all requirements of the Ohio Revised Code and Rules and Bylaws of this Board regarding notice of meeting have been complied with.

Minutes

President Lucas stated that the minutes from the January 31, 2023 Board Meeting had been previously distributed and reviewed, and asked whether there were any additions and/or corrections. There were no corrections. The minutes were approved.

Public Comments – Agenda Items

1. Shawn Freeman – He's representing the paratransit community. At last month's meeting, Shalida Dobbins requested updates to the website to make it more assessable (keyboard, reservation and cancelation line). Rides must be made a week in advance. She requested a meeting or response from the Board, but she didn't hear back.

Ms. Birdsong Terry asked him to follow-up with Nick Davidson, Director of Paratransit who is here today. We have a new staff member who will be working with IT on the ADA page. The website is under review. Ms. McCall mentioned that this is also a medical industry issue.

2. Loh – She agreed with the statements made about paratransit. Doctors can cancel appointments with short notice. No shows end up on rider's records if they can't cancel the ride in time.
3. Chris Martin – He is the Chair of Clevelanders for Public Transit (CPT). Shalida Dobbins is the Vice Chair of CPT. He asked Mayor Biasiotta to email him at info@clefortransit.org with his main concern for his city and he will tell him how better bus service is a part of that solution. CPT fights for the restoration of service cut by RTA. RTA must be bold and provide excellent public transit. Additional funding must be found.

Mayor Biasiotta said his interest on the Board is more global. He is a big advocate for public transit. He rode RTA to CSU and downtown for 20 years. His uncle was an operator and his dad rode RTA for over 40 years. His interest is to provide the best mobility for everyone in the county. It's important for jobs, the disabled, etc. The Board must make tough decisions to adhere to the budget. It requires a partnership with the state, county and federal government. He wants to use his connections to improve the funding. He asked Mr. Martin to tell him where the funds can be used more efficiently.

4. Airric Stewart – He repeated his proposal to reinstate the 15A. His proposal will connect riders to libraries, schools, retail and medical facilities.
5. Rev. Pinkney – Rev. Pinkney sent her comments to President Lucas. Operators are welcome to attend Board Meetings without retaliation.

Committee Reports

There were no reports.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

There were no reports.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

There were no reports.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

New Hires:

1. Vladimir Gremi – Operator
2. Toniesha Johnson – Operator
3. Leon Wells – Operator
4. Laurance Edwards – Operator
5. Robin Hood – Operator
6. Charles Whitehead – Operator
7. Larry Greathouse – Operator
8. Thomas Stover – Operator
9. Antoine Finley – Operator
10. Karess Hines – Operator
11. Fawnda Martin – Operator
12. Marcellus Porter – Operator
13. Jonathan Bruce – Janitor
14. Tayla McClendon – Paratransit Reservations Operator
15. Richard Burgos – Maintenance Technician
16. Aaron Lewis – Electronic Equipment Maintainer
17. Joseph Clark – Community Engagement Specialist
18. Chanel Steiner – Supervisor of Digital & External Marketing
19. Emily Bailey - Executive Assistant
20. Paul Dzurik – Maintainer
21. Yadiel Roman – Transit Police Officer
22. Omar Rojas – Laborer
23. Jayme Inks – District Business Analyst

Promotions:

1. Claudiu Dugala – Electronic Repair Lead
2. Mitchell Crawford II – Electronic Repair Lead
3. Rodnika Phillips – Dispatcher
4. Laurie Edwards – Dispatcher
5. Dion Cunningham – Money Handler
6. Michael Gomez – Maintenance Technician
7. Erica Wiens – Supervisor Cross Trained
8. Stacie Menefee – Assistant Operator Instructor

9. Paul Hudy – Signal Technician

Introduction of Resolutions:

- A. 2023-8 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-082A with Future Age, Inc. dba Provide A Ride to provide contracted paratransit services in an amount not to exceed \$17,044,485.35 for a period of three years, and in amounts not to exceed \$6,243,059.71 and \$6,474,762.80 for each of two option years, respectively, for a total five-year contract amount not to exceed \$29,762,307.86. (General Fund, Paratransit Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta and approved by unanimous vote.
- B. 2023-9 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-082b with GC Logistics of Mississippi, LLC to provide contracted paratransit services in an amount not to exceed \$11,106,075.91 for a period of three years, and in amounts not to exceed \$3,912,322.56 and \$4,016,054.09 for each of two option years, respectively, for a total five-year contract amount not to exceed \$19,034,452.56 (General Fund, Paratransit Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.

A representative from GC Logistics thanked the Board for the opportunity.

- C. 2023-10 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-082C with Senior Transportation Connection to provide contracted paratransit services in an amount not to exceed \$5,400,370.89 for a period of three years, and in amounts not to exceed \$1,916,788.07 and \$1,978,398.27 for each of two option years, respectively, for a total five-year contract amount not to exceed \$9,295,557.23 (General Fund, Paratransit Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.

A representative from STC thanked the Board for the opportunity. President Lucas thanked them for taking care of matters from the last contract.

- D. 2023-11 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-120 with Warren Roofing & Insulating Co. for Project 19.59 – Shaker Shelter Roof Replacement, in an amount not to exceed \$102,000.00 (RTA Capital Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. McCall and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2023-12 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-015 with Trillium Transportation Fuels, LLC dba Trillium CNG to provide CNG Operations & Maintenance Services for the Authority's Hayden District CNG Fueling Station for a period of five years in an amount not to exceed \$3,200,000.00 (General Fund, Hayden District Budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Joyce, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2023-13 – Approving revised list of positions designated to use Purchasing Cards, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Mr. Joyce and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2023-14 – Amending Section 222.04 Community Advisory Committee of the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority and approving amended Operating Guidelines for the Community Advisory Committee, the adoption of which was moved Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. McCall thanked the staff for their work and leadership and the members of the CAC. The new process and application will engage the public more. Ms. Walker Minor thanked Ms. McCall for her leadership and guidance. Two new employees to the Administration

and External Affairs Department include Joseph Clark, Community Engagement Specialist and Chanel Steiner, Supervisor of Digital & External Marketing.

- H. 2023-15 – Removing Section 640.03 Political Activity from the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority and amending Personnel Policy 100.03 Political Activity, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Mr. Joyce and approved by unanimous vote.
- I. 2023-16 – Amending Chapter 465 Financial Assistance of the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Joyce, seconded by Ms. McCall and approved by unanimous vote.
- J. 2023-17 – Approving the 2023 Internal Audit Plan, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Kay Sutula, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, gave the presentation in Mr. Gautam's absence. The U.S. annual inflation rate has increased from 2.5% in January 2020 to 9.1% in June 2022. Since June the inflation rate has been falling. At the end of January 2023, inflation is down to 6.4% and is expected to fall the remainder of the year. The Federal Reserve raised interest rates in December 2022 to its highest level in 15 years to fight against inflation. The Federal Open Market Committee increased interest rates to 4.43%.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 3.5% in December 2022, down from 3.7% in November 2022. The Ohio and County unemployment rate is preliminary and not seasonally adjusted. The Ohio rate remains steady at 4.2% in December 2022. Cuyahoga County dropped to 3.5% in December. Looking at the five largest metropolitan statistical areas (MSA). These are not seasonally adjusted. For December 2022, the rates are preliminary from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Cleveland is 3.5%, down from 4.2%. Toledo is 3.9%, up from 3.3%. Dayton is 3.5%, up from 3.1%. Cincinnati rose to 3.1%. Columbus rose to 3.1%.

January ridership was 37% above January 2022 levels. Compared to January 2022, ridership increased in all modes. January ridership was 1.68 million compared to 1.22 million in January 2022. Passenger fares for January 2023 was \$1.8 million or 18.1% above January 2022 which was \$1.5 million and 39.6% lower than January 2019. February 2023 sales tax receipts (for November 2022 activity) is 9.2% higher than February 2022. YTD it is 6.1% higher than 2022.

General Manager/CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO gave the report. Transit Employee Appreciation Day will be celebrated, Friday, March 24. Staff held several events for February Heart Health Month. A DEI&B Leadership Retreat was held February 3 in the Board Room. Ms. Birdsong Terry was a judge for the Accelerate 2023 competition. The Connectworks Ribbon Cutting was held February 16 at the Southgate Transit Center. Several partners were in attendance including Senator Matt Dolan, County Executive Chris Ronayne, Solon Mayor Edward Kraus and others. The next set of proposals are due March 30 for the second pilot.

The new MetroHealth Line sponsored CNG buses are on the street. A bus was out front for touring. Twelve of the 20 buses are in service. Staff testified in Columbus on projects that were funded for rail cars, buses, light rail track replacement, microtransit and Baby on Board. Several recommendations for ODOT TRAC competitive grants are in draft form or currently in progress including 25Connects/MetroHealth BRT and Light Rail Track Replacement. Final recommendations are expected March 29, 2023. Ohio Loves Transit Day was February 7. Several staff members met with Senators in Columbus. The General Managers internal update is going digital to reduce paper. The 2022 Annual Report video was played.

Public Comments – public transit related items

1. Chris Martin – He thanked the Board members and staff who attended the CPT Transit Equity Day rally and Ride Along. RTA asked for status quo funding from the State. CPT believes that Ohio is unconstitutionally governed by a radical right wing, super majority which has for years openly displayed its contempt for cities like Cleveland and Cuyahoga County. The State and Federal government is not a sustainable funding source.
2. Loh – The reason RTA does not have enough workers is due to less training. The website needs work. The county, city and State websites are all ADA insufficient. She requested the CAC and Transit Ambassadors work to improve the service and tackle funding issues.

Ms. Welch added that the leadership at RTA is really being mindful of the level of engagement with the community and riders. CPT is doing amazing work engaging with the public. She hopes for synergy between the customer surveys, RTA and CPT.

3. Airric Stewart - He repeated his proposal to reinstate the 15A. His proposal will connect riders to libraries, schools, retail and medical facilities. The customer surveys have not worked. He's gotten disconnected several times from the RTA Community Connection Line, 216-621-9500. He hasn't received a call back from Mr. Rivera in the Telephone Information Department.

President Lucas said all of Mr. Stewart's concerns have been reviewed by the Service Management department. He hasn't had any issues with the Community Connection Line but thanked Mr. Stewart for his feedback.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting and the Annual Meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, March 21, 2023**, in the Board Room of the Authority, Root-McBride Building, 1240 West Sixth Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. This meeting will be live streamed on RTA's Board page (www.RideRTA.com/board) by selecting the meeting date. The public is welcome to attend in person.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:51 a.m.



President

Attest:



Secretary-Treasurer