

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:04 a.m., October 27, 2020

Present: Clough (Chair), Lucas (Vice Chair), Bibb, Byrne, Joyce, McCall, Moss, Pellot, Serrano, Weiss

Not present: None

Also Present: Anderson, Bartlome, Benford, Birdsong, Bitto, Burney, Caver, Dangelo, Davidson, Feliciano, Fester, Fields, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Harris, Johnson, Pickett, Schipper, Talley

Mayor Clough called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. The secretary called the roll and reported that ten (10) board members were present. This meeting was conducted by teleconference for members of the Board in accordance with House Bill 197 of the 133rd General Assembly, signed by the Governor of the State of Ohio on March 27, 2020, the March 9, 2020 order of the Governor of the State of Ohio declaring a public health emergency and the April 30, 2020 order of the Director of the Ohio Department of Public Health prohibiting any gathering of ten (10) or more people. This meeting was live-streamed on RTA's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/rideRTA) for staff and members of the public.

The Secretary 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

Mayor Clough stated that the minutes from the September 1, 2020 Special Board Meeting and September 15, 2020 had been previously distributed and reviewed and asked whether there were any additions and/or corrections. There were no corrections. The minutes were approved.

Rep. Bride Rose Sweeney

Rep. Sweeney represents the 14 House District that includes Ward 16 and 17 of Cleveland, Brookpark, Brooklyn, Parma Heights, and Middleburg Heights. She is in her first term, but is not new to politics or the State House. In her first term, she was appointed to the Finance Committee that hears the transportation budget and authored the \$70 BI state budget. There is not much happening at the State House with the Election around the corner. They have sessions scheduled six days after the Election. Any bill that doesn't get passed at the end of the year will die. A lot is going on with the Pandemic and with Rep. Larry Householder being removed due to bribery charges and a new speaker appointed by a one point margin. This plays a factor in how he is trying to govern. Depending on how the election goes, will dictate the upcoming bills. She is hopeful the delegation stays bipartisan, working towards getting some forward thinking legislation. The capital budget, which is money that is put through the General Revenue Fund and set aside for the off year for state departments to give out capital improvements, is hopeful. She has seen projects creating investment and how much public transit is a part of that. The more they can connect the work that RTA does to fund other projects that impact the bigger picture is important. She is hearing the budget will be less than the original \$150 MI. It is bonded money and not from the GRF.

There will be a new General Assembly with term limits. They have eight-year term limits. It is fast paced. There is an influx of new people who are new at State government. Within the first three

months, they are voting on the Transportation Budget and the \$70 BI biennial budget six months after that. The more RTA and the delegation can stick together in the first six months and be bipartisan, the better. It seems like the make-up of the House is turning into urban versus rural. When they got the historic increase of \$70 MI in the State annual budget, individuals were against it because they don't rely on public transportation in their areas. She referenced an article that said that Columbus, Cincinnati and Cleveland make up more than half of the entire State's economic gross revenue, which is essential. She talked on the House floor about the brain drain in Ohio and how her millennial friends have moved to other states that are more millennial friendly and more transit-friendly.

She will be on the Finance Committee again next General Assembly. Hopefully it will be a different budget. Last year, they saw great bipartisan support because of the increase of the gas tax. They had to come over for Democrat support. She is a Democrat and she agreed to that is for the increase in public transit dollars. She is not sure that will be the same dynamic having the increase already there and having a budget that may be cut compared to the last biennial budget where before COVID they had more revenues coming in. The fight was about where to invest and where to cut. She asked for helping keep the Cuyahoga County delegation strong and bipartisan.

Mayor Clough thanked her for her continued support. A number of representatives in the State have recognized the importance of public transit and RTA has received funds in the past and want to stay in line to receive these funds. Ms. Birdsong asked if there are any recommendations that can help support her mission in the House. Rep. Sweeney emphasized starting early and the election will determine some things. There will be new people serving for the first time and the process is fast after being elected. They vote on the transportation budget and State budget early in their term. She will encourage her colleagues to rally people together. There are more rural representatives, but we disproportionately have a bigger impact on the State's budget. That message from Cuyahoga County needs to be louder and clear. She suggested one on one calls with them, sending a letter to the Speaker and Chair of the Finance Committee or working with the other major cities that have similar missions.

Public Comments – Agenda Items

1. India Pierce Lee – Cleveland, OH – She is the Senior Vice President for the Cleveland Foundation. The Cleveland Foundation is proud to partner with RTA. They have had a long term relationship with RTA. Their free ride sponsored day in 2014 to celebrate their Centennial, is still the most talked about gift to the community. We need to give access to people to go vote who don't have transportation. Ms. Birdsong said there will be an update later in the meeting about the free fare day and looks forward to presenting the resolution to the Board later on the agenda. Mr. Bibb thanked Ms. Birdsong and the Cleveland Foundation. This is an idea that he, Jose Feliciano and others in the community have been discussing for a while. He will be happy for Cleveland to join cities across the State and country to offer free fares. Mayor Clough thanked the Cleveland Foundation for making this grant available.
2. Libby Schubert – Cleveland, OH - With the major development plan to improve the GCRTA and increase the quality of services, an easy way to free up funding for that project is by defunding the Transit Police and reallocating that money back into improving the experiences of riders. On Thursday, three years after the historic Groves Decision ruled armed fare enforcement unconstitutional; Clevelanders for Public Transit is holding a virtual event to talk about alternatives to Transit Police. We invite the GCRTA board members to attend this event to hear from riders about their experiences with Transit Police and our demands to create a safer and more effective transit system. Register for the event at clefortransit.org

3. Nathan Jurcago – Cleveland, OH - Hi, I have noticed an absurd amount of allocation of the budget for transport has been going to the transit police over the past few years. I, as well as many others who have used and still use RTA's services, feel like these are unnecessary expenditures and the money would be more helpful funding other areas used for strengthening the community. I hope you will join the board meeting on the 29th where this topic will be presented for further discussion. You can RSVP at clefortransit.org.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

There was no CAC report.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

Nick Davidson, Director of Paratransit gave a presentation on Paratransit Operations improvements. Operational priorities include Leverage Scheduling Technology, Improve the Customer Service Experience (Reduce call wait time), Modernize Communication Technology, Increase on time performance (OTP) and Reduce on-board travel times (OBT). Looking at the past year for the reservation call wait time, last September, the average hold time to reach a reservation agent was a little over 30 minutes. As of September 2020, it was 34 seconds. They were down to seven minutes before COVID. Since then, they are under a minute. The ridership and calls in September were twice as much as that of April. They implemented changes while the call volume was low, to make sustainable progress for the future. The national standard is to have 95% of calls answered within two minutes and 99% of calls answered within five minutes so RTA is above the national standard.

Improvements include call wait times reduced by 98%, additional customer service-training, cancellations handled by call center and expanded hours of operations. They used to leave messages for cancellations, but now that is handled by an agent. Previous call hours were 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Currently they are 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. In addition, they added two reservationist positions. The dispatch call wait time last fall was nearly 10 minutes, but it is now around 1 minute. It is higher than the reservation center, but it is above the national average. But the dispatch handles high volume traffic and maintain the vehicles on the road.

Other changes to affect both call centers include subscription management (standing trips where customer does not have to call in to schedule the trip), enhanced call monitoring for accuracy, increased accountability, increased employee training and communicated metrics daily. Monitoring the metrics daily changes the culture of the call center so they can see their individual performance and the team performance. Almost 75% of trips are delivered in under 30 minutes. In addition, 93% of customers are on the bus under 45 minutes and 98% are on board for under an hour. September was the worst month this year. However, October is out performing this month. On-time performance last fall was 81%. National expectation is 90%. Pre-COVID, they had gotten to 89.5%. Since COVID, they are at 96%. Ridership from April has doubled. These improvements can be contributed to implemented street routing (using predictive path of travel in the mapping system to create an accurate schedule), adjusted time-distance calculations, adjusted traffic pattern considerations and adjusted number of scheduling days. Previously, they scheduled seven days in advance. Now they are scheduling three days in advance. This has led to a number of improvements such as the cancellation rate.

Next items they tend to work on include implementation of service Infractions software, which tracks no-shows, late cancels, and cancels-at-the-door. When they have these issues, they send educational letters, followed by warning letters and then suspension. Previously, this was done adhoc as people came to their attention. They stopped that practice several months ago since it was not equitable.

Other improvements include reducing cancellation rate (Currently 28%), down from 35% - 40% and improving customer service interactions. Mr. Serrano asked for more detail on the service infraction software and equity. Nick said they ask customers to cancel their trips in advance to prevent no shows and cancellations at the door. If they notice somebody showing a pattern, they would send them a warning and possibly suspend them. He does not believe it was applied fairly across all passengers. The software will track it and apply to all passengers. Rev. Lucas said that Nick has done an excellent job. Previously, customers waiting to get through would be offsite waiting for 30 minutes and their phones could loss power. The callers are now addressed within a few minutes. Ms. Pellot asked if reminders are sent out about trips. Nick said they make calls the day before and imminent arrival if the trip originates from the home address.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

New Hires:

1. Michael Bell - Central Communications Specialist
2. Peter Quigley - Safety Data Compliance Analyst
3. Lisa Manill - Legal Secretary
4. Nicole Campbell - Administrative Assistant
5. Sophia Ciaravino - Occupational Health Specialist

Promotions:

1. Alexis Marcano - District Business Analyst
2. Carl Harris - Maintenance Leader
3. Charnese Wilson - Contract Administrator
4. Melissa Beverly - Recruiter

Mayor Clough congratulated the promotions. Ms. Birdsong requested to acknowledge a few notable retirees. Ted Pickett, Fleet Team Leader will retire after 42 years at RTA. The most of his time has been in the Procurement department. He has been responsible for all of RTA's bus procurements. Mabry Harris will assume the position of Procurement Team Leader for Fleet and will handle the bus and rail car procurements. Ms. Birdsong added that Ted has been a joy to work with. Ted thanked RTA for the opportunity. He started as an entry-level mechanic and was promoted to a brake team leader, engine overhaul specialist and fleet engineering. Pete Anderson, CIO will also be retiring. He has been with RTA for a little over six years. He was in the Navy prior to RTA. He has worked at COTA and in Fort Worth, TX. Mayor Clough thanked both of them for their commitment and dedication.

Introduction of Resolutions

- A. 2020-74 – Expressing sincere appreciation to the Cleveland Foundation and authorizing the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer to accept a grant for \$75,000, for the purpose of sponsoring a fare-free Election Day on November 3, 2020, the adoption of which was moved by Rev. Lucas, seconded by Mr. Bibb and approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Birdsong added that this is important to the community. Community partnerships like this with the Cleveland Foundation are great. The Cleveland Foundation asked if RTA was interested in doing this. Staff had been looking for a partner. Mr. Bibb asked what the marketing communication strategy would be to get the word out. Mr. Bitto said they would run radio beginning today up until Election Day. They will have digital boards posted and at rapid stations. Audio announcements were posted this morning. They planned for digital ads on Facebook and Instagram, but Facebook blocked it because Election Day is included in the art. They appealed, but it is still blocked. Mr. Bibb asked how they could assist with spreading the word. Mr. Feliciano added that Cleveland Foundation is also advertising. The graphic package will feature the Cleveland Foundation as the sponsor. The promotion will start at Noon today. They will reach out to elected officials and CDCs, which have approached RTA about providing the free fare day. Ms. Birdsong added the free rides would include bus, rail and Paratransit.

- B. 2020-75 – Expressing congratulations to the employees of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority who retired during the third quarter of 2020, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mr. Bibb and approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Fields presented the new hires in a slide show.

- C. 2020-76 – Authorizing an increase to Contract No. 2018-112 with Transit Sourcing Services, Inc., for the furnishing of an additional 200 HRV 28 inch steel wheels, as specified and as required in an amount not to exceed \$174,000.00, for a new total contract amount not to exceed \$898,000.00 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Rev. Lucas and approved by unanimous vote.

Dr. Caver said a similar resolution would be brought to the Board next month. This contract will allow them to keep continuity of steel wheels. Several years ago, there was a break in the continuity, which resulted in vehicles being out for service.

- D. 2020-77 – Authorizing Contract No. 2020-058 with Transtech of South Carolina, Inc. for the furnishing of pantograph carbon shoes, as specified and as required, for a period of three years, in an amount not to exceed \$262,800.00 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Mr. Bibb and approved by unanimous vote
- E. 2020-78 – Authorizing Contract No. 2020-170 for the purchase of rock salt from the City of Cleveland for the 2020-2021 winter season in an amount not to exceed \$150,000.00 (General Fund, Service Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Byrne, seconded Ms. Moss. Chief McCall asked to recuse herself because of the City of Cleveland. There were nine (9) ayes and one (1) recuse from Chief McCall. It passed.
- F. 2020-79 – Amending Chapter 656 “Travel Policy and Procedures” of the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. Moss and approved by unanimous vote.

These were discussed in committee.

- G. 2020-80 – Approving purchasing cards for travel on Authority related business, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mr. Bibb and approved by unanimous vote.

The cards for travel were discussed in committee. They have worked with the Finance Department and Legal Department to ensure a process is in place, for when Board members and employees can't use their personal credit cards due to rewards programs tied to RTA vendors. Board members will be advised as of those vendors RTA does business with, so they are in conflict. Board members will continue to coordinate travel with the Board assistant. The card will be distributed when needed to the traveler. This will make this more seamless. Ms. Moss asked how many p-cards are being assigned and if there are good controls in place. Mr. Gautam added that these cards do not have a revolving credit where the available balance goes back up after payment. They have budgetary controls in place. For example, if a \$2,000 or \$5,000 limit is on a card, once that money has been spent, that card cannot be used unless the budget is amendment. There are various controls as to what can be used and how the money can be spent and the size of the purchase. There is continuous review and approval from the supervisor, department head and p-card admin. The transactions are subject to Internal Audit review. Tony Garofoli added that the p-card program is subject to a 100% audit in their continuous auditing program. Every transaction is processed through an electronic script where they interrogate the data with 110 questions looking for any exceptions. The exceptions are brought to management for remedy.

- H. 2020-81 – Approving revised list of positions designated to use purchasing cards, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Bibb, seconded by Mayor Weiss and approved by unanimous vote.

This is a revised list of positions that have purchasing cards, so the card follows the position and not the name.

- I. 2020-82 – Adopting the framework for the future Strategic Plan of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Bibb, seconded by Mr. Joyce and approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Bibb thanked Maribeth Feke and India for an additional briefing he received on this plan. He looks forward to the additional work presented by the other consultants during their retreat next month. Ms. Birdsong thanked him and Chief McCall for leading the conversation in digging deeper. She is confident that this is a good base, but we need to keep moving forward over the next year. Rev. Lucas also received additional information on the plan. He appreciates the work of the staff.

Interim Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Dr. Caver gave the report. The economy has a huge bearing on RTA's revenue success. The unemployment rate over the last six months, it has been coming down. The State is at 8.4%. The county numbers will come in later. We are a little higher than the State traditionally. It is still high considering that prior to COVID we were in the 4% range. There has been \$11.8 billion in unemployment payments through the State of Ohio and Dept. of Job and Family Services. Although things are getting better, we are still at levels we have not been before. The economy is adding jobs, but is still down 6 years' worth of job growth. The economic conditions and the decisions of firms are still impacted by COVID-19. Companies have altered investment plans given the uncertainty of the economy. Locally and nationally, small businesses have been disproportionately affected. In addition,

black owned businesses have been particularly hit hard. Sales tax is doing well, but the near term does not support that there will be a continued economic increase.

Ridership drives fare revenue and ridership has been at a 54% reduction on average since COVID. In the height, we were in 70% driving sales up to 60%, but now we have leveled off to the 55% range. We are averaging 50-55% in passenger fare revenue. Last year in September, we would have received the CMSD payment, which has traditionally been \$4 MI. They are finalizing the agreement, but it is expected that that revenue will not be the same since students are not traveling back and forth to school. Although the economy is not at its pre-COVID levels, the sales tax has performed strongly. September and October, year over year, there have been slight increases, they believe due to the unemployment payments and the extra payments the people are receiving. Once the payments end, the aggregate spending will be reduced. Rev. Lucas asked in a previous meeting what makes up the increase. These are due to auto, liquor and online sales. Online sales are taxed at home addresses compared to in store sales that may be made outside the County. Compared to 2020, we have received \$5 MI more from online sales for sales tax. The \$112 MI received from the CARES tax was drawn down through October.

Ms. Birdsong said we are in a tumultuous time where there is uncertainty with ridership. They will keep the Board updated on the financial changes that come about as the House and delegation continues to push for transit funding. As of current, there are no ongoing talks of a 2nd round of CARES Act funding, but she asked that all Board members continue as advocates for transit funding. They would not be able to continue without consideration of layoffs or cutbacks more than what they had through the initial stages of COVID without the funding. Rev. Lucas asked if there is any more funds mentioned for public transit in the conversation going back and forth in Congress. Mr. Schipper said when the House passed the HEROES Act, there was \$15 MI for public transit. Then there was another version with \$15 BI of which some would have come to RTA through a competitive grant formula. Other talks on the stimulus had it as high at \$32 BI. Most of that difference being with the larger agencies like New York, Chicago, Washington, etc., where the CARES Act formula did not help them as significantly as RTA. It was set up in a way RTA could get the money quickly. It is still out there, but they are not banking on it. The Senate never acted on the HEROS act. For RTA it will not be life or death for the larger agencies, but we have tremendous funding needs above what is in the Operating budget.

General Manager, Chief Executive Officer Report

India Birdsong gave the presentation. She announced that last month RTA received a BUILD grant for \$15 MI to support the rail car replacement project. She shared a video that aired on TV-5 about how we received the award and the importance of it to the Ohio region. She thanked Mike Schipper and his team for their work and the work of the advocacy group in D.C. The System Redesign meetings began yesterday. The public will be asked for feedback on Facebook Live meetings over the next few months. June 2021 is the estimated Go Live date. Thanks to the work of the Ad Hoc Technology Committee, RTA will migrate from Novell to Microsoft Office 365. RTA has been on the current system for 20 years. The goal is to move over by mid-December. Free Wi-Fi on all RTA buses, trains and several stations is now available. Dr. Caver, Mike Lively, Steve Bitto, Erica Tucker and Theresa Burrage worked on the project. This will assist students to connect to Wifi. Paratransit will be added in early December. Brookpark, Puritas and W. 150th Street Station is coming soon. Pictures of the car cards, billboards and social media were displayed. The marketing efforts for the free fare day includes radio and social media ads.

Mayor Clough asked how many buses take people to their polling locations or is this designed to take people downtown. Joel Freilich, Raj Gautam and India looked at expected ridership. They looked at a typical Tuesday over time, a typical weekday ridership and Election Day over the last few years.

RTA usually brings in \$140,000 per day for revenue. They reduced the expected ridership by 50-55% due to COVID. Mayor Clough added that polling locations are not all on a main route and wondered how effective this would be. She has done this type of promotion in other cities. It's not guaranteed people will use it to get to the polls, but they found this to be more equitable to make the entire day free to avoid having to push a button, show a sticker or having a cut off time. Other cities have cut off times, but people would be stranded. Mayor Clough ask that it be clear that this is a free day and not a direct ride to the polls and hopefully the routes will get them there. Rev. Lucas lives near Shaker Square. There used to be a polling place in his building, but it is now closed. The closest polling place is Harvey Rice on E. 116th Street, which is accessible on the Blue or Green Line.

President's Report

Mayor Clough announced that he would not be seeking reappointment. He will have served as President for three years. The bylaws indicated that is the maximum the President or VP could serve in that position. Another mayor selected by the Cuyahoga County Mayors & Managers Association will be elected December 17. Mayor Clough's term will end February 28, 2021.

New Business

The proposed 2021 Board and Committee Meeting dates was sent out to the Board for review. Mayor Clough asked if the Board wanted to vote on it now or at the next meeting. Rev. Lucas thanked him for his leadership thus far. Chief McCall mentioned that some of the meetings fall after a holiday. The Board executive assistant mentioned that the dates that fall after the holiday include MLK Day and President's Day. Mayor Clough said that if a date is in conflict the Board could vote to change the January or February dates. Chief McCall said she was ok and moved for approval. Mr. Serrano seconded and the schedule was approved.

Public comments on non-agenda items

Comments were received via email and by dial in. A few comments came in from Will Tarter and Lo after the September 15, 2020 meeting adjourned. The questions and answers were read into the record, but they are included in the September 15, 2020 minutes.

1. Chris Martin – Cleveland, OH - This month marks two anniversaries for RTA. First, the agency celebrated 12 years of the Healthline. Go ahead and pat yourselves on the back for the subsequent billions in economic development that I am sure you give yourselves credit for. However, the second anniversary marks 3 years since agency decisions killed the whole point and promise of the Healthline. RTA's decision to rid the Healthline of proof-of-payment fare validation has resulted in consistent delays and precipitous ridership declines. Please join Clevelanders for Public Transit and Black Spring CLE on Thursday at 6pm via Zoom to learn more how you can heal the Healthline and begin to deliver justice for riders.
2. Ellen Morales – Berea, OH - I am contacting because I believe we need to defund transit police and instead invest in other forms of community commuter safety. I believe conversations on this topic will help improve our city greatly. We hope you can join us on October 29th to discuss this further. You can RSVP at clefortransit.org. Thank you!
3. Riley – Cleveland, OH - Commit to abolishing police on the RTA. They are unnecessary and unhelpful. I have been harassed on the RTA so many times, and not once has one of your officers intervened. They do not do their jobs of protecting riders and serve only to intimidate anyone who can't pay the fare.

4. Josiah – Twinsburg, OH - I am writing because I have been avid RTA rider for most of my life. Growing up in Shaker the train was my gateway to the world. When my car died recently I even caught the bus from county line downtown to work. Service cuts have hurt many people and when so much money is being spent on Transit police, it seems a simple choice. I encourage board members to attend Thursday's Zoom event being put on by Clevelanders for Public Transit and Black Spring Cleveland and hear from riders themselves. Please show that the board is invested in creating best outcomes by registering at clefortransit.org.
5. Justin Petro – Cleveland, OH - During this critical period where RTA needs to properly invest its resources to continue to serve the community, now is the time to divest from the Transit Authority and instead invest more resources into safe reliable public transportation for the community. Clevelanders for Public Transit is holding a virtual meeting on October 29th that we invite and encourage RTA board members to attend. Please join us on October 29th to discuss this further. You can RSVP at clefortransit.org
6. Lauren Joy Fraley – Cleveland, OH - I commuted on the Red Line regularly in 2018-19 and as a white woman heading from Kamm's Corners to Cedar-Fairmount, I only witnessed police officers checking (usually Black riders) for fare cards "with reasonable suspicion", while my own interactions with officers were usually having the door held for me. This is the lens through which I share this comment. I am aware that RTA Fares were doubled (from \$1.25 to \$2.50) and RTA police budget was also doubled in 2012. RTA has claimed that crime is down 65% since then (ostensibly due to the increase in officer presence). But research done by Clevelanders for Public Transit and Black Spring Cleveland shows that the only crime that has actually gone down is fare evasion - which accounts for 99.5% of that reduction in crime. Any change in quality of life crimes are negligible, leading one to conclude that an increase officer presence has done nothing for public safety, and has indeed caused physical, emotional, and financial harm for Black and Brown communities. October 29th at 6pm is a celebration of the anniversary of the Groves Decision-- which said that armed officers cannot randomly do searches on the RTA. At that time in 2017, Judge Groves also made a recommendation to have unarmed ambassadors represent the RTA rather than armed cops-- yet this change hasn't been made. This is an opportunity to demand that Emanuella Groves' recommendation be honored and WE HOPE YOU JOIN US!! YOU CAN RSVP AT CLEFORTTRANSIT.ORG
7. Kate Nickley – Lakewood, OH - I firmly believe defunding the transit police and investing in other forms of community safety such as a civilian ambassador program would be a significant step towards equity and social justice in Greater Cleveland. Reducing fares rather than paying to police fare evasion would also be in the public's interest. BIPOC riders and poor riders are disproportionately and negatively affected by your current policing system. I invite you to take action by listening to and collaborating with community groups who aim to amplify the rider's voice. Please join Black Spring Cleveland on October 29th to discuss this further. You can RSVP at clefortransit.org.
8. Ernest W. Durbin III - Cleveland Heights, OH - I am writing to support defunding the GCRTA Transit Police Department. Since the Groves decision in 2017, which struck down unconstitutional fare enforcement policies, the Transit Police have become redundant as a police force. Each community that the GCRTA services in Cuyahoga County has an existing police force that can respond to incidents that occur in and around the GCRTA. This overlap is an abject waste of the \$14 million budget allocated by the GCRTA to operate a police force that only exists to harass and intimidate our most vulnerable community members. These funds could be used to immediately reduce fares and increase service for all residents, increasing ridership and working to a more sustainable GCRTA. I am asking that the GCRTA

Board members please join Clevelanders for Public Transit and Black Spring Cleveland on October 29th to discuss this further. You can each RSVP at clefortransit.org.

9. Kameron Damaska – Cleveland, OH - Hello, I'm a transit rider on the west side of Cleveland. The common route I ride is from the EcoVillage Red Line stop to Tower City. Every time I leave the platform at Tower City, I see at least 6 transit police just standing around, doing nothing. Police used to enforce fares on transit. They would harass riders, sometimes put them in jail, all over a couple dollar bus pass. Luckily for us, transit police cannot do that anymore. Now, they do next-to-nothing. We need to free up the wasted funds we spend on police, and really invest in our riders. Board members, we will be having a conversation October 29th on Zoom to discuss this more. Will you join us? You can RSVP at clefortransit.org.
10. Rev. Pamela Pinkney-Butts – She is working with Mr. Bitto in reference to shelters that have been adopted, but not being taking care of. The cameras on the buses coming out of Hayden don't work. People on dialysis are being left outside after they are dropped off because the centers won't let them in. She asked that this be brought to Mayor Jackson's attention. She doesn't like how the funding has gone. There are no elevators at the stations on the east side.
11. Pluria Gardner – She called a few meetings ago about an issue with a Transit Police officer. She requested a meeting with the General Manager. This problem has caused her 2-3 trips. A TP falsified a police report. She has pending charges. She is a RTA customer and doesn't appreciate the treatment she is receiving. Ms. Birdsong added that her office reached out to her and will be in contact by the end of the week after they gather information from Transit Police.
12. Dana Beveridge – Clevelanders for Public Transit (CPT) thanked the Board for approving the Strategic Plan. She hopes this will mean more opportunities to collaborate with RTA for a more equitable, better transit in the future. She applauds the Board and the Cleveland Foundation for the free fares on Election Day. They hope that the Board and leadership will join them this Thursday for a townhall discussion on safer alternatives to policing on transit. They are eager to discuss the possibilities RTA joining other progressive agencies across the U.S. who use unarmed civilian transit ambassadors to ensure customers are able to have safe and comfortable experience while riding RTA. RSVP at clefortransit.org.

Upcoming Meetings

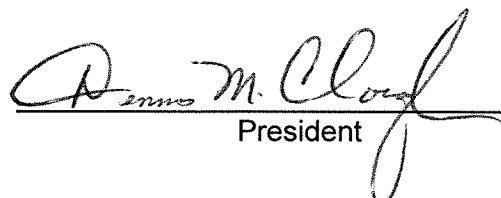
The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 17, 2020 in the Board Room of the Authority, Root-McBride Building, and 1240 West Sixth Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. This meeting will be live streamed on RTA's Facebook page for staff and members of the public at www.facebook.com/riderta Only Board members and required RTA staff will be allowed in the Board Room.

This meeting was adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

Attest:



Interim Secretary-Treasurer



President