

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:34 a.m., June 29, 2021

Present: Lucas (Chair), Byrne, Joyce, Koomar, McCall, Pellet, Serrano, Weiss

Not present: Duarte, Moss

Also Present: Becker, Benford, Bitto, Burney, Caver, Coffey, Cottrell, Fields, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Gibson, Kirkland, Miller, Mothes, Petit, Pfeiffer, Schipper, Sutula, Togher, Walker-Minor, Wiehe

President Lucas called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. The secretary called the roll and reported that eight (8) board members were present. This meeting was conducted by teleconference for members of the Board in accordance with Sub. H.B. 404 of the 133rd General Assembly, passed on November 19, 2020, signed by the Governor of the State of Ohio on November 22, 2020 and the March 9, 2020 order of the Governor of the State of Ohio declaring a public health emergency, 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

President Lucas stated that the minutes from the May 25, 2021 Board meeting had been previously distributed and reviewed, and asked whether there were any additions and/or corrections. There were no corrections. It was moved and seconded. The minutes were approved.

Public Comments – Agenda Items (comments were submitted by form and phone)

1. Mr. Vernon Henderson – He called about routes 50 and 48A. He is concerned about the service his neighborhood is not receiving because of the extension of the 48A.

Rev. Lucas said they will take all concerns about these routes into consideration.

2. Airric Stewart – He called about the changes to the 48A. It is traditionally an efficient route leading from Ward 1 at E. 177th in Tarkington going to Euclid Avenue near Cleveland Clinic. Changes were made without public consent. He sent an email to the Board in hopes to put the route back in place. The route traditionally has been running every hour from 177th in South Miles to 131st in Miles. The 48 Marymount had been running every hour from Marymount Hospital to 131st in Miles also. From that point going north, those routes shared the same route and were running 20-30 minute intervals. They would go down 131st north, west on Union, north on 130th and turn right on Ford, up Shaker Square which is significant, then to University Circle. The public only wanted weekend service, not a route change. This route has been compromised negatively by the implementation of the 50. Mr. Freilich said the reason was to tie in the hospitals better. He does not agree with the changes.
3. Rev. Pam Pinkney – Cleveland, OH – She questioned Reso 2021-58 for Lytx. She asked who is monitoring the driver behavior. For Reso 2021-62 for Trapeze Software for paratransit, she asked for results for the disabled to be aware of what is being done or improved. For Reso 2021-59 Advanced Rail Management Corp. she does not like the ramps at rail stations. E. 79th Street light rail needs an upgrade. For Reso 2021-64 for the budget, she asked for the other expenditures. For Reso 2021-67 she asked why certain sections are being removed from the Code. For Reso 2021-

68, she asked for the purpose of amending Chapter 480. She asked how the agenda is going to stop slavery.

Dr. Caver said the behavior system monitors risky driver behavior and shares that information with staff to coach the driver on improving their driving. The Trapeze software helps route the paratransit buses for the customers similar to rideshares. We are using ramps opposed to elevators due to reliability. Elevators don't operate well in the cold weather and get vandalized. President Lucas approves of the ramps.

4. Chris Martin – Cleveland, OH - This comment is regarding the minutes from last month's meeting. There, this is an instruction that your new police chief work with your acting CEO on a "transit police civilian board." I want to remind the Board of Trustees that your newly hired police chief comes from the Cleveland Division of Police, which is so rife with unconstitutional policing that the federal government had to come in to provide court-mandated oversight. And, Trustees, please remember that Cleveland Police, to this day, work to undermine their own civilian police oversight review board. I question the ability of a cop from this department to actually empower civilians in the oversight of your violent police force. Similarly, I question the ability of your acting CEO to do the same after he, during the height of nationwide protests against police brutality, proudly posed with the widely recognized as racist "thin blue line" flag. Trustees, you are asking the fox to build the hen-house, let alone guard it.

Trustees, cops in this agency have made headlines twice this year already for assaulting riders. In the second incident, one of your violent cops pushed a rider onto live tracks where a train could have come and killed that person. Trustees, please show you are worthy of the trust put into you by the public at large. You must demand that a civilian police oversight review board be created and that civilians who serve on it are actually empowered to provide accountability for your police.

Rev. Lucas met with Chief Jones and spoke highly of her leadership and ask that she be given a chance. The staff had favorable views of her leadership. Chief McCall added that Chief Jones is the first LGBTQ commander and was instrumental in the changes that were implemented as a result of the Consent Decree. She will be hands-on. She will institutionalize constitutional policing and asked that she be given a chance.

5. Chris Stocking – Cleveland, OH - Regarding general fund revenue report. Thanks to RTA for implementing the NextGen system redesign. Some background. In 2016, CPT first recommended GCRTA implement a system redesign to restore service cuts and prevent fare increases. An email was sent to each board member recommending a transit system redesign as an alternative to fare increases- make the routes work better to gain riders and fare revenue.

Mr. Serrano was the only board member to respond Thank you for this well thought out and articulated response. I truly appreciate your passion and insights. I have forwarded your letter to CEO Calabrese and the board and we will discuss this.

In 2017, CPT worked with County Council and Transit Center to promote system redesign. In 2018 CPT released our Fair Fares platform which recommended redesigning the transit network to increase the number of jobs accessible via transit within 90 minutes. Five years later we have NextGen. The current system redesign is a tough sell to many riders. We've lost nearly 30% of service over the past 15 years and fares have doubled. RTA is trying to serve more people with less service hours. Redesigning where buses go with a shrinking pot of money can only go so far. New funding is needed. In RTA's strategic plan, the expanded funding system redesign is a priority. It requires new revenue. What is the board's plan to get new funding? The longer the board waits, more service reduced and community support evaporates

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

There was no report.

Committee Reports

There will be an External Affairs Committee meeting in July or August to address the concerns of riders related to the NextGen system changes.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

He met with STC about their vehicles. The older vehicles only have one seat for wheelchairs, which is in the back of the vehicle, which makes for a bumpy ride. The new vehicles have wheelchair accommodation in the middle of the vehicle.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

Promotions: N/A

New Hires:

1. Taisha Tejeda – Executive Secretary
2. Dan Zelina – Engineering Co-Op
3. Daniel Palacio – Engineering Intern
4. Jamarr Carter – Occupational Health Specialist
5. Nazar Tkachenko – Marketing & Communications Intern
6. Kristi Frank – District Business Analyst
7. Brian Shepard – Central Communications Specialist

Public Transit Development Program Interns

1. Jack Brancatelli
2. Brian Harper
3. Zane Patterson
4. Brooklyn August
5. Laura Crenshaw
6. Joseph Warnkin
7. John Kennick
8. Tariq Mohammed

Introduction of Resolutions:

- A. 2021-58 – Authorizing an increase to Contract No. 2019-148 with Lytx, Inc. to provide 4G Driver Behavior Performance Monitoring System Equipment and Related Services for Bus and Paratransit Vehicles in an amount NTE \$211,000.00, for a new total contract amount NTE \$1,213,936.00 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.
- B. 2021-59 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-029 with Advanced Rail Management Corporation for Rail Grinding Program Management Engineering Services for a total contract amount not to exceed \$476,369.80 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pellot, seconded by Mayor Koomar and approved by unanimous vote.

- C. 2021-60 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-056 with KS Associates, Inc. for Project 19.07 – On-Call Surveying Services – Phase 6 in an amount not to exceed \$250,000.00 for a period of 36 months (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2021-61 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-066 with Valvoline, Inc. for the furnishing of engine oil, as specified and as required, for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed \$243,150.00 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Byrne, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2021-62 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-077 with Trapeze Software Group, Inc. to provide Paratransit Software Support Services for a period of four years in an amount not to exceed \$1,790,460.00 (General Fund, Innovation and Technology Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pellot, seconded by Mr. Serrano approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2021-63 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-078 with Ultramain Systems, Inc. to provide Ultramain Software Hosting Services for a period of three years in an amount not to exceed \$416,130.00 (General Fund, Intelligent Transportation Systems Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2021-64 – Amending appropriations for the current expenses and other expenditures for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, as adopted in Resolution No. 2020-101 and 2021-019 and increasing the appropriation to the General Fund by \$62,000,000, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Byrne, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- H. 2021-65 – Resolution authorizing the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority to provide for the (i) defeasance of certain outstanding sales tax supported bonds including (a) sales tax supported capital improvement and refunding bonds, series 2012, (b) sales tax supported capital improvement and refunding bonds, series 2015, (c) sales tax supported capital improvement refunding bonds, series 2016, and (d) sales tax supported capital improvement bonds, series 2019, for a total aggregate principal amount of the prior bonds being defeased not to exceed \$50,000,000, and with the escrow requirements, not to exceed a total aggregate amount of \$62,000,000 and; (ii) authorizing an escrow trust agreement with the bank of New York Mellon Trust Company, N.A.; and (iii) other matters related to such defeasance of the prior bonds as defined below, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- I. 2021-66 – Authorizing the filing of grant applications with the State of Ohio for State Fiscal Year 2022 financial assistance under all State of Ohio programs, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pellot, seconded by Mayor Weiss and approved by unanimous vote.
- J. 2021-67 – Removing Sections 648.02 and 648.03 from the Codified Rules and Regulations (“Code”) of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, moving Chapters 626 and 627 of the Code to the Personnel Policies and amending Section 600.03 of the Personnel Policies to include Chapters 626 and 627 from the Code, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by

unanimous vote.

- K. 2021-68 – Amending Chapter 480 of the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Byrne, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer presented the report. The April unemployment rate for Ohio stayed at 4.7%. Ohio and Cuyahoga County rates were under the U.S. rate of 6.1% for April. In May, the U.S. rate dropped to 5.8%. The Ohio rate rose to 5%. We experienced an uptick in April 2021 ridership due to it being compared to the Pandemic last April and because of the NFL Draft. May ridership declined to 1.3 million rides, but is still up 18.3% on a month to month basis. May Passenger fares increased 26.7%, but obviously is still below pre-COVID levels. June Sales Tax increased when compared to 2020 by 33.2%. This is most likely a result of the 3rd Stimulus checks under the ARRP of \$,1400 distributed in March.

Included in the monthly package are several reports. The staff is looking at the policies requiring the presentation of these reports so they can improve the financial reports, making the Board's job easier for oversight and fulfillment of your fiduciary responsibility. Two revenue reports are included. One report looks at month to prior year's month and YTD versus prior YTD. The second report is of the same cash receipts versus the budgeting amounts on a monthly and YTD basis. A sales and use tax report indicates monthly information comparative with prior months and YTD and comparison of actual versus budgeted amounts. The Inventory of treasury investments report indicate the investment holdings by each fund, the maturity and accrued interest income related information and the average yield. This is required by internal management policy (Administrative Procedure 5). The Debt Service schedule and status report indicates the total amount of bonds outstanding. The bonds are set up and they pay interest twice a year (June and December) Principle payments are due in December. The \$106 M is the amount that was outstanding as of the end of 2020. It continues to show what level of interest would be due on June 1.

The Summary of Investment Performance report shows the average balances by each month, the amount of investment income earned and the yield. This is also required per AP 5. A report on Investment Earnings on a cash basis shows the earnings by fund and by each account. The Composition of Investment portfolio by instrument report is broken down at the principle amount, average yield, etc. The last report discloses our bank relationships. It references the Ohio Ethics Commission advisories we received, which resulted in the amendment of our travel policies. This intends to provide information as to which banks and institutions RTA does business with.

Acting General Manager/CEO Report

Dr. Caver presented the report. This year the RTA Mission and Vision was modified. The new mission is "Connecting the Community". The NextGen system redesign is a major effort in allowing better connections for the community to jobs, healthcare and education. Environmental justice describes work and planning efforts that look at communities from an equity standpoint. RTA rider demographics include:

- 79% Minority
- 37% earn less than \$15,000/yr; 60% earn less than \$35,000/year
- 26% Students
- 77% Transit Dependent; 54% Highly Transit Dependent (no driver's license)

On June 13, the NextGen plan was launched. It attempted to aggregate the communities' values. They lean towards building a system that increases frequency on major arteries. Through planning, we increased the number of jobs and residents within a ½ mile of frequent service:

- NEXT GEN RTA reflects community priorities, including frequent service (every 15 minutes or better) all day
- The number of **jobs** within ½ mile of frequent service will increase by 50,000 jobs or 25%
- The number of **residents** within ½ mile of frequent service will increase by 167,000 residents or 100%
- The service emphasizes key corridors in the Strategic Plan

The key corridors have a high propensity for transit ridership that link to the density of the city. Two major aspect of environmental justice planning from the federal government ask agencies to look at communities who have a portion of their residents below the poverty line. Within the NOACA region, the green areas on the map have more than 12% of residents below the poverty line. We are increasing services in these communities. The yellow area on the map defines communities with minority populations greater than 30.73%. The NextGen 15-minute and 30-minute service are over layed on communities with a higher portion of minority residents. Looking at both maps together, some areas have a high poverty and high minority rate. NextGen provides increased service and increased frequency in those low equity communities.

RTA has played a pivotal role ensuring its investments are catalytic for communities and that it fosters development. The Opportunity Corridor is a federal opportunity zone. It is the State's number one investment in Northeast Ohio at \$300 MI, which gives it State interest. It is one of the Mayor's transformational neighborhoods. Different levels of government want to bring this neighborhood back. It includes 4-5 CDCs. RTA's investment can help. On the OC between E. 55th Street and E. 105th in Quincy, RTA has approx. 800 employees. Rail has 600 employees. Central Bus Facility has 300 employees. Outside of the healthcare industry, RTA is one of the largest employers along the corridor. RTA's investment allows for a convenient transportation alternative for car drivers in the corridor. At E. 55th in I-490, we have a 10-year-old station costing \$9 million. At E. 79th Street Station, \$7 million was put into the heavy rail station. Recent development includes the E. 105th Street Quincy station. The aggregate investment totals in this corridor from RTA is \$50 million. RTA not only provides transportation, but provide for assets for a safer investment.

RTA has made investments in the E. 79th corridor the City of Cleveland is working on. We have investment in the heavy rail station and the light rail track below. Within the CIP, in 2023 we will design a station for the light rail station at E. 79th and will construct the station in 2025. RTA's connection to the community has an eye towards equity and environmental justice. Several Board members thanked Dr. Caver for his report and requested it be shared with the Board.

President's Report

Rev. Lucas thanked Dr. Caver and Legal Counsel Benford for their assistance as he navigates as the Board President. He is pleased at the support he gets from staff. He'd like to get some things done this year with paratransit and with the Transit Police headquarters down the line. There needs to be two community meetings in July in the Glenville and Lee/Harvard neighborhoods to address the community concerns about some of the routes.

Public Comments – Agenda Items (comments were submitted by form and phone)

1. Airric Stewart – Dr. Caver's report of increased efficiency is not met at the same point of truth. The 48A was more efficient prior to NextGen. The 50 would be better served to take the right turn south off of Miles to better connect the Marymount Hospital and the Clinic and UH hospitals in one trip while still preserving the 48A. This is an issue of fuel, ridership and increased ridership. He asks Dr. Caver to read the email he sent to the Board so they can discuss it. The public wasn't involved in the changes. He will follow up with the secretary treasurer about a question he had about the bonds.

Dr. Caver said his thoughts are appreciated. Staff will come to the community in July to speak with him and other residents.

2. Rev. Pam Pinkney Butts – Cleveland, OH – She ask that her Title VI complaint be looked at. Who are RTA investors and who in the church community are investors because shelters are not maintained. She asked where we are with addressing violence being declared a public health crisis and what we are doing about the smoking ban at RTA shelters. Does RTA have a way to extend paratransit service where the bus and rail system does not go. She thanked Dr. Caver for his work.
3. Chris Martin – Cleveland, OH - This comment is about your violent police force and the lack of transparency demonstrated by this agency. In my earlier comment regarding the civilian police oversight review board I referenced an incident where one of your violent cops assaulted a rider by pushing him onto live tracks. After this incident, this agency tried to hide video surveillance of it. Only because of legal action did your Law Department relent. This was the inevitable result but by fighting it, this agency wasted precious resources that would be better spent providing transit service to riders.

Last year, you Trustees voted to supply all of your violent cops with body-cams. I understand the agency is currently working on policies related to this. I implore the Board of Trustees to maintain curiosity about what goes into those policies. Will cops face punishment for not turning their camera on? Will the agency share footage with any other police forces, and if so, under what circumstances? How long will evidentiary footage be retained? How about non-evidentiary footage? Will the public have presumed access to the footage? There are many questions that need to be answered about these policies and the Board of Trustees cannot just take the word of staff on these questions. When staff has demonstrated their major interest is in protecting violent cops from public scrutiny, the responsibility falls to you Trustees to ensure that the public interest is met.


Rev. Lucas added that he met with Chief Jones on the body cams. A report is planned for August. Dr. Caver added that he will assist with the policy development for the body worn cameras. The policy and the Civilian Review Board update will be brought in August.

4. Art Cernoia – Parma, OH - Since NextGen has gone live, there have been a number of unscheduled temporary service disruptions to the 45 Fulton-Ridge line. These have ranged from an hour to several hours. In speaking to a bus driver about this issue, they guessed that at least one of these disruptions was due to a shortage of manpower.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 27, 2021 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 10:45 a.m.



President

Attest: 

Secretary-Treasurer