

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:01 a.m. September 28, 2021

Present: Lucas (Chair), Moss (Vice-Chair), Joyce, Koomar, Serrano, Weiss

Not present: Byrne, Duarte, McCall, Pellot (virtual)

Staff: Benford, Birdsong, Burney, Catalusci, Caver, Coffey, Dangelo, Fields, Garofoli, Gautam, Ghanem, Johnson, Jones, Kirkland, Lincoln, Miller, Mothes, Petit, Schipper, Sutula, Talley, Togher, Walker-Minor

Public: Gibbons, Loh, Rodriquez

President Lucas called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. The secretary called the roll and reported that six (6) board members were present.

This meeting was live-streamed on RTA's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/rideRTA) for staff and members of the public. Based on Centers for Disease Control guidance to continue to avoid large events and gatherings and Ohio Department of Public Health advice that businesses may continue to require mitigation measures, as well as RTA's interest in protecting community and employee health and safety, several measures were put in place for in-person attendance, which are spelled out on the meeting notice. The public was allowed to attend the meeting in-person.

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 August 24, 2021 Board Meeting, August 31, 2021 Special Board Meeting and September 14, 2021 Special 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.

Rev. Lucas commended the staff on their work at Tower City during an incident that happened there last week.

Public Comments – Agenda Items (comments were submitted in-person and by phone)

1. Luz Pellot – Ms. Pellot is a Board member. She spoke with a woman from UCI and she said how fantastic the vaccination bus has been and helpful to the public.
2. Mark Rodriquez – He works with NOBLE. He asked about the bus stop that was moved outside the Emergency Room at MetroHealth Hospital. Now Paratransit passengers have to wait outside. Dr. Caver said he will look into this matter. It could have been moved at the request of the hospital due to construction around the hospital.
3. Ms. Montgomery – She called to see if the review of reinstating the 15A has been completed. Dr. Caver said they are still reviewing the route request from the community.

Committee Reports

Ms. Moss stated that the Audit Committee met last week. They will review the Internal Audit Charter to ensure it is in compliance. They will meet again October 27, 2021 at 2:30 p.m. Ms. Pellet stated that the Ad Hoc Technology Committee will meet Wed, October 20, 2021 at 5 p.m.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

No report.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

No report.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

New Hires:

- Kyle Best – Engineering Co-Op
- Tatiana Bivens – Operator
- Karen Bryant – Operator
- Darney Dunn – Operator
- Laura Chawshaw – Staff Auditor
- Michael Fesler – Associate Counsel II
- Natasha Everett – Operator
- Melonie Foree – Operator
- Sharon Gayle – Operator
- Gary Hutchinson, Jr. – Laborer
- Chad Hicks – Operator
- Tiffany Holder – Talent Acquisition Manager
- Tariq Mohammed – Public Transit Development Program Business Analyst
- Shaquille King – Operator
- Kylan Levy – Operator
- Deontae Morris – Operator
- Andreas Rainge – Laborer
- Laura Paull – Talent Acquisition Manager
- Kazeem Raheem – Operator
- Verginia Veria – Operator
- Darylenna Robinson – Operator
- Michael Yelko – Operator

Promotions:

- Evan Lett – Service Quality Coordinator
- Robert McCormick – Bus Shelter Maintenance Supervisor
- Derrick Gordon – Paratransit Dispatch

Ms. Birdsong added that there are a lot of operator new hires. Next month there will be a presentation on hiring practices and where we stand with workforce needs. There is a shortage of operators. Staff has been working hard to work on creative strategies to fill these positions. There will be a report out in November on Training and Development. Ms. Moss asked if the report could include a breakdown of the open positions across the board and how long the positions have been open.

Introduction of Resolutions:

- A. 2021-85 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-085 with the Osborn Engineering Company for Project 19.10 – On-Call Bridge Engineering Services II in an amount not to exceed \$300,000.00, (RTA Capital and/or Development Funds, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. Moss and approved by unanimous vote.
- B. 2021-86 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-88 with Kapsch Trafficcom USA Inc. to provide rail heater equipment and related services for a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,442,351.00 (RTA Development Fund, Power and Way Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Joyce, seconded by Mr. Serrano and approved by unanimous vote.
- C. 2021-87 – Authorizing the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District for student fares for the 2021-2022 school year and ratifying the issuance of tickets, it was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Mayor Koomar to table this item due to Mr. Serrano having to recuse himself, therefore not having enough votes (6) to pass it.
- D. 2021-88 – Designation of depositories for active and interim public monies during the five-year period commencing October 5, 2021 through October 4, 2026, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Koomar and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2021-89 – Estimation of inactive deposits of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority to be awarded for the period from October 5, 2021 through October 4, 2026, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Mayor Weiss and approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Moss asked for more information prior to the vote. Mr. Gautam explained that this resolution and 2021-88 are requirements of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). Reso 2021-88 identifies those financial institutions that have adequate collateral and are eligible to receive public monies within the five-year period. They have different amounts of collateral. RTA would be restricted to depositing those public monies that meet the collateral requirement. Reso 2021-89 relates to any funds RTA will not use in a five-year period. We have zero inactive funds.

- F. 2021-90 – Amending Chapter 286 and repealing Chapter 289 of the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Koomar and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2021-91 - Authorizing a utility agreement with Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company to extend electric service to the new Warrensville Van Aken substation (Project No. 60B) in an amount not to exceed \$850,520.03 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Joyce, seconded by Mayor Koomar and approved by unanimous vote.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer, gave the report. The unemployment rates by month for Cuyahoga County and Ohio are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The County rate will be published at the end of the month. In August 2021, the U.S. unemployment rate dropped from 5.4% to 5.2%. The Ohio rate remained at 5.4%. Ridership has remained steady from May through July. August ridership increased by 14.5% when compared to 2020. YTD ridership is still 18.2% below 2020 levels. Passenger fare revenue also has remained stable over the last three months. August fares were 8% higher than August 2020. YTD they are 18.3% lower than 2020.

Sales tax has remained strong. Sales tax collected in September is based on June activity due to the three-month lag. That number is 11.8% higher than September 2020. YTD we are 13.1% higher compared to 2020. Thirteen of the 23 categories that make up the sales tax base were positive. September 2021 compared to 2020, motor vehicles and motor crafts were 10.6% higher. Online sales were 43.8% higher. Regular and statewide sales were 16.4% higher. This is the second month where liquor receipts were less than the previous year with a decline of 5.3% compared to September 2020. The CARES Act funding was fully drawn down. CRRSAA through August 2021 has been drawn down for \$67.4 M. ARP drawdowns have begun. We have so far drawn down \$54.8 M with \$81.3 M remaining.

In May he reported on the plan of spending down the unrestricted funds that the stimulus payments have resulted in. With the savings and passenger fares and sales tax revenue, that ordinarily would have supported our operations. The debt reduction of \$60 M has been completed after the Board approval in July. The debt will be paid off nine years ahead of schedule, resulting in approximately \$126 M in savings. We had planned for \$60 M, but the actual defeasance was \$57.5 M, which is a result of the fluctuating rates of treasury and other investment rates. The \$2.5 M savings will go back to supporting Operations or Capital Funds. Rev. Lucas thanked the Finance Department for their hard work.

General Manager/CEO Report

India Birdsong, General Manager/CEO, presented the report. She thanked the Board, staff and Transit Police for their commitment to public transit. The transit industry is working toward figuring out how to respond to the federal vaccine mandate. The RTA management team is finding out how many employees have their vaccination card. The data will be presented to the Board in October with next steps to determine how we will proceed with the mandates. At that time, they will seek out guidance from the FTA and our CDC partners to determine next steps. We are working with the union also.

RTA received TRAC funding for its light rail program for \$4.2 M for State Fiscal Year 2022 to replace the tracks and crossovers at the end of the Blue Line. Staff has been working with our legislative partners and advocacy groups to explain the importance of our rail system and how we are going through the eligibility process with ODOT to be able to recognize that importance and qualify for funding. She thanked Mr. Marchbanks who heads ODOT. A \$8 M, 6-week light rail rehab project was completed. Service will be restored Oct. 2, 2021. The rail car replacement project was reposted from being cancelled June 11, 2021. We wanted to ensure a quality response. We conducted a thorough vendor debrief and industry review. Staff spoke to the FTA administrator and others on guidance on the legislative side to ensure the procurement is quality this second round. We met with other transit properties to see what they have done and decided to post it for a longer period of time with a few additional modifications to the specifications. It will be advertised in October and brought back to the Board for recommendations.

Staff attended the Ohio Public Transit Association (OPTA) Conference Sept 15-17, 2021 in Akron, Ohio. This is our state advocacy organization. Marketing and Human Resources staff made presentations. Jeff Macko, Planning Team Leader won the 40 under 40 award. Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) will celebrate 50 years September 27-29, 2021. They advocate for an equal playing field for communities of color and transit officials of color for diversity and inclusion. COMTO has a Cleveland/Northeast Ohio Chapter. The chapter was very active 10 years ago. Staff is working to make this a part of the D&I program at RTA. The chapter will host an event to broadcast COMTO's Celebrating The Women Who Move the Nation virtual event today at 2 p.m. Ms. Birdsong who is a former National Board Member as well as retired DGM for Finance Loretta Kirk are past honorees. The current Chapter President is Jarrett Davis from Human Resources.

President's Report

President Lucas considers it an honor to serve in his position. He regularly speaks with the Board Support Administrator Theresa Burrage and visits the office regularly to conduct business. He appreciates the hard work of the General Manager, Legal Department and staff. He is happy that the work on the Shaker Rapid Line is almost complete.

He read into the record the following Delegation of Authority memo:

The responsibilities of the Secretary/Treasurer are outlined in Article II, Section 8 of the Bylaws. Pursuant to Article II, Section 8(b)(8) of the Bylaws, the Secretary-Treasurer may perform "such other duties as may be required by or delegated by the Board."

Effective as of May 1, 2021, I hereby delegate to Rajan D. Gautam, Secretary/Treasurer, or his designee, the responsibility for reviewing and approving purchasing card transactions and travel expense reports submitted by the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer, the Executive Director of Internal Audit and members of the Board of Trustees.

Public Comments – Non-Agenda Items (comments were submitted in-person and phone)

1. Ms. Montgomery – She asked what the time frame is for a response on the reinstatement of the 15A and 48A. Ms. Birdsong said she will have Operations and Planning review the request and bring a recommendation to her next month and bring back to the Board before the holiday season.
2. Arric Stewart – At the July 27 Board Meeting, Ms. Birdsong said she'd review his email about putting the 15A and 48A back into its previous service. He hasn't heard back from her after leaving several messages. Councilman Joe Jones hasn't had a conversation with her either. His proposal is to have the 48A serve one stop service to route 15 at E. 131st, service a transfer point for the 15A, one stop service to Shaker Square and go to University Hospital and Cleveland Clinic which the regular 48 currently serves. Slow down the 48 and put it back at hourly service and keep the 48A at hourly service, they will operate at 30 minute intervals from E. 131st in Miles heading North. Start the 50 at Marymount at hourly service, it will serve 30 minute intervals from Marymount Hospital to E. 131st in Miles and the same 50 can head on Miles where it will shift service with the 19 and 19B and go down E. 116th and to the same hospitals. This is a factual assessment and would give more service to the public and would be more efficient to the public who live east of E. 131st in Cane.

Ms. Birdsong is aware of his calls to staff. She asks Natoya Walker-Minor to work with Councilman Jones to set up a call before the next Board Meeting. The review was given at a

previous Board Meeting. They will reach out to him to explain the outcome and provide follow-up information to the Board.

3. Carlita Gardner – She asked that the 48A and 15A be reinstated.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 26, 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 The public is allowed to attend in-person.

This meeting was adjourned at 9:47 a.m.



President

Attest: 

Secretary-Treasurer