

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

10:32 a.m. January 25, 2022

Board Members: Lucas, (Chair), Moss (Vice Chair), Byrne, Duarte, Joyce, Koomar, McCall, Pellot, Serrano, Weiss

Not present: None

Staff: Benford, Birdsong, Blaze, Burney, Caver, Coffey, Dangelo, Davidson, Fields, Fleig, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Harris, Holder, Kirkland, Miller, Mothes, Paull, Petit, Richardson, Schipper, Talley, Togher, Walker-Minor

Public: Davis, Gibbons, Gruber, Loh

The meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. The secretary called the roll and reported that ten (10) 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 December 7, 2021 Special Board Meeting and December 21, 2021 Board Meeting had been previously distributed and reviewed, and asked whether there were any additions and/or corrections. There were no corrections. The December 7, 2021 Special Board Meeting minutes were approved. The roll was called for December 21, 2021 Board Meeting minutes. There were nine (9) ayes and one abstention from Ms. Moss. The minutes were approved.

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

1. Robert Davis – East Cleveland, OH – He is with the ATU Local 268. The Board is being asked to approve the subcontracting of engine repair work historically performed by union workers to an outside vendor. Union workers are trained to do this work. Though this work is historically union work, the union has in the past agreed to share the performance of this work with the vendor. Not because they are not qualified or not performing up to standards. But the limitations placed on them by management has limited their ability to accomplish this task in a timely manner, considering the quantity of work. That limitation being the failure of the RTA to provide the equipment needed to do the work and the manpower. He requested the Board either hold or deny approval so that RTA and the Union can do good faith bargaining to reach an amicable resolution.

2. Rev. Pamela Pinkney-Butts – Cleveland, OH – She opposes today's agenda. She will oppose it until she sees positive results of some of her concerns. The agenda is racially oriented. Just as the CEO, GM is obligated to the RTA, she also has an obligation to the community.
3. Airric Stewart – Cleveland, OH – He referenced emails he has sent. The #50 which runs hourly in a 15 hour cycle M-F and 14 hour cycle S-T should maintain itself hourly but should begin at Marymount Hospital to give customers more service. This will allow the #48 bus to be an hourly bus. This would allow for the 48A to be put back into service. The #15A should be put back in place starting from Pinecrest along with his other suggestions in his email. The #15 should be at 20-minutes opposed to 15 minutes running in a 16 hour period.
4. Mr. Alex Rubbins – Dr. Caver said on Ideastream media that RTA suspended service last week because it was not safe to operate because there was too much snow and the roads had not been plowed quick enough. According to RTA's statement, RTA executed their winterization plan before the snow fell based on the National Weather Service forecast. He asked why RTA was not prepared to keep the Red Line running since RTA has the lines right away and the winterization plan includes clearing snow from its tracks. And how will RTA revise this plan based on the failures of Jan. 17, 2022.

Committee Reports

Dr. Caver, COO of Operations gave a report to the Organizational Services and Performance Monitoring Committee on the inclement weather service recap for Monday, January 17, 2022. Each fall RTA produces a Winter Service Management plan. It chronicles the steps taken for winter storms. It also catalogs the equipment used. There are requirements the Service Quality Department will enact in a winter storm or ice event. They include:

- Snow Trains
- Overnight Train Storage – moved to rail equipment shop and under Tower City so they don't get snowed in or iced in
- Early Operator Arrivals – 30 minutes before shift to have time to get to work location
- Snow Removal Crews
- Service Communications

There was 15" of snow that came down in Cleveland over a 12-hour period. Bus and rail service had to be suspended. RTA and Cleveland went to social media to report the difficulty with keeping up with snow removal. He showed a few pictures of the roads and buses and emergency vehicles being stuck in the snow.

Storm Timeline – Sunday, Jan. 16, 2022

- 7:00 a.m. NWS Heavy Winter Storm Warning – Snowfall Forecast Increased, 1" of snow per hour possible Sunday into Monday Morning.
- 10:00 a.m. Bus & Rail District Notifications of Winter Storm Plan Implementation.
- 11:49 a.m. Rail Operators notified to report 30 minutes early for Monday's start of service.
- 12:01 p.m. Rail Shop made available for overnight railcar storage.
- 1:06 p.m. All GCRTA winter service plans and actions confirmed as executed, or ready for execution.

Monday, Jan. 17, 2022

- 2:54 a.m. Notification that snow trains were operating overnight. One HRV snow train for the Red Line and two LRV snow trains for Blue & Green Lines. The trains crack ice and keep the snow off the track
- 3:28 a.m. Hayden District assisted the city of East Cleveland in plowing/salting roads. In order to operate south, they have to run up hill.
- 3:30 a.m. Multiple buses stuck throughout the county.
- 4:02 a.m. Suspended remaining pull-out at the E.55th Yard due to heavy snowfall
Six (6) of eight (8) Red Line trains & two (2) of five (5) Blue & Green Line trains successfully deployed on the Mainline in service. Three (3) of the Blue & Green Line trains not scheduled for service till 5:03 am or later.
- 4:51 a.m. Red Line Train unable to proceed at E.55th due to visibility issues – single track established to maintain rail service.
- 5:58 a.m. Initial single track concluded upon resolution, second single track initiated at West 30th to maintain rail service due to switch obstruction.
- 6:30 a.m.** Approximately fifty (50) buses are stuck throughout the county.
Two (2) Three-Emergency Broadcasts received, where trains slid backwards in the Yard and on the Mainline rail at Kinsman.
Rail service suspended for safety reasons.
- 6:35 a.m. Rail snow plow & crews mobilized to clear snow from all rail lines.
- 6:54 a.m.** **Bus service suspended for safety reasons.** (13 accidents, 10 Big Bus/3 Para)

Restoration - Monday, Jan. 17, 2022

- 7:43 p.m. Blue & Green Line service was restored.
- 9:53 p.m. Red Line service between Tower City and Windermere restored.
- 10:47 p.m. Red Line service between Tower City and the Airport restored.

In the late evening, Transit Police and Service Quality Supervisors provided courtesy rides home to customers in Tower City. The staff continued to work throughout the day to restore service and get riders home. Several bus routes from both garages were restored throughout the evening. Snow crews were deployed throughout the Authority to clear snow on RTA property and on the rail. Staff was sent out to look at switch issues on the rail. RTA communicated to the public, media and Board through social media, email, RTA's Transit App and media channels. Dr. Caver interviewed with TV-5, TV-8 and Ideastream. There is always room for improvements with communication. Staff is looking at ways to reach its riders and audiences. Municipal collaborations included:

City of Cleveland: Mayor's Office

- RTA provided list of critical snow removal needs
- RTA assisted by plowing some streets, where buses travel
- Remained in touch with Snow Bird Dispatch Center

City of East Cleveland: Streets Department

- RTA assisted by plowing and salting roads where buses travel
- Priority - the hills in East Cleveland (Superior, Taylor, Noble, and Lee) this is the only way RTA can travel south from East Cleveland

Other Municipalities

- Communicated with streets departments

He was confident with the decision to prioritize the safety, life and health of the community. The 13 bus accidents were minor. There was no loss of life or injury. RTA is required to report major system issues to FTA for safety oversight. There were no reportable incidents on the rail system. Rev. Lucas commended the staff. He was in contact with them throughout the day. He was happy that Paratransit was able to continue running for critical care appointments like dialysis treatments.

Paratransit transported 171 people that day. Mr. Joyce commended the staff and first line workers. He witnessed the buses traversing the streets.

He asked if there is a visibility standard on the rail. Dr. Caver said they have to be able to see the switches and signals. Occupancy track information and the direction is included in the signal system to provide safe train separation. Ms. McCall asked if RTA ever had to suspend service. Dr. Caver did not recall service being suspended during his 19 years with the Authority. She added that the Board was briefed regularly and the social media was good. She reminded everyone that even though the rail cars are old, they held up through the storm.

Ms. Pellot asked if the service suspension was posted on the Transit app. Dr. Caver said it was updated on the app. Staff will follow-up with her to see where the updates were posted. Ms. Birdsong said her staff debriefed after the storm. They are looking to reorganize the website and ways to improve communication and prioritize alerts. Suspending service is not an easy decision. It was a health and safety issue. In her experience, there is a layered affect to pulling back service in inclement weather. Articulated buses are pulled first because they can fish tail. Then side streets are removed because of plowing, then major streets, etc. The snow affected all areas and streets at once so the steps had to be skipped. We have to be able to work with the City to have a plan that reflects a layered affect. We worked with the City and used are equipment to the best of our ability considering the circumstances.

Dr. Caver commended the staff for showing up and doing their job during the storm. Mayor Byrne was impressed with the communication, operational staff, management and services. He said these type of incidents pull organizations together. He has been impressed with the Authority since he joined the Board. RTA is a well-run organization and well respected in the community. Rev. Lucas thanked the staff and workers on behalf of the Board for how they handled the storm.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

There were no reports.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

Ms. Pellot said she is working with staff to create the 2022 meeting schedule.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

Tiffany Holder, the new Talent Acquisition Managers introduced the new hires and promotions.

New Hires:

1. Lynnette Adams, Operator
2. Masario Atkins, Laborer
3. Victor Day, Equipment Servicer
4. James Deloach, Operator
5. Ryan Foxx, Operator
6. Sheila Gales, Operator
7. Michael Gomez, Equipment Servicer
8. Grant Kersh, Engineering Co-Op
9. Samuel Littlejohn, Operator
10. Eric Marks, Operator
11. Grace Murphy, Intern
12. Gregory Neal, Operator
13. Hector Olmeda, Operator
14. Shontai O'Neal, Operator

15. Alice Pearson, Operator
16. Jassen Peterson, Operator
17. Jasmine Richardson, Operator
18. Aaron Russo, Jr., Operator
19. John Sulik, Associate Counsel I
20. Tommy Tidwell, Laborer
21. Tramel Tucker, Operator

Promotions:

1. Truceilla Besses, Service Quality Coordinator
2. Parasram Bisesar, Assistant Supervisor – Equipment
3. Nicauya Ware, Dispatcher
4. Larhonda Johnson, HRIS Specialist

Introduction of Resolutions:

- A. 2022-1 – Expressing congratulations to the employees of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority who retired during the fourth quarter of 2021, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Mr. Serrano and approved by unanimous vote.

There were 36 retirees.

- B. 2022-2 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-156 with K&J Safety and Security Consulting Services, Inc. for Project 19.18 – Consultant Services for Safety Certification of GCRTA Rail Transit Projects-2021 in an amount not to exceed \$400,000.00 for a period of 36 months (RTA Capital and/or RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.
- C. 2022-3 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-169 with Feghali Brothers, LLC for Project 18.68 – GCRTA Main Office Building Vestibule Modifications, as specified and as required, in an amount not to exceed \$176,000.00 (RTA Capital 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. 2022-4 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-175 with Oracle America, Inc. to provide Oracle software maintenance, licenses and support services for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed \$404,116.34 (General Fund, Innovation & Technology Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2022-5 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-179 with Cleveland Charcoal and Salt Supply Company for the furnishing of chemical ice melt, as specified and as required, for a period of two years in an amount not to exceed \$133,000.00 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2022-6 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-180 with Amerigas Propane, L.P. for the furnishing of liquid propane gas, as required, for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed \$180,000.00 (General Fund, Paratransit Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Joyce, seconded by Mr. Serrano and approved by unanimous vote.

- G. 2022-7 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-181 with Swiger Coil Systems, a Wabtec Co., to provide heavy rail traction motor overhaul services for a total contract amount not to exceed \$2,210,344.00 for a two-year period (General Fund, Rail District Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Ms. McCall and approved by unanimous vote.
- H. 2022-8 – Repealing Section 628.02 and removing Section 644.12 from the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. Pellet and approved by unanimous vote.
- I. 2022-9 – Repealing Section 628.01, amending Section 646.02 and moving Section 646.02 from the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority to the Personnel Policies, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.
- J. 2022-10 – Authorizing Electric Vehicle Charging Station Program Partner Agreements between the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) and the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded it by Mr. Serrano. There were nine (9) ayes and one abstention from Mayor Weiss.

The last two resolutions were transposed.

- L. 2022-12 - Authorizing an interagency agreement with Shaker Heights providing for Shaker Heights to contribute towards the cost of relocating an electrical duct bank for service to the Warrensville/Van Aken Substation in an amount up to \$114,643.98, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Byrne. There was discussion.

Ms. Moss has commented on this issue at the committee level and in executive session. She has issues with it. Shaker Heights City Council passed an ordinance and the Mayor of Shaker Heights signed the ordinance in which they agreed to pay 70% of the cost and RTA would pay 30%. Since that ordinance was passed, there has been a change that RTA and Shaker Heights would split the project cost 50/50 and that any overrun of the project would be paid by RTA. She is not pleased with the reasons given in executive session and publicly about the change so she will be voting no.

Ms. McCall will support this if the ordinance that was passed by Shaker Heights is amended to reflect the 50/50 agreement. The current resolution executed by Shaker Heights is explicit that it shall be paid at the 70/30 split. Rev. Lucas said the Law Director at Shaker Heights agreed to take that back to Shaker Heights City Council. She request the RTA resolution be amended to reflect the request to Shaker Heights for an updated resolution.

Ms. McCall made a motion to amend the RTA resolution to make RTA's approval contingent upon an updated ordinance from Shaker Heights to represent the 50/50 split. Ms. McCall said that Shaker Heights ordinance 21-114 states that Shaker Heights will pay \$114,643.90 which represents the 70/30 split. It was seconded by Ms. Pellet. Mayor Byrne asked for clarification that we would request the amendment from Shaker Heights. That was confirmed. Ms. Benford said the request could be made. Shaker Heights Law Director said even though not legally required, he could make the request. Mr. Gruber,

Shaker Heights Law Director said he would present the request to their Council with the approval of the Mayor and Clerk of Council, legislation that would amend the ordinance to reflect the 50/50 split.

The roll was called on the amendment. There was eight (8) ayes, one (1) nay from Ms. Moss and one (1) recuse from Mayor Weiss. The amendment passed.

The roll was called on the amended resolution. There was eight (8) ayes, one (1) nay from Ms. Moss and one (1) abstention from Mayor Weiss. The amended resolution passed.

- K. 2022-11 – Authorizing an amendment to an existing utility agreement with Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company to relocate an existing duct bank in conjunction with extending electric service to the new Warrensville Van Aken Substation (Project No. 60B) in an amount not to exceed \$163,777.12, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Koomar. There was discussion.

Ms. McCall asked how this contract amount relates to Resolution 2022-12. Is it just what we are paying CEI? Does it take the \$114,643.90 amount in that resolution into consideration. Mr. Schipper said this resolution reflects the 50/50 split. Section 3 of the resolution designates what RTA will pay and what will be reimbursed by Shaker Heights. Ms. McCall made a motion to amend this resolution so that it is consistent with the same amendment in 2022-12. That it be contingent upon an updated ordinance from Shaker Heights to represent the 50/50 split. Mayor Koomar stated that this is a separate agreement with CEI and not Shaker Heights.

Ms. Moss asked if this repeals what the Board approved last September. Ms. Benford said this amends what the Board voted for last September. Rev. Lucas asked if this matches. Ms. Benford said this is a contract between RTA and CEI. Ms. McCall said it assumes that Shaker Heights is paying 50%. She wants the amendment to show Shaker Heights has authority from their Council and Mayor to pay 50%. Ms. Birdsong added that this amendment stands alone from the Interagency Agreement with Shaker Heights that will be ratified to include the 50/50. The same amendment is not required for the CEI agreement. Ms. Benford confirmed. Ms. McCall said that even though it is not required, the 50/50 amount is cited in the resolution without the authority from Shaker Heights. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pellot. Mayor Byrne asked if this is required. Ms. Benford said we are not legally required to do this and it will not invalidate the contract if we do not amend it.

The roll was called for the amendment. There were five (5) ayes (Duarte, Joyce, Lucas, McCall, Pellot), four (4) nays (Byrne, Koomar, Moss, Serrano) and one abstention from Mayor Weiss. The amendment failed.

The roll was called on the resolution. There were five (5) ayes (Byrne, Duarte, Koomar, Lucas, Serrano), four (4) nays (Joyce, McCall, Moss, Pellot) and one abstention from Mayor Weiss. The resolution failed.

Rev. Lucas said this was amending what the Board approved last September. Ms. Birdsong summarized that the Board approved amending the language for the agreement with Shaker Heights and received a declination to authorize an amendment of an existing utility agreement. Legal confirmed. Ms. Benford said they might have to come back with another resolution for the utility agreement because the work is needed. Mr. Schipper

said CEI is moving forward with the agreement the Board approved last September to get the work done unless agreement is amended later.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer, gave the report. The unemployment rate of the U.S. is compared to the State of Ohio and Cuyahoga County. The source of these rates is the Bureau of Labor Statistics. December unemployment rates have shown steady decline from January 2021, both U.S. and Ohio, showing the lowest rates since March 2020. The U.S. rate of 3.9% represents a 73.5% decline from April 2020. Ohio was at 4.5%, which is a decline of 70.4% from April 2020. This was in the early stages of the Pandemic. December ridership increased by 21.8% when compared to the previous year. December 2020 had 1.12 million riders. December 2021 had 1.36 million riders. Year-end riders is 6.8% below 2020 levels.

December 2021 Passenger fares were 1.4% lower than December 2020. YTD total passenger fares are 10.4% lower than 2020. Total passenger fares were \$21.5 million. The largest source of our operating revenue is Sales Tax, which has remained strong. YTD 2021 versus 2020, sales tax revenue was 13.9% higher. Most of that increase was a result of the different categories that make up the sales tax. Motor vehicles and water craft were 20.3% higher. On-line sales were up 43.0% higher. Regular State and wide sales were 11.2% higher. January 2022 receipts were 12.8% higher than January 2021. Fifteen of the 23 categories that make up the base were positive when comparing January 2022 to 2021. Motor vehicles and water craft were 55.6% higher. On-line sales were up 40.0% higher. Regular and State wide sales were 15.6% higher.

General Manager/CEO Report

India Birdsong, General Manager/CEO, presented the report. Recapping the Jan. 16-17 winter storm presentation, RTA was at the mercy of the weather with several buses stuck in the snow. We revised service and pleased to say that it took less than 24 hours. We will continue our pledge to the city and residents to create a reliable system. She thanked the staff for reporting to work during the storm. Transit Police did a great job assisting customers home who were waiting at Tower City.

RTA received a clean 2021 drawdown review from FTA. The Finance department did a good job in being good stewards in drawing down the federal funds. RTA scorecards are a part of the performance management process for each Division and Departments. The scorecards are being finalized and will be sent to the Board by the end of the week. The Board received a draft last October. They are working with Internal Audit to include this in their future plan. RTA's TransitStat performance management meeting will be revamped and reported out quarterly after an internal review. Surveys will be part of the process. Staff will shadow our consultant on the survey process.

The NBA All Star weekend is Feb. 18-20, 2022. Major event locations include Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse, Wolstein Center and Cleveland Public Auditorium. We will work with the City of Cleveland, CAVS and NBA to provide service. A draft of the service was presented to them.

- Trolley – modified hours – extended until 11 pm (*Request into FTA*)
- Added Trolley service Saturday-Sunday from 9 am to 12 midnight
- All-Star Route: From Tower City Center, via Prospect Ave. to Rocket Mortgage and Wolstein; via Euclid Ave. from CSU to E. 9th; via Lakeside to Cleveland Public Auditorium
- Will create All-Star Trolley map with venues and hotels
- Train Service: Will operate a minimum of 60 minutes after Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse events

A co-branded logo with RTA, NBA and the City of Cleveland was approved. The logo will be printed on masks. We're working with the airport to have signage, car cards, wayfinding, etc.

The HealthLine is celebrating 13 years of partnership with Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals. We recently unveiled the new HL buses to them. Staff met with leadership at both hospitals and UH Rainbow Babies & Children. Some of the features include hand sanitizer, stroller racks and improved safety features. Kudos to Board Member Roberta Duarte with connecting RTA to the Hispanic Promise, which is a national pledge to ensure RTA works towards inclusivity in hiring Latinos. More than 190 companies have signed the pledge. RTA is the first transit agency to sign the pledge.

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

1. Loh – She said snow is normal for us. What we get is not always consistent with the national forecast. She attended a CPT meeting where there were complaints about RTA service during the storm. RTA staff are heroes, shoveling the snow and clearing the tracks. However, there is room for improvement. RTA should issue alerts that are more frequent during inclement weather. Customers expected service. They did not know soon enough about the shutdown. This will help RTA's image.
2. Rev. Pamela Pinkney-Butts – She wants to assist RTA but finds herself in a catfight. She is disappointed in the CEO and our transportation system. The women will not work with her. She has filed complaints with RTA. She requested a meeting with President Lucas. The E. 79th Superior Rapid has been down for over a year.
3. Airric Stewart – If you start the 15A at Pinecrest and run it every hour for 16 hours, the bus covers the same stops that the regular 15 covers. It allows one stop service to the Blue and Green Line at Shaker Square and the Red Line between University Circle and Quincy. The 15A will reach two additional hospitals the 15 will not touch as well as CSU, Tri-C Metro and Tri-C East, several public schools, libraries and more retail.
4. Dontez Taylor – He thanked RTA for life saving service on Paratransit during the recent storm.

Ms. Birdsong thanked the callers for their recommendations and criticisms. She requested the comments be respectful and non-biased. This request will be advertised during all meetings.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 15, 2022 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.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:13 p.m.



President

Attest:



Secretary/Treasurer