

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:01 a.m. July 25, 2023

Board Members: Lucas (Chair), Moss (Vice Chair), Biasiotta, Koomar, Mersmann, Sleasman, Weiss, Welch

Not present: Joyce

Staff/Other: Birdsong Terry, Burney, Caver, Coffey, Dangelo, Davidson, Feke, Fields, Fleig, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Jones, Kirkland, Lively, Miller, Schipper, Talley, Walker Minor

Public: Dancy, Durbin, Gibbons, Loh, Mahalsha, Marneckech, McManus, Santori, Schmidt, Smith

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m. There were eight (8) Board members present.

It was advised that notice of this meeting had been posted more than twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting, that the usual notification had 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 had been complied with.

Minutes

President Lucas stated that the minutes from the June 27, 2023 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

There were no public comments.

Committee Reports

There were no reports.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

There was no report.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

There were no reports.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

New Hires:

1. Eric Marks – Transit Ambassador
2. Ashley Burks – Occupational Health Specialist I
3. James DeCaro – Electronic Equipment Maintainer
4. Jamar Roberts – Hostler
5. Deborah Cha – Legal Intern
6. Roosevelt Wallace – Summer Intern
7. Jordan Randall – Public Transit Development Intern
8. Lee Harper – Operator
9. Sean Midgett – Operator
10. Erwin Hill – Operator
11. Darlene Price – Operator
12. Ebony O'neal – Operator

13. Shaunita Howell – Operator
14. Nikki Washington – Operator
15. Breanna Hill – Operator
16. Leon Sibley – Operator
17. Matthew Booth – Operator
18. James Hall – Operator
19. Harra Stiggers – Operator
20. Katrina West – Operator
21. Steven Wozniak – Operator
22. Nicholas James – Operator
23. Reinard Rieves – Operator
24. Karen Eagle – Operator
25. Shareese Williams Clement – Operator
26. Joslyn Mclemore – Operator
27. Schriond Hughes – Operator
28. Marshalette Clark – Operator
29. Tanyah Bulgin – Transit Ambassador
30. Tyrone Lampkin – Financial Accountant II
31. Myles Crowell – Financial Analyst/P-Card Administrator
32. Kaylie Hall – Transit Police Officer
33. Louis Broschk – Transit Police Officer
34. Raul Rodriquez – Transit Police Officer
35. Adrian Calhoun – Transit Police Officer
36. Tamiaka Stewart – Transit Police Officer
37. Jermaine Smith – Transit Police Officer

Promotions:

1. Anthony Pawluk – Bus Mechanic Apprentice
2. Tiffany D. Bowie-Thomas – Dispatcher
3. Tiffany L. Burton – Service Management Group Leader
4. Courtne' L. Cook – Laborer Leader
5. Joshua Geyer – Assistant Equipment Manager
6. Danielle Griffin – Assistant Equipment Manager
7. Willie C. Harrison, Jr. – Revenue Data Operator
8. Marcus R. Lewis – Service Quality Supervisor, Rail

Executive Session

9:08 a.m. - It was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta to go into Executive Session to discuss the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, compensation of a public employee or official. There were eight (8) ayes and none opposed.

9:40 a.m. – It was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. Moss to come out of Executive Session. There were eight (8) ayes and none opposed.

Introduction of Resolutions:

- A. 2023-47 (**TABLED 6-27-23**) – Amending and restating employment agreement of India L. Birdsong Terry as General Manager, Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority and authorizing the execution of that agreement. It was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Mayor Weiss to remove this from the table. There were eight (8) ayes and none opposed.

The Board's attorney, Ralph Cascarilla of Walter Haverfield said they researched the General Manager salaries of 75 transit systems nationally. The data collected was from 2021-2022. The metrics used were number of employees, number of vehicles and the budget. GCRTA has 2,100 employees, 600 vehicles and a \$482 million budget. The Compensation Committee determined the current proposed contract when compared to similar sized agencies in Ohio and

in the U.S. to be consistent with a mid-point salary. The contract is amending and restating for a five-year period from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2027. The proposed salary is \$335,000. The contract highlights are noted in the agreement. Mr. Cascarilla provided details on other organizations for comparative purposes.

Mayor Weiss, chair of the Compensation Committee added that this committee was formed to address compensation issues mainly for the General Manager. This is one of the most important duties of the Board. They have worked with Mr. Cascarilla for several months. It's important for the Board and benefit of the public to be proactive. It's important for Ms. Terry to continue to lead the GCRTA for the next five years for stability and continuity. Other committee members include Ms. Moss, Mayor Koomar and Ms. Mersmann.

The adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Ms. Welch. There were eight (8) ayes and none opposed. It passed.

Ms. Terry thanked the Board. RTA is getting the funding and recognition it deserves and the investment through the community. She is proud to lead the GCRTA through transformation.

- B. 2023-48 – Expressing congratulations to the employees of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority who retired during the second quarter of 2023, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta and approved by unanimous vote. There were 15 retirees this quarter. Vanessa Henderson, Roberta Nunley and Kurt Slesinger were in attendance. The retirees expressed their gratitude for their employment.
- C. 2023-49 – Authorizing an increase to Contract No. 2019-123 with Hatzel & Buehler, Inc. for Project 60B – Warrensville Van Aken Substation replacement in the amount of \$83,032.00 for a total contract amount of \$3,118,758.00 and reinstating the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer's change order signing authority in its entirety (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Mayor Koomar. Mayor Weiss asked for a roll call. There were seven (7) yes and one (1) abstention by Mayor Weiss. It passed.

Ms. Moss commended the staff for not having a lot of change orders.

- D. 2023-50 – Authorizing an increase to Contract No. 2022-115 with Northeast Ohio Trenching Service, Inc. for Project 19.05 – Airport Tunnel and Pump Station repairs in the amount of \$16,500.00 for a total contract amount of \$115,400.00 and reinstating the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer's change order signing authority in its entirety (RTA Capital Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2023-51 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-017 with Ave Automeia, Inc., dba SHARE Mobility, to provide Micro Transit Program Services, in an amount not to exceed \$300,000.00 (RTA Development Fund, Programing & Planning Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mayor Weiss and approved by unanimous vote.

SHARE will take the lessons learned from the Solon program to make improvements for this program. Discussions with stakeholders showed that Aerospace and Brookpark were the best areas for this program. The Aerozone Alliance includes 50 sq. miles surrounding CLE Hopkins International Airport. It is home to approximately 200,000 jobs from NASA, Ford, General Motors and others. They have connected to 61+ businesses. One of their challenges is getting people to their businesses safely and conveniently. Ms. Moss asked what is the target for ridership. Mr. McManus said the goal is 10,000 employee subscriptions. He said he would give a ridership target at the next update. Ms. Terry said there will be a six-month report. She suggested a mobility ridership analysis.

- F. 2023-52 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-048 with Richard L. Bowen & Associates, Inc. for Project 24X - A/E Services for E. 79th Street Light Rail Station Reconstruction in an amount not

to exceed \$859,825.01 (RTA Development Fund - Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.

- G. 2023-53 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-61 with Hatzel & Buehler, Inc. for Project 12F – addition of 515 turnout at the west end of Brookpark yard in an amount not to exceed \$2,715,000.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.
- H. 2023-54 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-65 with EDM Technology, Inc. for the purchase of magnetic fare media, as required, for a period of three years, with two additional one-year options, in an amount not to exceed \$650,865.00 for the base term and in an amount not to exceed \$226,573.50 for each option year, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,104,012.00 (General Fund, Revenue Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. Moss and approved by unanimous vote.
- I. 2023-55 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-067 with Safety-Kleen Systems, Inc. for the furnishing of antifreeze, as specified and as required, for a period of one (1) year in an amount not to exceed \$120,128.50 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- J. 2023-56 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-080 with ECS Midwest, LLC for Project 19.78 – On Call Testing and Reporting 2023 in an amount not to exceed \$200,000.00 for a period of twenty-four (24) months (RTA Capital and/or Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Mersmann, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.
- K. 2023-57 – Adopting the Tax Budget of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2024, and submitting the same to the Cuyahoga County Fiscal Officer, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mayor Weiss, and approved by unanimous vote.
- L. 2023-58 – Removing Section 644.14 Professional Society Membership from the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, as a duplicate of Personnel Policy 400.14, and amending Personnel Policy 400.14, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Ms. Mersmann and approved by unanimous vote.
- M. 2023-59 – Removing Section 644.11 from the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority as a duplicate of Personnel Policy 400.11, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta and approved by unanimous vote.
- N. 2023-60 – Amending Sections 1014.01 Transit Amenities and 1014.02 Vehicle Assignment of the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Sleasman, seconded by Mayor Koomar and approved by unanimous vote.
- O. 2023-61 – Authorizing the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer to enter into an agreement with Medina County to exchange operating funds for Medina County’s capital grant funds and to provide for Medina County to fund a portion of the cost of GCRTA’s 251 Flyer Route, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.
- P. 2023-62 – Authorizing the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District for student fares for the 2023-2024 school year, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mayor Weiss and approved by unanimous vote.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan D. Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer gave the report. The annual inflation rate in the U.S. hit its high point of 9.1% in June 2020. It has been steadily decreasing because of the FOMC efforts. Since June 2022, it has been falling. At the end of June 2023 inflation is down to 3%. It is expected to continue to fall in 2023. The FOMC is meeting today and tomorrow so an update is expected. The U.S. unemployment rate was 3.7% in May 2023. The June MSA unemployment data will be released August 2. All reported MSAs experienced an increase in their rates from April 2023 to May 2023. For May, Cleveland is 3.8%, up from 3.4%. Cincinnati is 3.1%, up from 2.8%. Columbus is 3%, up from 2.8%. Dayton is 3.4%, up from 3.2% and Toledo is 3.8%, up from 3.5%.

Ridership for June 2023 was up 11.3% compared to June 2022. YTD 2023 ridership is up by 19.5%. Comparing 2019 YTD ridership of 15.78 million to 10.47 million for 2023 shows a ridership decline of 33.6%. Passenger fares for June 2023 was 43.9% above June 2022. This is a result of timing issues. We had received some large collections from U-pass related income this month, about \$596,000. Overall, YTD the U-pass revenue is about 1.3% higher than 2022. YTD fares for 2019 of \$18.56 million compared to 2023 of \$13.63 million shows a 26.5% decline. Sales tax for July 2023 which is based on economic activity for April 2023 was 9% lower compared to June 2022. The last time sales tax declined for two consecutive months was February and March 2021 so we will monitor this. The largest factor has been the high interest rates. Motor vehicles and watercraft was 5.3% lower comparing July 2023 to July 2022. Online sales were 1.1% higher. Regular and statewide sales were 0.4% higher.

General Manager/CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO gave the report. RTA received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) 2023 Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for their budget document. Ms. Terry thanked the Finance Division for their work. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) officials from Chicago and DC visited the Authority on June 29. They toured the W. 25th Street BRT Corridor & Broadway Corridors. RTA along with other agencies will be used as a case study for how to build a successful BRT. Mr. Schipper added that this will assist with funding efforts. RTA was awarded a TOD grant for the Broadway Corridor. The FTA officials were able to see the results of TOD projects on W. 25th Street.

Ms. Terry participated in a Transit Voices Podcast that will air on August 10. Topics will include GCRTA Rail Car Replacement Program, EZfare and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the transit industry. Ms. Terry served on a panel for the Golden Hour Last Mile & Equitable Transit event on July 21. The focus was Microtransit mobility options, and innovations in Public Private Partnerships (P3) model of business in Greater Cleveland. Representatives from Sway Mobility and SHARE Mobility also participated.

RTA held a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Stakeholders Workshop on June 30 to strategize and finalize the DEI&B Strategic Plan. Several RTA departments and union members were represented. RTA is committed to DEI and committed to ensure equity and inclusion is a part of the mainstays of our mission. A presentation will be made to the Board at the end of the year. Several RTA employees attended the 2023 Conference of Minority Transportation Officials National Meeting & Training Conference, July 8-11 in Los Angeles, CA. RTA is involved in the local chapter. Focus areas included Diversity & Equity, Procurement & Contracts, Technology & Innovation and Grant Opportunities & Federal Funding. Mr. Kirkland added that it was beneficial to attend the conference and to see that RTA is active in the conference focus areas.

Public Comments – public transit related items

1. Rico Dancy – He is the president of Black Lives Matter for the Deaf. He is a certified interpreter for the deaf. He is on the Board of WMATA. They write ADA policies for people with disabilities. Every officer has an app called VRI or video remote interpreter. Purple Communication and Sorenson are the two companies for the deaf and hard of hearing. He asked what RTA is doing for their law enforcement for the deaf. Ms. Terry ask that he speak with Chief Jones after the meeting.
2. Carlata Santouri – Operators are not letting the ramp down for carts and don't always call out the stops. The AC is too high. Elevators smell and need cleaning. Restrooms or port-o-potties are needed. It's


hard to see out of the windows with mesh on them. She thanked RTA for the plastic seats. People smoke in the shelters and put their feet on the seats.

3. Loh – She congratulated Ms. Terry on her new contract. The deaf community is still in need. The Solon microtransit program is not as successful due to remote work.
4. Airric Stewart – The public was price gauged with the GM's salary increase. This is not a national job. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg, has a national position and makes \$250,000 a year. This position is much more intellectually intensive, the tax base that contributes to that position is stronger and his resume is much stronger. Franklin County in Columbus, OH has a higher cost of living and the tax base contributing to that CEO's position is stronger. The cost of living in Cleveland is much lower. The public should have been involved in the salary process. The CAC is still not operating. He requested routes 15A and 48A be reinstated. Readjust routes 50 and 48.
5. Pluria Gardner – She hasn't heard back about a complaint she filed. It was not investigated properly and nothing has been done. Ms. Terry said this complaint was reviewed by OEO and Legal with a recommendation for representation outside of RTA. It went through an internal review and was closed out.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, August 29, 2023**, in the Board Room of the Authority, Root-McBride Building, 1240 West Sixth Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. This meeting will be live streamed on RTA's Board page (www.RideRTA.com/board) by selecting the meeting date. The public is welcome to attend in person.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:54 a.m.



President

Attest: 

Secretary-Treasurer