

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

10:57 a.m. November 28, 2023

Board Members: Lucas (Chair), Koomar (Vice Chair), Biasiotta, Love, McPherson, Sleasman, Weiss, Welch

Not present: Mersmann

Staff/Other: Birdsong Terry, Burney, Caver, Dangelo, Davidson, Feke, Fesler, Fleig, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Harris, Johnson, Jones, Jupina, Kirkland, Marquit Renwald, Miller, Rusnov, Schipper, Smith, Stover, Sutula, Talley, Togher, Walker Minor, Woodford, Wright, Young, Zimmerman

Public: Brewington, Gibbons, Johnson, Loh, Meissner, Rubin, Sopko, Ware

The meeting was called to order at 10:57 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 October 31, 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.

Introduction of Resolutions:

Resolution 2023-85 was introduced early in the agenda.

- A. 2023-85 - Appointment of eleven members to the Community Advisory Committee, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Biasiotta, seconded by Ms. McPherson and approved by unanimous vote.

Eight of the eleven (11) CAC appointed members were in attendance. They all took an oath of office.

Public Comments – Agenda Items

1. Lenny Stover – Lenny opposes Resolution 2023-94. Lenny believes the Red Line Greenway should be preserved and a land bridge should not be built. Volunteers worked to keep the Greenway a place to be enjoyed. A bridge could be built on Fulton Road.
2. Airric Stewart (caller) – Airric sent an email requesting some routes be reinstated. He also sent emails to the new Board members. He hasn't heard back from them. He suggested numbers be shared along with percentages from the TRACTION report earlier.
3. Chris Martin (caller) - Chris is concerned about safety while waiting for transit and while riding transit. More frequent service could address this issue. CPT suggested a public facing database for transparency. He congratulated the new CAC members.

4. Laura McShane (webform) – I am asking the RTA board to reject the proposed "carte blanche" amendment to the 2021 DUA with the Marons and to terminate this shady deal forever. RTA board: please prioritize the renovation of the W 25th Station by providing pedestrian access to the train platform from the Metroparks' Red Line Greenway trail* and commit to save the wildlife habitat slated for senseless destruction. honor the legacy of Stan Adams, Pete Presson, Dutch Harley and Rotary volunteers led by Lennie Stover. (*this is possible because it is used at E34 and E79)
5. Sam McNulty (webform) - The Scottish poet Alexander Smith wisely said, "A man doesn't plant a tree for himself. He plants it for posterity."

I've visited Ohio City with my parents and six siblings since the 1970s, and in the last 22 years I've lived, worked, and played in this great neighborhood. My business partners and I have renovated 140,000 square feet of vacant properties in Ohio City, opened 6 businesses, and have created over 200 well-paying jobs in the neighborhood. We recently built 7 transit-oriented townhomes on a vacant property in the adjacent Duck Island neighborhood. In other words, I'm very much in favor of dense, urban development. This is why I studied Urban Planning and Real Estate Development at CSU's Urban Studies College. It was there that I learned that dense transit-oriented development only works when it is balanced with publicly accessible green space.

I write today to express my strong opposition to the development of the RTA-owned land adjacent to the Metroparks Redline Greenway. The sale of publicly owned green space - indeed, one that includes a protected wetland - to private for-profit developers is not in the best interests of taxpayers and the quality of life of the surrounding neighborhoods. I've watched thick clouds of migrating monarchs hovering over this narrow stretch of wooded habitat. And the migrating tropical forest songbirds and ruby-throated hummingbirds that visit in spring and fall are a sight to behold.

The forested habitat along the Metroparks will be enjoyed by Clevelanders of all walks of life. The Western Reserve Land Conservancy could step in and purchase this urban forest from RTA and permanently protect it from development so that it can forever be part of the growing Cleveland Metroparks Emerald Necklace. Posterity will thank us.

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

There were 35 new hires and 19 promotions. Their names and positions are listed in the presentation slides.

Executive Session Requested

11:27 a.m. - Executive session was requested to consider the purchase of property for public purchases or the sale of property at competitive bidding. It was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Ms. Welch. There were seven (7) ayes and none opposed.

12:07 p.m. – It was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Ms. Welch to come out of executive session. There were seven (7) ayes and none opposed.

Introduction of Resolutions

- B. 2023-86 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-99 with Northeast Ohio Trenching Service, Inc. for Project 18.92 – E. 115th & Superior Eastbound Healthline Station Rehabilitations as specified, in an amount not to exceed \$138,900.00 (RTA Capital Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- C. 2023-87 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-100 with Schindler Elevator Corporation to provide Elevator and Escalator Maintenance and Repair Services, for a base period of three years in an amount not to exceed \$2,980,356.00, with two, one-year options in amounts not to exceed \$1,049,891.00 and \$1,077,427.00, respectively, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$5,107,674.00 for a period of five years (General Fund, Service Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2023-88 – Authorizing the exercise of an option under Contract No. 2021-125 with Siemens Mobility, Inc. for the purchase and delivery of up to six (6) High Floor Light Rail Vehicles at a unit price of \$5,166,336.00, for an amount not to exceed \$30,998,016.00 (RTA Development Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Mr. Love and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2023-89 – To amend the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Revenues and Appropriations, as adopted in Resolution No. 2022-113, to provide for an increase in the appropriation for the Law Enforcement Fund in the amount of \$60,000, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2023-90 – Removing Sections 644.07 Temporary Salary Adjustment, 644.08 Health Care Coverage, 644.09 Prior Service Credit and 644.13 Tuition Reimbursement from the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority as duplicates of Personnel Policies 400.07, 400.08, 400.09 and 400.13, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2023-91 – Removing Sections 648.01 Smoke-Free Workplace, 648.04 Employee Assistance Program, 648.06 Biennial Physical Examination Requirements, 648.08 Driver's License Requirements, 648.09 Safety Belt Usage, 648.10 Hazardous Waste and 648.11 Workplace Violence from the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority as duplicates of Personnel Policies 600.01, 600.04, 600.06, 600.08, 600.09, 600.10 and 600.11, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Mr. Love and approved by unanimous vote.
- H. 2023-92 – Removing Sections 646.01 Holidays, 646.03 Bereavement Leave, 646.04 Sick Leave, 646.05 Extended Disability Coverage, 646.06 Jury Duty, 646.07 Military Reserve Leave, 646.08 Unpaid Leaves of Absence and 646.09 Family and Medical Leave from the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority as duplicates of Personnel Policies 500.01, 500.03, 500.04, 500.05, 500.06, 500.07, 500.08 and 500.09, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.

- I. 2023-93 – Authorizing an agreement with the City of Shaker Heights for Landscape Maintenance and Parking Lot Snow Removal for a period of one year beginning January 1, 2024 in an amount not to exceed \$290,735.52 (General Fund, Programming & Planning Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Ms. Welch. There were six (6) ayes and one (1) abstention from Mayor Weiss. It passed.
- J. 2023-94 – Authorizing the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer to execute the first amendment to the Development and Use Agreement with AJAPPJR, LLC, an Ohio Limited Liability Company, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Mr. Sleasman. There were seven (7) ayes and none opposed. It passed.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan D. Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer gave the report. In June 2022, the rate of inflation hit 9.1%. Since then, it has been on a steady decline. At the end of October 2023, inflation came in at 3.2% lower than the 3.7% in September 2023. The Federal Reserve raised interest rates again back in July to 5.5%. The Federal Open Market Committee met on Nov. 1. They decided to keep the target rate at 5.5%. They are scheduled to meet December 13 to discuss further interest rate action. Interest rates are at the highest level in 22 years.

Ridership data goes back to pre-Pandemic levels in 2019 at 27.06 million rides. YTD through 2023, we have 18.22 million rides. That is 8.84 million rides lower or 32.7%. October ridership was up 14% when compared to October 2022. October passenger fare revenue was 53.5% below October 2022. This is a result of timing. Student fare cards revenue received in October 2022 accounted for that decline. YTD passenger fares in 2019 were 32.39 million. YTD through October 2023, it is 22.93 million which is 9.46 million lower or 29.2%. Sales tax receipts remain strong. YTD sales tax is up 3%, nearly \$7 million higher than 2022. Fifteen of the 23 categories were positive in November 2023 compared to November 2022. Online sales were 8.1% higher. Regular and statewide sales were 2.9% higher. Motor vehicles and watercraft were 8.3% lower.

General Manager/CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO gave the report. GCRTA veterans were recognized Nov. 6-11 with videos, a marketing campaign, a panel discussion, new resource group, City of Cleveland event and a special pin. The new EngageRTA webpage launches today. The page was created to receive special event requests and services. GM/CEO Birdsong Terry will be honored by the YWCA as one of their Women of Achievement on May 30, 2024 at Severance Hall. RTA celebrated National Apprenticeship Week, November 13-19. RTA has a bus mechanic and rail mechanic apprenticeship programs and an Operator Mentoring program.

The Operator Mentoring Program, Positive Impact – celebrated those who recently went through the program on November 17. RTA hosted ATU International representatives, FTA and the Transportation Learning Center. Several transit systems' training divisions were in attendance. T-shirts for RTA's Employee Resource groups are in the design form. Elevating Women Together, Latinos Unidos and Pride are among the resource groups. The Holiday Trolley will run from Nov. 18 – Dec. 17. The trolley will make appearances at several community events. Holiday District Visits started Nov. 16 and will run through Dec. 20.

Public Comments – public transit related items

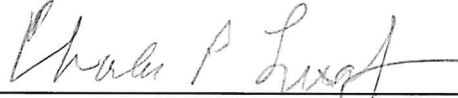
1. Loh – Loh was late today's due to the snow resulting in buses being slow. Loh rides the #9. Two scheduled buses did not show up. This route was reduced to a 30-minute frequency. The system redesign covered businesses, healthcare and retail, but doesn't cover all residential areas. Loh is unhoused. Loh suggested text service alerts be used again and shelter locations be reviewed.

2. Abigail – Abigail represents TK Elevator. She asked for more information on why Schindler was chosen for this contract. Ms. Dangelo will speak with her after the meeting.
3. Airric Stewart (caller) – Airric is still having issues with the survey line. He requested it be fixed. He asked the staff and CAC to experience traveling in inclement weather such as today and question why the 15A is still not back in service.
4. Chris Martin (caller) – Chris' plan is to solve the operator shortage, increase ridership, and create more safety and security. He hasn't seen any action to advance the Strategic Plan and Climate Action Plan goals.
5. Samuel Hutchins (webform) – I would like to be a member of your board.

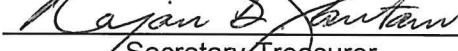
Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, December 19, 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 12:35 p.m.



President

Attest: 

Secretary/Treasurer

