

## Minutes

### RTA Committee of the Whole Meeting

9:03 a.m., Tuesday, September 26, 2023

**Committee Members:** Lucas (Chair), Koomar (Vice Chair), Biasiotta, Mersmann, Sleasman, Weiss, Welch

**Not present:** Joyce (virtual)

**Staff/Other:** Bailey, Birdsong Terry, Caver, Dangelo, Davidson, Dykes, Fields, Fleig, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Hlavacs, Hudson, Jenkins, Jones, Jupina, Kirkland, Marquit Renwald, Miller, Mothes, Reed, Shaffer, Steiner, Sulik, Talley, Tarka, Temming, Walker Minor, Woodford

**Public:** Auvil, Bortolotto, Clary, Gibbons, Gordon, Loh, Morris, Sims, Taylor, Wharton

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. There were seven (7) committee members present.

#### Executive Session Requested

President Lucas asked for a motion and second to go into executive session to consider the appointment of a public employee or official. It was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta. There were seven (7) ayes and none opposed.

9:12 a.m. - It was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta to come out of executive session. There were seven (7) ayes and none opposed.

#### Office of the Vice President

The Office of Vice President is currently vacant. President Lucas asked for nominations for the Office of Vice President. Ms. Welch nominated Mayor Koomar. It was seconded by Mayor Weiss. There were no additional nominations. There were six (6) ayes and one abstention from Mayor Koomar. Mayor Koomar is the new Vice President.

#### Civilian Oversight Committee

Floun'say R. Caver, Chief Operating Officer, Operations Division gave the presentation. The COC project schedule details when the committee would be implemented. The Board approved the Operating Procedures and Code Book provisions last year. Today staff will recommend the Board appoint the initial seven members. Upon approval, the members will be trained and expected to be operating by January 2024.

#### COC Purpose:

- To review/investigate public complaints filed against GCRTA Transit Police employees and make recommendations
- Recommendations must be consistent with GCRTA/TP rules, policies, procedures, collective bargaining agreement

#### Benefits of Police Oversight:

- Increases police accountability
- May assist in liability management/reduce the likelihood of costly litigation
- May identify areas of concern/offer options to improve policing
- Helps improve quality of Internal Affairs investigations
- Increase public understanding of police policies and procedures
- Fosters communication between community and police

#### Member Qualifications

- Ability to remain objective/unbiased
- Reflect customer base
- At least 18 years of age
- Resident of Cuyahoga County
- No criminal history
- General understanding of GCRTA and TP services

#### Committee Selection Process

- Written Application
- Screening Committee (filters out unqualified candidates)
- Ad Hoc Selection Committee
  - Committee Chair Lauren R. Welch
  - Mayor Paul A. Koomar
  - Mayor David E. Weiss
- Board of Trustees makes final appointment from Ad Hoc Selection Committee's recommended candidates

#### Committee Composition

- Seven individuals from diverse communities within Cuyahoga County
- At least one retired police officer with Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA) training and investigative experience
- Selected by application to the COC by the Board of Trustees
- Terms for COC members shall be three years (staggered)
  - Three initial appointments for three years
  - Two initial appointments for two years
  - Two initial appointments for one year

#### Candidates for initial 3-year term:

- **Auvil, Elise:** Elise has served as an assistant public defender in both Philadelphia and Cleveland and served as an associate counsel for GCRTA from 1997 to 2003. Elise was also the former Chief of Staff for Mayor Justin Bibb. Elise is currently the Human Resources Consultant for EHA Solutions, Ltd. and has held that role for 8 years.
- **Gordon, Jakolya:** Jakolya has been a member of various community organizations including the Cuyahoga County Child Fatality Review Committee, Alliance for HOPE International, and the Alcohol, Drug, Addiction, & Mental Health Services Board. Jakolya currently works as a program specialist for the Cuyahoga County Public Safety & Justice Services and has held that role for 13 years.
- **Taylor, George (OPOTA trained, retired police officer):** George is a retired uniformed police officer who served the Toledo Police Department for more than 30 years. After retiring from service as a police officer, George continued to serve the community in various roles such as the Director of Public Safety and Justice Services for Cuyahoga County and the Chief Deputy of the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department.



Candidates for initial 2-year term:

- **Clary, Timothy:** Timothy has experience working as an attorney in a private firm handling litigation as well as serving as an assistant prosecuting attorney for Cuyahoga County. Presently, Timothy is working as an assistant public defender in the Cuyahoga County Public Defender's Office.
- **Sims, Steven:** Steven has engaged in public service throughout Cuyahoga County and Cleveland in various roles, including at GCRTA as the Director of the Office of Business Development. Steven currently serves as the President/CEO of the Greater Cleveland Community Credit Union, a financial institution focused on serving the unbanked and underserved communities of Cuyahoga County.

Candidates for initial 1-year term:

- **Morris, David:** David has 20+ years of HR experience, with job duties and responsibilities including handling investigations of employee misconduct and citizen complaints. David presently works as the Human Resources Manager for the City of Bedford Heights.
- **Wharton, Rebecca:** Rebecca presently works as the HR manager for Malachite Innovations, L.L.C. and has responsibility and oversight of over 60 company clients. Rebecca has a history working in a multitude of HR-related positions including the management of all aspects of HR duties and responsibilities. Rebecca also worked as a constituent liaison for the State of Ohio's Department of Public Safety.

On behalf of the Ad Hoc Selection Committee, Staff requests that the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Board of Trustees the appointment of the seven recommended candidates as members of the Civilian Oversight Committee.

Ms. Terry said this is a proactive initiative that has been in the works for over a year. She thanked the committee members for their service. It was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mr. Sleasman to move this to the full Board. There were seven (7) ayes and none opposed.

### Code of Conduct

Floun'say R. Caver, Chief Operating Officer, Operations Division and John Sulik, Associate Counsel II, gave the presentation. The Code of Conduct applies to any Board-Appointed Committee Members.

The Code has 12 Conduct provisions:

1. I will be present for all required meetings of my Committee, to the extent possible.
2. I will take necessary steps to be informed about issues being considered by my Committee.
3. I will respect the rights, dignity, and worth of all citizens, peers, public officials, and GCRTA employees.
4. I will be a positive role model and actively promote public confidence in GCRTA through my actions.
5. I will welcome, respect, and consider divergent points of view.
6. My language, manner, preparation, and follow-through will demonstrate courtesy and professionalism.
7. I will not represent myself as having any greater authority than that of a Committee member.
8. I will carefully avoid conflicts of interest and will refrain from taking any actions that may be perceived as a conflict of interest.
9. I will accept feedback from the Board in order to offer the most effective service in my role.
10. I will not accept any compensation for my service to GCRTA other than that which may be authorized by the Board, and I will not accept anything of value from any third party for performing my duties.


11. I will not make any effort to influence Board members or GCRTA officials or employees to act in a manner benefiting my personal and/or financial interests.
12. I understand that failure to adhere to this Code of Conduct may result in my dismissal or non-reappointment.

The committee member will also take an oath of office.

On behalf of the Ad Hoc Selection Committee, Staff requests that the Committee of the Whole vote to adopt a Code of Conduct for any Board-appointed committee comprised of members of the public. It was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mayor Koomar. There were seven (7) ayes and none opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 a.m.

  
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Rajan D. Gautam  
Secretary/Treasurer

  
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Theresa A. Burrage  
Executive Assistant