

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:03 a.m. November 19, 2024

Board Members: Welch (Vice Chair), Biasiotta, Elder, Love, Sleasman, Weiss

Not present: Koomar, Lucas, McPherson, Pacetti

Staff: Birdsong Terry, Blaze, Burney, Caver, Dangelo, Davidson, Feke, Fields, Fleig, Ford-Marshall, Freilich, Gautam, Gibbons, Hudson, Jones, Jupina, Kirkland, Macko, Meinke, Metcaff, Miller, Mothes, Moore, Rusnov, Schipper, Sutula, Talley, Togher, Walker-Minor, Young, Zimmerman

Public: Bingham, Gibbons, Hagar, Hinkle, Loh, Martin, Rubin, Sopko, Urankar

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. There were six (6) 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

The minutes from the October 29, 2024, 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 and Non-Agenda Items

The public comment section has been consolidated to include agenda and non-agenda items.

1. Chris Martin – Cleveland, OH – The RTA Strategic Plan identified seven key initiatives including addressing funding challenges. Under this initiative the Board said it should expand funding concepts with more frequency corridors and 7-day a week consistency at night and weekends. Since then, the Board has done little to ensure that. BRT is a subject of concern. RTA mentioned items that would increase ridership for the Broadway BRT but not for the W. 25th BRT plan. Chris ask RTA to define BRT.
2. Kevin Hinkle – Cleveland, OH – Kevin suggested RTA put a transit museum in Tower City. He suggested the Northern Ohio Railroad Museum as a partner. He could donate a few items for the museum.
3. Denise Clinton-Alex – Cleveland, OH (webform) - no comment.
4. Isaac Shimsky-Agosto – Cleveland, OH (webform) - As RTA continues with the rail car replacement program, I hope that they will use this as an opportunity to install the equipment necessary to scan tickets at all the doors, on the blue and green lines. The current system of making everyone getting on or off, depending on the direction, use the same door by the driver, significantly slows down the process at busy stops. This is even worse at East 34th and East 55th, where people need to walk to the front and then double back to sit down or get off. The recent free day on November 5th, showed how much faster and easier each stop could be, if people could use any door in each direction. The same observations would also apply to the Healthline.

5. Robert Winn – Cleveland, OH (webform) - This comment is about the bus lanes on W 25th for the MetroHealth Line BRT project. Dedicated bus lanes are a key time-savings element of BRT -- if dedicated bus lanes are excluded from the MetroHealth Line BRT line, this will undermine the time-savings and reliability benefits of bus rapid transit. According to the outreach conducted during the initial phase of the 25 Connects project, "In the extensive 25Connects outreach, the need to "Improve Bus Service" and create "More Reliable Service" was the most cited goal for all aspects of the Corridor." Furthermore, it says that route 51 is consistently behind schedule in the corridor. "In every time period, average (50th percentile) travel times exceed the scheduled time." The report also says "The difference between the average and typical bad (50th to 90th percentile) is over 60% during the AM peak inbound time, this is a high degree of variability for a bus rider needing to rely upon or to make connections." and that the project "must improve travel time and reliability for transit riders." Please direct RTA's engineering department and consultants to RETAIN the 24-hour bus lanes on W 25th, especially in the heavily-congested district near the West Side Market, from about Lorain Ave to Bridge. Please see the BRT Study Report for more details: <https://www.riderta.com/sites/default/files/pdf/major-projects/25connects/5-BRTStudy.pdf> Again, please RETAIN these bus lanes for the W 25th BRT project.
6. Matthew Liu – Cleveland, OH (webform) - My name is Matthew Liu and I am a medical student at the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine.

I live downtown, so I commute everyday on the Healthline. I love taking the RTA and the Healthline, and I do want to applaud you all for the work you do, especially with such a constrained budget. However, I do think there are improvements that can be made to make my ride and others' rides smoother and more efficient.

Some of these improvements include bus lanes along the entire corridor (as the current bus lane stops at 105th St), signal priority, increasing frequency, and off board payment with all door boarding. I usually ride during rush hour, and having 10 or more people per stop scan their bus ticket while boarding from one door significantly slows down the ride. Having someone check tickets beforehand like in Tower City would make this much faster.

An idea I had to increase frequency was to extend the 48 and 50 buses from their current terminus at the Cleveland Clinic to Public Square, and have them use the bus lane as well. This would be an easy way to increase bus frequency on a majority of the existing bus lane without having to necessarily run completely new buses. Pittsburgh already does this, where they have multiple bus routes using the same bus lanes.

Introduction of Resolutions

- A. 2024-84 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-106 with Van Scoyoc Associates, Inc. to provide federal advocacy services for a three-year period in an amount not to exceed \$327,000.00 and in an amount not to exceed \$109,000.00 for each of the two option years, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$545,000.00 (General Fund, Executive Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Elder, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- B. 2024-85 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-107 with JB Hadden of Murray Murphy Moul + Basil LLP and Terrence O'Donnell of Dickinson Wright PLLC to provide state advocacy services in an amount not to exceed \$255,000.00 for a three-year period and in an amount not to exceed \$85,000.00 for each of the two option years, for a total five-year contract amount not to exceed \$425,000.00 (General Fund, Executive

Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mr. Sleasman. There was a roll call. There were five (5) ayes and one (1) abstention from Mr. Love. The adoption failed.

- C. 2024-86 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-118 with City Architecture, Inc. to provide professional planning and engineering services for the Broadway Corridor Transit Oriented Development Plan in an amount not to exceed \$484,426.59 (RTA Development Fund, Programming & Planning Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Biasiotta, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
 - D. 2024-87 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-120 with ms consultants, Inc. for Project 19.08 – Architect/Engineer Services for Light Rail Retaining Wall Repair – Phase III Blue Line in an amount not to exceed \$359,977.20 (RTA Development Fund - Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Biasiotta, seconded by Mr. Sleasman. The roll was called. There were five (5) ayes and one (1) abstention from Mayor Weiss. The adoption failed.
 - E. 2024-88 - Authorizing the exercise of an option under Contract No. 2021-125 with Siemens Mobility, Inc. for the purchase and delivery of eighteen (18) high floor light rail vehicles at the contractual base price of \$5,166,336.00 plus an inflationary price increase calculated at the time of final assembly based on the producer price index for transportation equipment and a labor index published monthly by the United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, spare parts and tooling (RTA Development Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- Dr. Caver added that we currently have 30 cars ordered. If the Board approves this resolution, this will add 18 cars resulting in 48 cars on order. The maximum purchased will be 60.
- F. 2024-89 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-134 with Parts Authority, LLC for the furnishing of bus batteries, as specified and as required, for a period of two years in an amount not to exceed \$103,664.00 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Biasiotta, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
 - G. 2024-90 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-160 with Motorola Solutions, Inc., for link layer authentication access keys in an amount not to exceed \$127,132.12 (General Fund, Information Technology Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Love, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta and approved unanimous vote.
 - H. 2024-91 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-170 with S&A Systems, Inc. to provide Fleetwatch hosted software maintenance and support for a period of three years in an amount not to exceed \$113,910.42 (General Fund, Information Technology Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Biasiotta, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.

- I. 2024-92 - Authorizing a lease agreement with Barons Bus, Inc. for property at the Brookpark Rapid Transit Station located at 17510 Brookpark Road, Brook Park, Ohio 44135 for a term of ten years with two five-year renewal options, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- J. 2024-93 - Authorizing the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority to enter into a settlement agreement with Gehring Property Company LLC to resolve a dispute over land ownership near the West 25th – Ohio City Station, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Sleasman, seconded by Ms. Elder and approved unanimously vote.

Committee Reports

The Civilian Oversight Committee meets tonight at 5 p.m.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

Ms. Ford Marshall introduced the new employees and promotions. There were 23 new hires and 5 promotions.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan D. Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer gave the report. The inflation rate in the U.S. has decreased from 9.1% in June 2022 to 2.4% in October 2024. The Federal Open Market Committee reduced the interest rates to 4.75% following a 0.25% reduction at their November 7 meeting. They are scheduled to meet again on December 17 and 18 to determine any additional actions.

Ridership through October 2024 was 12.3% above 2023 levels. YTD compared to 2023, it is 11.4% higher. Compared to pre-COVID ridership of 27.1 million rides we currently stand at 20.8 million which is 6.3 million rides lower or 23.24%. Free fare Election Day ridership of 90,770 exceeded that of a typical Fall 2024 Tuesday by 6.2%. All modes were up. Election Day ridership exceeded 2023 Election Day by 27.8%. All modes were up. Passenger fares compared to October 2023 were 35.2% higher and 43.2% above September 2024. YTD we are 20.1% higher compared to 2023. Compared to pre COVID levels of \$32.4 M in 2019 we stand at \$27.5 M, a decline of \$4.9 M or 15.1%.

We have not received the November sales tax. October receipts are stable. YTD we are 0.6% higher compared to last year.

Selected Data

Total Long-Term Debt – 12/31/2023	\$30.3 million
Average Investment Yield – YTD	4.47%
Cash and Investments	
Unrestricted (General Fund)	\$29.3 million
Restricted	<u>342.3 million</u>
TOTAL CASH AND INVESTMENTS	\$371.6 million

A principal payment of \$8 million is due at the end of the year. Total debt service is approximately \$8.7 million. The current balance in the Bond Retirement Fund is \$8.7 million so no further transfers will be needed from the General Fund. Mayor Weiss asked what caused the uptick in passenger

fares in October 2022. Mr. Gautam said that it resulted from collections due to an initial delay in payments from CMSD. Ms. Welch thanked The Cleveland Foundation and Cleveland Votes for the free ridership day grant and support.

General Manager, CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO gave the report. GCRTA was awarded \$4.2 million from the Governor's Office as part of the Ohio Department of Transportation's Urban Transit Program. The funds will be used to purchase six 40ft. CNG buses. Ms. Terry gave an update on GCRTA projects, programs and the upcoming 50th Anniversary at the Cuyahoga County Mayors & Managers Meeting, October 31. Ms. Terry spoke on mentoring at the Railway Age Women in Rail Conference, November 5-6 in Chicago, IL. Members of Power & Way were recognized.

Several operators were recognized at the Positive Impact Program mentoring graduation November 7 at the Hayden District. Ten other transit properties have mentoring programs. RTA was awarded \$800K, Nov. 8 for Public Workforce Transportation Projects through the Governor's Office. The funds will be used for a microtransit feasibility study (\$300K) and bus stop enhancements (\$500K). GCRTA recognized veterans by participating in a Week of Honor, November 11-15. Veterans received a special recognition coin. Presenters from Plexus LGBT and Allied Chamber of Commerce held an education session on Nov. 11 about creating an inclusive and supportive workplace environment for transgender and nonbinary individuals.

Ms. Terry served on a panel at the Making Connections Conference, Nov. 11-13 in Baltimore, MD. Discussions included FTA's strategic goals for workforce development. Several staff members and union members attended the conference. RTA is replacing the vinyl seats on rail cars. Customers have expressed in the TRACTION surveys their concern about cleanliness on rail cars. The total number of seats replaced was 2,592.

New Business

Trustees Sleasman and Love are heading to the OPTA Ohio Needs Transit Conference in Columbus, OH today after the meeting.

Ms. Terry said a Special Board meeting will be scheduled to reconsider the two resolutions (2024-85 and 2024-87) that failed today due to low attendance. A few additional items may be added to that agenda.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, December 17, 2024** 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 9:46 a.m.



President

Attest: 

Secretary-Treasurer

acting for


