

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:32 a.m. September 26, 2023

Board 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 9:32 a.m. There were seven (7) 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 August 29, 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

1. No name given - Bus operators lean on the horn a lot for small reasons. They need to be more polite.
2. Airric Stewart – There is still no Community Advisory Committee. RTA is still running ads on using the service, but there hasn't been a study on the reinstatement of the 15A. This route would connect to hospitals, libraries and retail. The 48A should also be put back into service. The 50 should start at Marymount Hospital to serve the 48A and 15A.

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 36 new hires and 6 promotions. Their names are listed on the slide show presentation.

Introduction of Resolutions:

- A. 2023-72 – Expressing appreciation to Karen Gabriel Moss for her service as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority and extending best wishes for many years to come, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta and approved by unanimous vote.
- B. 2023-73 – Initial appointments of the seven members to the Civilian Oversight Committee, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. Mersmann and approved by unanimous vote.
- C. 2023-74 – Delegating to the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer the authority to authorize change orders up to \$6,500,000.00 under Contract No. 2021-125 - the purchase of replacement rail cars, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta and approved by unanimous vote.

Mayor Koomar added that periodic updates from the CEO/GM will keep the Board informed as they move through the change order process.

- D. 2023-75 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-98 with Cook Paving & Construction Co., Inc. for Project 19.48 – Triskett Maintenance Facility Roadway Improvements in an amount not to exceed \$237,680.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mayor Koomar and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2023-76 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-109 with Apex Construction & Management Co., Inc. for Project No. 19.76 – Triskett Garage Overhead Door Replacement in an amount not to exceed \$134,750.00 (RTA Capital Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2023-77 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-130 with Holland LP to provide Track Geometry Testing Services in an amount not to exceed \$420,500.00 for a period of five (5) years (General Fund, Power & Way Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Mersmann, seconded by Mayor Koomar and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2023-78 – Removing Chapter 462 Private Sector Participation from the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Mersmann, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- H. 2023-79 – Removing Section 648.07 Safety Policy and amending Chapter 1098 Commitment on Environmental Policy of the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority and amending Personnel Policy 600.07 Safety Policy, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Ms. Mersmann and approved by unanimous vote.
- I. 2023-80 – Authorizing the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority to enter into a five-year license agreement with Lamar Advertising of Youngstown, Inc., dba Lamar Advertising of Cleveland, OH for Outdoor Advertising Structures at five (5) locations on GCRTA property, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mayor Koomar and approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Terry added that staff spoke to Audit, Safety Compliance & Real Estate Chair Mayor Koomar about this resolution. Mr. Reed, RTA Property Manager said this is for five billboard locations on RTA land. We are licensing the land on which the billboards are

erected and maintained. They propose continuing the relationship with Lamar, which has been successful over several years. The term is for five years beginning this October. They will remove one of the locations due to Lamar's inability to maintain its permit with the City of Cleveland. They are increasing the fees to \$112,300 per year from \$105,000 a year for a total of \$561,500 over the five-year agreement. The payment schedule will change from quarterly to monthly. The new agreement incorporates the Authority's new Advertising Policies and Administrative Procedures. The rates are competitive or 8% over the last agreement.

Dr. Walker Minor added that her department worked with Legal and did extensive research to bring the guidelines up to date. Ms. Welch asked if we have rights to the ads on the billboards. Dr. Walker said the guidelines will help monitor the ads and control our brand.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan D. Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer gave the report. At the end of August 2023, inflation rose to 3.7% from 3.2% in July 2023. The FOMC met on September 20 and decided to keep the target rate at 5.5% with an indication they are likely to maintain the higher rates for the foreseeable future. They are scheduled to meet again on November 1 to discuss further action. Interest rates are at the highest level in 22 years. The August MSA unemployment data will be released tomorrow. The U.S. unemployment rate increased to 3.8% in August compared to 3.5% in July. The Ohio unemployment rate increased to 3.4% in August compared to 3.3% in July.

YTD ridership still shows a decline of 33% compared to pre-pandemic levels. August 2023 Ridership was 16.3% above August 2022 levels. Passenger fares for August were 42.9% when compared to August 2022. Variances are due to an increase in U-pass revenue, which is a result of timing. Also, mobile ticketing showed a significant increase. August 2022, we transitioned from Passport to Masabi's EZfare. There was an initial timing issue of when those credit card payments were remitted. Sales tax through September 2023 is 13.1% higher compared to September 2022. YTD ridership is 4% higher compared to 2022. Fifteen of the 23 categories that make up the sales tax base were positive. Online sales were 7.9% higher. Regular and statewide sales were 1.1% higher. Motor vehicles and watercraft were 19.5% higher.

Mayor Weiss asked about RTA ridership compared to other cities. Mr. Gautam said the challenge in reporting this was limited monthly information from other transit authorities. They can review that later in the year to see if mid-year and fiscal year data is available.

Chief Deirdre Jones

President Lucas asked Chief Jones to make some comments. She stated that Commander Hudson, Deputy Chief Gettings and Ron Woodford, Project Manager were on the planning team for the COC and are in attendance today. She is looking forward to meeting the new members. The committee is necessary and consistent with 20th century policing.

General Manager/CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO gave the report. The CAC will be brought to the Board next month. The CAC and COC should be up and running by the 1st quarter of 2024. She thanked Ms. Moss for her service to the RTA Board of Trustees. She congratulated Mayor Koomar for his election as Vice President of the Board. Deidre McPherson will be confirmed by County Council tonight to serve on the RTA Board. Stephen Love will be confirmed by County Council to serve on the RTA Board in the next month. Transit Police Honor Guard presented colors during the National Anthem at a Guardians baseball game, September 2. The Waterfront Line reopening was held September 8. Several state and city officials were in attendance along with representatives from the Cleveland Browns and several Board members and staff. Three proclamations were received from several Senators.

Several staff members and Board member Jeffrey Sleasman attended the OPTA conference in Columbus, Ohio September 18-20. Staff were also present at the conference. Staff and Board member Mayor Weiss attended a Transportation Review Advisory Council TRAC regional presentation on September 20 in Findley, Ohio. RTA staff presented in the effort to secure TRAC funding for various light rail projects. Ohio Transit Partnership Program awarded RTA two grants, \$12.4 million for rail cars and \$200,000 for electric vehicle planning.

RTA attended the Esperanza Fiesta of Hope Scholarship Gala on September 8. Esperanza has 40 years of service to the community. Ms. Terry is the newest Board member with In Counsel with Women. She was inducted at their Annual Meeting on August 16.

President's Report

President Lucas presented the official parade banner. He thanked Marketing for their help.

Public Comments – public transit related items


1. Loh – She is supportive of the new COC committee and looks forward to the new CAC. Training is needed for new operators. Proper docking of vehicles is needed and the ramps need to be checked. Winter is approaching. Preparations are needed. She asks transit surveyors to ask rider-focus questions.
2. Airric Stewart – He asked why it is taking so long for the CAC to be implemented. He opposes the GM/CEO's raise. RTA has a social and economic responsibility to the public. The 15A should be reinstated to serve retail and Shaker Square. The 48A should be reinstated.

President Lucas is proud of the progress the new administration has made with the Transit Ambassadors, COC and upcoming CAC. The COC members will be sworn in after this meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 31, 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 10:19 a.m.



President

Attest: 

Secretary-Treasurer