

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

10:04 a.m. May 21, 2024

Board Members: Koomar (Chair), Welch (Vice Chair), Love, McPherson, Mersmann, Pacetti, Sleasman, Weiss

Not present: Biasiotta, Lucas

Staff: Bennett, Birdsong Terry, Burney, Caver, Coffey, Dangelo, Davidson, Fesler, Fleig, Ford-Marshall, Garofoli, Gautam, Jones(Diana), Jones(Chief), Kirkland, Lincoln, Miller, Miranda, Mothes, Rusnov, Schipper, Talley, Togher, Walker-Minor, Young

Public: Bingaman, Gibbons, Katanovic, Loh, Rubin, Sopko

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 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 Koomar stated that the minutes from the April 16, 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 Items

1. Steven Katanovic – Bus ads are too bright. Install shades on buses to block the ads.
2. Airric Stewart – NextGen surveys responses were not addressed. The customer service survey is still not working. The 15A should be put into service based on his recommendation. Provide the numbers that the percentages are based on in the TRACTION report.
3. Bryan Hagar – There are lots of homeless on the HealthLine. The operators on route 40 and 9 drive erratically. The Red Line is leaving customers behind.
4. Isaac Shimsky-Agosto (webform) - The board will vote today on renewing the contract with Masabi. Despite the fact that it is time for a new contract, EZFare still has not been fully implemented across RTA's system. While I am happy to hear that testing of the e-ticket scanners for Tower City will begin soon, that apparently still leaves 12 months before they are in operation. I am sure that RTA's staff has done the best they could do over the course of this project, but it is concerning that, despite their best, this has taken as long as it has. I urge RTA to move with all possible speed to bring the Tower City e-ticket scanners into operation, and to see what lessons can be learned from this project to improve future projects.
5. Michael Harney (webform) - Good morning. I live in Cleveland and I've ridden on RTA almost my whole life. I heard that there were plans to finally add eTicket scanners at the Tower City station. That is exciting news, but it concerns me that the timeline for this may be up to a year. Quite a few people I know who use the Transit app to pay their fare have faced obstacles

catching the rapid from Tower City, because there was no attendant there to check their tickets. I've really appreciated the effort RTA has put into supporting eTickets the past couple of years, and with everything else RTA has been doing to make them a viable option for riders, I really hope there is a possibility to fast-track this process. The sooner we can eliminate issues like what I described, the better. Thank you.

Mayor Koomar added that RTA management reviewed Mr. Stewart's comments. A presentation was made at the last Board meeting. The goal of NextGen was to provide increased opportunities for ridership for customers to get to work, hospitals and retail locations. Some of his suggestions would indicate a lesser level of service to key areas such as Marymount Hospital, shopping and arts areas and would potentially decrease some of those rush hour commuting needs. The area served by the bus lines Mr. Stewart mentioned which had 5 days of service prior to NextGen, now have 7 days of service. A transfer is involved but the overall needs of the Authority have made great strides. At this point, there will not be any changes.

Committee Reports

Ms. Welch said the Civilian Oversight Committee (COC) is filling open positions. Anyone interested is encouraged to apply. The committee will meet Tues, May 28 at 5 p.m. Mayor Weiss said the Ad Hoc Compensation Committee will meet Wed, May 29 at 3 p.m. It will be in executive session. Mr. Sleasman said the Ad Hoc Technology Committee will meet Mon, June 17 at 3 p.m. in the Board Room. It will be livestreamed.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

There were 40 new hires and 8 promotions. Their names are listed on the PowerPoint presentation.

Introduction of Resolutions

- A. 2024-35 - Authorizing Contract No. 2023-167 with Castle Heating & Air, Inc. for Woodhill Garage HVU Replacement, as specified, in an amount not to exceed \$129,900.00 (RTA Capital Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mr. Love and approved by unanimous vote.
- B. 2024-36 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-20 with Jadco Construction Services, Inc. for Main Office Building Parking Garage Repairs, as specified, in an amount not to exceed \$423,000.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimously vote.
- C. 2024-37 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-048 with UKG Kronos Systems, LLC to provide Annual Maintenance, Software Subscription and Support Services for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed \$148,518.05 (General Fund, Management Information Services Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Mersmann, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2024-38 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-77 with Johnson Controls Fire Protection LP to provide Fire and Safety Inspection and Testing through the State of Ohio, Department of Administrative Services, Cooperative Purchasing Program, in an amount not exceed \$687,117.36 for a three-year period, and in amounts not to exceed \$229,039.12 and \$249,039.12 for each of two option years, respectively, for a total

five-year contract amount not to exceed \$1,165,195.60. (General Fund, Transit Police Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McPherson, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.

- E. 2024-39 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-080 with Masabi LLC to provide EZFare Mobile Ticketing Services in a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,200,000.00 for a period of two years (General Fund, Management Information Services Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Sleasman, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2024-40 - Repealing Chapters 1066 Promotional Activities and 1094 Newspaper Dispensing Box Policy and amending Chapters 470 Real Estate Policies and 850 Public Assembly on Authority property of the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mr. Love and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2024-41 – Appropriating the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority’s expenditures or outlays for the Fiscal Year (“FY”) 2025 Capital Improvement Budget, 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 Federal Open Market Committee met on April 30 and May 1. Interest rates remain steady at 5.5% as the FOMC continues to keep an eye on the changing economic conditions. They meet again on June 11 and 12. They’ve stated that they will continue to fight to restore price stability. At this time the FOMC does not expect to reduce the target rates until they are confident that inflation is moving towards the 2% mark.

April 2024 ridership was 17.6% higher when compared to 2023. YTD it is up 11.5%. Comparative YTD ridership going back to 2019 is 10.5 million. Compared to 2024 ridership, it is 2.6 million below the pre COVID levels or a 24.7% decrease. April fare revenue was 13.5% above the previous month. It is 31.7% above the budgeted amount. Compared to pre COVID levels, it is still down \$2.1 million on a YTD basis or 17.2%. May 2024 sales tax receipts are flat. On a YTD basis it is 0.5% lower compared to the previous year. YTD comparing 2024 to 2023, 12 of the 23 categories were positive. Online sales are 6.6% higher. Regular and statewide sales are 0.01% higher. Motor vehicles and motor craft are 3.6% lower.

Mayor Weiss heard from the State that sales tax has been flat to down over the last few months. Mr. Gautam said on a YTD basis it is 0.5% lower than the previous year. Ridership continues to make strides but is 24.7% below pre-COVID levels. Ms. Pacetti asked how our ridership compares to other transit agencies pre-COVID. Mr. Gautam said our ridership is better. Ms. Terry added that previously when this data was shared with the Board, our numbers were significantly better. The fluctuation of the different agencies with different modes muddled the data. RTA led the pack in our size category. Compared to the larger transit systems, they are noticing a different fluctuation by mode based on political climate, economics, return to work and safety and security. Ms. Terry wants to get riders back permanently. Other systems are offering free rides to increase ridership. Investment in infrastructure and quality of the service will garner a long-term return on investment. She suggested an annual comparison might be helpful.

General Manager/CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO gave the report. RTA participated in the Cleveland Cavaliers 1st Annual Employee Resource Group Summit. RTA has four ERGs (Elevating Women Together, Pride, Latinos Unidos and Veterans). The Office of Business Development (OBD) partnered with Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) and National Association of Minority Contractors to hold a Banking Forum at the Main Office, April 25. Topics included Financial Literacy, Banking Relationships, Funding Opportunities and Barriers to Accessing Capital.

RTA received the Government Finance Officers' Association Distinguished Budget Presentation award April 29, 2024. Only 8 of 1,651 agencies received the award. RTA has received the award for the 36th consecutive years. Ms. Terry participated in the CollaboRx Initiative: Nature Based Education Forum, April 29. This was a day-long forum focused on organizational and educational collaboration to help mitigate the social drivers of health for underserved populations, in grades PK through 6th grade. Ms. Terry and staff visited the ODOT HQ in Columbus, Ohio, April 30. The purpose of the meeting was to focus on GCRTA's capital projects priorities, funding opportunities, and strengthening relationships with ODOT leadership.

Ida Ford-Marshall, Talent Acquisition Manager was recognized by the YWCA on May 7 as a Women of Professional Excellence Reception. Ms. Ford-Marshall was recognized and awarded for her enthusiasm and stellar execution of recruitment and workforce development initiatives at GCRTA. Ms. Terry was interviewed on the Transit Voices Podcast with Ben Whitaker, May 8. Discussion topics included technology, enhancing transit accessibility, importance of employee benefits and holistic approach to employee retention strategy. Ms. Terry was on a panel for Connect NE Ohio 2024 on May 16, 2024. This was a day-long conference that brings together leaders in the healthcare industry and community to advance the goal of community health and well-being in Northeast Ohio.

RTA will host the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Rail Conference, June 2-5. RTA team members will be on several panels such as Workforce Development, Railcar Replacement, TRACTION – Performance Management and Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP). Special tours for conference attendees include Northern Ohio Railway Museum and Veterans Memorial Bridge.

President's Report

Mayor Koomar thanked the Board for keeping him and the Board Administrator informed of any absences for quorum purposes. Information on the Rail Conference was provided to the Board. Board members who are not registered can access the sessions with their RTA badge.

Public Comments – public transit related items

1. Airric Stewart – The 50 bus would complement the 19 and 48 buses, 1 hour service. The 15A would go to public libraries, colleges and public schools and hospitals.
2. Jason Zhang (online) - Would love to see more articulated buses on the 51, especially during rush. Right now, the bus gets so full sometimes that some passengers can't get on. I understand there are plans to upgrade this route in the future, but running artic's on this route is a quick way to improve ride quality right now. Is there any plan to modify the service to allow for greater capacity? The flashing eastbound train light at W.25th-Ohio City is also stuck in the solid "train arriving" signal for almost a whole month. Is there any plan to fix that?

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, June 25, 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 10:47 a.m.



President

Attest:



Secretary-Treasurer

