

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:04 a.m. October 29, 2024

Board Members: Koomar (Chair), Welch (Vice Chair), Biasiotta, Elder, Love, McPherson, Pacetti, Sleasman

Not present: Lucas, Weiss

Staff: Birdsong Terry, Blaze, Burney, Caver, Dangelo, Davidson, Fields, Fleig, Ford-Marshall, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Gibbons, Hudson, Jupina, Kirkland, Miller, Sulik, Sutula, Talley, Togher, Walker-Minor, Young

Public: Gibbons, Hudy, Loh, Martin, Rodriquez, Shila, Taswell

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 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

The minutes from the September 24, 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. Kerrie Shila – Parma – Kerrie rides paratransit and is legally blind. She lives in a development off State Road in Parma. The 51A was rerouted and as a result she was pushed out of the ¾ mile pick up policy. She must walk 10-15 minutes to a friend's house that is within the allowed service area. It's unsafe for her to walk that far. She would like to be picked up at her own residence since the driver has to go past her residence to turn the vehicle around. Others living further from the service are picked up.

Ms. Terry said Nick Davidson will review her request.

2. Chris Martin – Cleveland – Chris objects to the decision to reduce the public comment sessions. He believes it is disrespectful. The Board continues to meet in the mornings when most working riders can't make it. He asked if the Gillig buses are wired for validators to enable all door boardings. Was the CAC consulted about the specs for the buses/ What does the CAC do? RTA's Strategic Plan calls for expanding bus service to increase frequency at night and during the weekends, but how is that going. The 50 and 53 are branded as the MetroHealth Lines. CSU Line branded buses often run as 22's along Lorain. Doesn't this dilute the branding benefit. How long will there be weekday, evening 30 minute headways on the Red Line? Will the 2nd entrance at the W. 65th Station be repaired and reopened? Will the Board demand bus lanes on W. 25 between Detroit and Chattum? Will the Board direct leadership to heal the HealthLine? What does Bus Rapid Transit mean to RTA and will the Board define it?
3. Hayes Rowan – his carriage is not allowed to stay upright on Paratransit. Staff said it is a safety issue. Some fix route operators allow him to keep the carriage in place.

4. Kevin Ullman – Cleveland (webform)
 1. Have accurate information about pickup/drop-off locations with bus number/contractor
 2. Allow an option to schedule 7 days in advance and beyond
 3. Notify clients if pickup will be delayed, how long delays are expected and where they are coming from
 4. Anytime when buses are delayed, free rides should be offered
 5. Allow an option for Will-call for return pickups from any place
 6. Have a GPS tracking system on the website that has the status of the vehicle location, driver and what kind of bus.
 7. Allow an option to have passengers in wheelchairs sit wherever they want.
 8. Allow an option for passengers to either wear vehicle seatbelts or wear seatbelts that's comes with their chair.
 9. Expand service outside of Cuyahoga County.
 10. Have an option to park in driveways at houses for people that are unable to board and deboard using streets
 11. Allow same-day service for passengers that want to go to places on the same day or if they need to go to doctors office/ pharmacy etc.
5. Isaac Shimsky-Agosto – Cleveland (webform) It is wonderful that there are now departure screens in Tower City. RTA should continue to build on this success by introducing these screens across more of the system. Departure screens especially make sense on the HealthLine. It is a single line, that operates on dedicated lanes for a large part of its route, with purpose built stations. Having real time departure information in the station makes waits seem shorter. If you have ever had to wait a while for the HealthLine, you know there is a very strong chance that someone is going to walk up to you and ask when it's going to come. Riders would appreciate having an official source for that information at the station.
6. Bernie Oakar – Medina (webform- sent in after the meeting) - expansion to Medina would be nice. (sent in after the meeting)
7. Airric Stewart (webform - sent in after the meeting):
 1. Today, October 29, 2024 7:56 a.m. I called 216 621 9500. I hit the prompt to participate in the survey. I talked to either Bill or Stan to find out when the next number 14 westbound bus crosses Lee Road. He answered the question then the call was completely disconnected. This is another example of a poor public communication relationship with RTA. This was the 34th time this has happened in 11 months.
 2. The elimination of the 4-minute public comments and questions, in 2-minute intervals, for agenda and non-agenda items demonstrates an intentional lack of healthy appreciation from RTA to the public. There has still been no response from my last participation.
 3. The Community Advisory Committee has poor accessibility for the public. I've had no communication from one CAC member. Nor is there phone access to their meetings which is a bad idea.
 4. I noted that much less than half of anything that I have said a Board of Trustees meeting makes it into the online public record.
 5. There has still been **no** acknowledgement or explanation as to why RTA lied about the 50 being more efficient than the 48A.
 6. The suggested number 15A should be better studied so that more members of the public can have more efficient access to work, school, and hospitals. There are no less than 61 businesses at Pinecrest. There are no less than 24 businesses in Shaker Square. This route will give easy transfers to the 14, 15, 41, 40, 48 and 48A, blue line, green line, red line, number 50, and number 11.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

Ms. Ford Marshall introduced the new employees and promotions. There were 47 new hires and 7 promotions.

Introduction of Resolutions

- A. 2024-74 - Expressing congratulations to the employees of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority who retired during the third quarter of 2024, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.

There are nine (9) retirees. Retirees Paul Hudy and Ricky Buck were both in attendance.

- B. 2024-75 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-096 with Sam Schwartz Consulting, LLC for fleet electrification study services in an amount not to exceed \$311,924.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Sleasman, seconded by Mr. Love and approved by unanimous vote.
- C. 2024-76 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-112 with Sona Construction, LLC for Project No. 19.60 – Brookpark Maintenance Facility modifications in an amount not to exceed \$1,281,000.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McPherson, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2024-77 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-116 with Michael Baker International, Inc. for Project 20.19 – On-Call Rail Engineering Services - 2024 in an amount not to exceed \$450,000.00 for a period of twenty-four (24) months (RTA Capital and/or Development Funds, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Elder, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2024-78 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-124 with Cook Paving & Construction Co., Inc. for GCRTA Central Rail Maintenance Facility repave, as specified, in an amount not to exceed \$353,865.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mr. Love and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2024-79 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-133 with Sunoco, LLC for the furnishing of approximately 450,000 gallons of 87 octane unleaded gasoline, as specified and as required, for each of three years at a cost of plus \$0.0313 per gallon above the OPIS index for year one, at a cost plus \$0.0338 per gallon above the OPIS index for year two, and at a cost of plus \$0.0363 per gallon for year three (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2024-80 - Authorizing a change order to exercise an option under Contract 2020-071 with Gillig, LLC for the purchase and delivery of forty 40-ft. low floor CNG coaches, spare parts and tooling, as specified, for an amount not to exceed \$28,893,874.40 (RTA Development Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Sleasman, seconded by Ms. McPherson and approved by unanimous vote.
- H. 2024-81 - Amending Resolution No. 2023-103 to provide for an increase in the Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations for the current expenses and other expenditures for the General Fund

in the amount of \$18,444,837 and the Reserve Fund in the amount of \$2,415,340 for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Gautam added that this went through committee. The need for the \$18.4 MI in additional appropriations is due to increases in salaries and wages. The Reserve Fund amounts were higher than the Board Policy so \$2.4 MI is being transferred back into the General Fund.

- I. 2024-82 - Amending budget appropriations for the Fiscal Year ("FY") 2024 Capital Improvement Budget to provide for an increase of \$101,502,256, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Gautam added that this is to adjust the Capital Improvement Budget to prepare for a resolution that will come before the Board in November to exercise the option to purchase 18 additional rail cars in support of the Rail Car Program.

- J. 2024-83 - Authorizing the establishment of a three-year overall annual goal for Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation in the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority's federally funded contract procurement opportunities for Federal Fiscal Years 2025 through 2027 and also authorizing its submission to the Federal Transit Administration, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. McPherson and approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Pacetti thanked the staff for the additional information.

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 currently at 2.4%. The Federal Open Market Committee reduced the interest rates to 5% at the September 19 meeting. Meetings are scheduled for November and December 2024 to determine any further action.

In September, ridership was up 14.3% month to month and up 11.26% YTD. Compared to pre-Covid ridership, we are \$5.5 million rides lower or roughly 22.9%. Passenger fares compared to last month are down 29.8% due to a large payment of \$1.2 million received for student fares. YTD passenger fares are 18.1% higher YTD. Compared to pre Covid, 2019 passenger fares through September were 28.7 million. Passenger fares for 2024 are \$24.1 million which is a decrease of \$4.6 million or 16%.

Sales tax represents the largest source of operating revenue for the Authority. The October 2024 receipts based on the activity in July 2024, was 2.1% lower compared to last October. YTD we are stable at 0.6% higher compared to 2023. YTD, twelve of the 23 categories were positive. Online sales were 11.5% higher. Regular and statewide sales were 0.1% higher. Motor vehicles and watercraft were 2.7% lower.

This data is selected information included in the monthly package. Principle payments are made once a year in December.

Total Long-Term Debt – 12/31/2023	\$ 30.3 million
Average Investment Yield – YTD	4.50%
Cash and Investments	
Unrestricted (General Fund)	\$ 29.4 million
Restricted	<u>344.7 million</u>
TOTAL CASH AND INVESTMENTS	<u>\$374.1 million</u>

General Manager, CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO gave the report. Casey Blaze was elected to Secretary of the APTA Light Rail Technical Forum, September 29 for a two-year term. As Secretary, Mr. Blaze will be part of a committee that oversees a multitude of nationwide Light Rail Transit topics. Staff and several board members attended the APTA TRANSform Conference in Anaheim, CA, Sept. 29-Oct. 2. Mike Schipper attended the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) Regional Hearing to request funds for light rail track reconstruction, infrastructure and TOD. This funding is highly competitive. RTA has been funded once from this program.

RTA held a Bus Rodeo, October 5 at West Park Station. Awards are given to the best in show for bus skills. The goal is to participate at the national level for APTA. The Paratransit website was recently updated. It went live October 7. Connect at paratransit.gcrtta.org CAC members gave input for the new site. A ride free and vote press conference in conjunction with the Cleveland Foundation and Cleveland Votes was held October 8 at Tower City Rapid Station. Rides on RTA will be free per the Cleveland Foundation grant, from 3 a.m. Nov. 5 through 3 a.m. Nov. 6.

The Cleveland Leadership Institute held their fall Regional Economy session, October 25 at RTA. Several RTA staff participated. GCRTA held an internal Fall Town Hall for employees to go over programs here at the Authority. The event was held in the AdCom building on W. 9th. Over 200 employees attended. RTA joined community leaders to unveil a public mural located outside the Central Bus Maintenance Facility and across the street from the new the CMHA public housing reconstruction.

The results of the 2024 Employee Survey are now available. Out of 2,035 employees, 1,004 (47%) of employees participated. RTA held its annual Awards Banquet, October 25 at the Holiday Inn on Rockside. Over 250 attended and over 150 employees were recognized and received awards. RTA employees participated in the Latinos You Should Know Meet & Greet Celebration, October 25 at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo.

President's Report

Mayor Koomar acknowledged the awards received at the Annual Awards Banquet. Ms. Welch was the emcee of the event. Mr. Love was also in attendance. Crisis Communication Training for the Board is tomorrow in the Board Room.

New Business

The Board approved the 2025 Board and Committee Meeting schedule.

APTA TRANSform Conference Report – Sept. 29 – Oct. 2 – Anaheim, CA

- Trustee Stephen Love said the conference was an opportunity to better understand what other agencies are doing and struggling with. He learned about fleet conversion and zero emission fleets and looking holistically at innovation to drive more mode shift, TOD and fleet conversion. Relative to fleet electrification, conversion to Hydrogen, conversion to CNG, there is still a lot of learning going on. Lots of agencies have made strides. How do FTA policies and federal funding drive those decisions and build more domestic supply chain to meet the Buy America requirements. There were innovative models around TOD at Kansas City Transit. There is an opportunity to learn from our peers.
- Trustee Deidre McPherson learned that RTA is well respected at the APTA level. She enjoyed meeting leaders from across the country and networking. She noted free rides for 18-year-olds and under and free transit for community college students. In London, they have infused arts and culture to elevate the experience of transit riders. She is interested in TOD and learning about the car-light communities in Arizona and Florida. She enjoyed keynote speeches about fighting human trafficking and the roll that public transit can play to end that.
- Trustee Paul Koomar echoed the comments of trustee Love and McPherson looking at electric and hydrogen vehicles and opportunities RTA will have in the future to run a cleaner fleet. He heard several positive comments about the Rail Conference RTA hosted this summer.

Ms. Terry suggested board members rotate through the APTA conferences. APTA TRANSform has around 3,000 attendees. RTA hosted 1,600 at the Rail Conference. It can max up to 6,000 attendees depending on the location. Mayor Koomar will meet with each board members to discuss travel in 2025.

Executive Session

It was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta to go into executive session to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, compensation of a public employee or official and to enable the Board to conference with GCRTA attorneys for information-gathering, fact-finding and to receive legal advice.

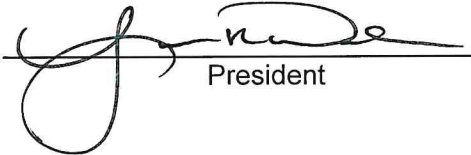
There were eight (8) ayes and none opposed.

10:51 a.m. - It was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Ms. McPherson to come out of executive session. There were seven (7) ayes and none opposed. Mayor Biasiotta had to leave before the roll call.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 19, 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 10:51 a.m.



President

Attest: 

Secretary-Treasurer