

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:14 a.m. March 21, 2023

Board Members: Lucas (Chair), Moss (Vice Chair), Biasiotta, Joyce, McCall, Weiss, Welch

Not present: Joyce, Koomar

Staff: Birdsong Terry, Burney, Caver, Coffey, Dangelo, Ferraro, Fields, Fleig, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Jones, Kirkland, Miller, Mothes, Schipper, Talley, Walker-Minor

Public: Gibbons, Loh, Martin, Morris, Cobhens

The meeting was called to order at 9:14 a.m. There were seven (7) board members present.

It was advised that notice of this meeting have been posted more than twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting, that the usual notification has 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 have been complied with.

Minutes

President Lucas stated that the minutes from the February 28, 2023 Board Meeting had been previously distributed and reviewed, and asked whether there were any additions and/or corrections. There were no corrections. The minutes were approved.

Public Comments – Agenda Items

1. Chris Martin, Chair of Clevelanders for Public Transit - CPT has not received any updates on the Paratransit scheduling website. It is not ADA compliant. RTA told him they cannot update it because it is operated by Trapeze.
2. Airric Stewart – The survey line is still not working properly. He restated his suggestions for route 15A. His route proposal improves access to retail, schools, colleges, hospitals and libraries.

Committee Reports

There were no reports.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

There were no reports.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

There were no reports.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

New Hires:

1. Tasha Jones – Operator
2. Ramaris Crosby – Operator
3. Brenee Rice – Operator
4. Nardica Wells – Operator
5. Aaliyah Haamid – Operator
6. Allen Moss – Operator
7. Deandre Stephens – Operator
8. Dontez Anderson – Operator
9. Lee Ward - Laborer

Promotions:

1. Alsindor Pittman – Service Quality Supervisor
2. Ricky Williams – Supervisor Cross Trained

Executive Session Requested

9:23 a.m. - President Lucas asked for a motion and second to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, compensation of a public employee or official. It was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta. The roll was called. There were seven (7) ayes and none opposed.

10:27 a.m. – It was moved by Ms. Pellot, seconded by Ms. McCall to come out of executive session. The roll was called. There were seven (7) ayes and none opposed.

Introduction of Resolutions:

- A. 2023-18 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-088 with UKG, Inc. to provide an applicant tracking system for a three-year period in a total contract amount not to exceed \$347,000.00 (General Fund, Management Information Services Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta and approved by unanimous vote.
- B. 2023-19 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-003 with CPC Industries, Inc. for the furnishing of heavy-duty cleaner/degreaser, as specified and as required, for a period of two (2) years, in an amount not to exceed \$161,000.00 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pellot, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta and approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Moss thanked Procurement for their work in receiving more than one bid for a number of the resolutions.

- C. 2023-20 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-012 with Transit Sourcing Services, Inc. for the procurement of 28-inch steel wheels for heavy rail vehicles in an amount not to exceed \$458,000.00 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2023-21 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-014 with Northeast Lubricants LTD. for the furnishing of transmission fluid, as specified and as required, for a period of one (1)

year in an amount not to exceed \$112,275.00 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Pellet and approved by unanimous vote.

- E. 2023-22 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-139 with HDR Engineering, Inc. for Project 19.46 – On-Call Architect/Engineer Services - 2022 in an amount not to exceed \$300,000.00 for a period of 24 months (RTA Capital and/or Development Funds, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), The adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pellet, seconded by Mayor Weiss and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2023-23 – Approving a new three-year collective bargaining agreement covering conditions of employment with the Fraternal Order of Police/Ohio Labor Council, Inc., the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta and approved by unanimous vote.

Another resolution will be added to the agenda once it is finalized.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan D. Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer gave the report. The annual inflation rate in the U.S. increased from 2.5% in January 2020 to 9.1% in June 2022. Since June 2022, the rate has been falling. At the end of February 2023, it was down to 6%. It is expected to continue to fall in 2023. The FOMC has raised interest rates in December to the highest level in 15 years to fight inflation. They increased rates in February 2023 to 4.75%. The U.S. unemployment rate dropped from 3.5% in December 2022 to 3.4% in January 2023. February 2023 numbers are not currently available. Ohio unemployment dropped from 4.1% in December 2022 to 4% in January 2023. Cuyahoga County unemployment rose from 3.4% in December 2022 to 4.3% in January 2023. The MSA statistical information is currently not available. It will be provided at the next meeting.

YTD ridership through March 2023 is 3.32 million. This is a 34% decline from pre-COVID levels. February 2023 ridership was 28.2% above February 2022. Pre-COVID YTD passenger fares for March 2019 was \$5.5 million. This is a 20% decline as of March 2023. February 2023 passenger fare revenue was 4.2% below February 2022. YTD passenger fares were 3.8% above 2022 levels. The difference in declining ridership compared to declining passenger fare is due to the U-pass and CMSD agreements that are back to normal levels. A peer comparison of passenger fares shows RTA is better than four of its peers. Only MTA in Baltimore, MD shows better recovery results. RTA's 40% decline in 2020 shows recovery. A passenger fare comparison with larger agencies shows RTA is ahead of Washington (WMATA), Boston (MBTA), Philadelphia (SEPTA) and New York City (NYCT).

March 2023 sales tax which is based on December 2022 activity was 7.4% higher than March 2022. YTD it is 6.6% higher than 2022 levels. Nineteen of the twenty-three categories were positive in March 2023. Comparing March 2023 to March 2022, motor vehicles and watercraft were 15.5% higher. Online sales were 21.4% higher. Regular and statewide sales were 7.4% higher. March 2023 collections represent the Christmas sales from 2022. This activity was higher than pre-COVID levels of 2019. A significant portion of that increase is based on higher inflation rather than the economy. Mayor Weiss requested the peer comparison be presented each month.

General Manager/CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO gave the report. Mayor Weiss was sworn in for a second term on March 7. He is the Chair of the Compensation Committee and an appointee of the

Cuyahoga County Mayors and City Managers. Ms. Birdsong Terry gave testimony before the Ohio Senate Transportation Committee on March 8 in Columbus, Ohio. Mr. Schipper and Ms. Walker Minor gave testimony the week before. She spoke on several state funding projects such as replacement vehicles, microtransit, Baby on Board and training and workforce development.

Ms. Birdsong Terry, Teresa Muti and Chief Jones spoke on March 9 for International Women's Day in partnership with MTA and EWT. The theme was "Breaking Glass Ceilings" Several RTA staff and Board Members attended the APTA Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. March 12-14. The conference focused on the importance of federal legislation, advancing equity and safety. Staff visited with key legislators. Several staff members attended the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) 12th Annual Women Who Move the Nation Awards Ceremony on March 15 in D.C. Ms. Birdsong Terry testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs on March 16 in D.C. She spoke about infrastructure, safety, operations, and workforce development.

A \$4M request for Community Project Funding was made to Representative Shontel Brown and a \$4M request for Congressionally Directed Spending was made to Senator Sherrod Brown for Light Rail Track Reconstruction. A \$1.35M request for Congressionally Directed Spending was made to Senator Sherrod Brown for Bridges to Opportunity Workforce Development Project. Ridership was lower than expected for St. Patrick's Day. Transit Police patrolled the stations and bus stops. Staff volunteered at the rail stations. Ms. Birdsong Terry (virtual), Teresa Muti and Kay Sutula will participate in a Women In Transit Conference on March 31 in Rochester, NY. GCRTA staff will volunteer with the Cleveland Public Library Ride & Read event on April 12 from 3-6 p.m. at various RTA stations. Free books will be distributed.

Introduction of Additional Resolution

Resolution 2023-24 was added to the agenda:

2023-24 – Authorizing a salary adjustment for Anthony A. Garofoli, Executive Director of Internal Audit, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Ms. McCall. Ms. Moss stated that she believes the Internal Audit Director should be a Grade 116, like his peers. President Lucas added that there will be additional discussion about this matter. The roll was called. There were six (6) ayes and one opposition from Ms. Moss. It passed.

President's Report

As a result of his trip to the APTA Legislative Conference, he will be meeting with the head of paratransit. He also observed some construction and bus issues.

Public Comments – public transit related items

1. Carlata Santouri – She thanked RTA for the new seats. The mesh on the buses makes it hard to see out the windows. Operators don't lower the ramp for shopping carts and walkers. Buses have passed her up (#11 and #9 and #14) downtown on Superior Avenue. Transit Police needs to enforce non-smoking on RTA property. Operators should tell customers not to put their feet on the seats.
2. Chris Martin – CPT requested the Board put a tax levy on the 2023 General Election ballot. CPT has asked RTA to seek new funding since 2018. In 2018, former trustee, Mayor Elkins was not supported in his motion to place a levy on the ballot. Former Board President Mayor Clough said RTA would put a tax levy on the ballot by 2019. As a result of Mayor Elkins'

motion, RTA did a presentation on RTA service, who uses the service, funding and what it would take to find additional local funding. CPT recommends the presentation be updated for the May Board Meeting. It should include a menu of service expansion that could be implemented with new funding. CPT is available to assist with the content of the presentation.

3. Airric Stewart – He said the #50 should start at Marymount Hospital. This will give greater access to customers. It will get to 93rd in Chester faster. The #48 could be an hourly bus. He complained about the two-minute public comment limit. President Lucas said Joel Frieilich is available to provide feedback about route suggestions.
4. Shalida Dobbins (webform comment) - Even though GCRTA doesn't own the paratransit scheduling website they still have to hold their vendors accountable for not being accessible for the paratransit riders - 2024 is too long to wait for the vendor to update the website, riders can't use it now. The Board should demand the vendor to get it updated sooner or work with a better vendor.

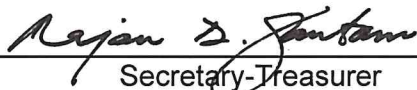
Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 18, 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 11:06 a.m.



President

Attest: 
Secretary-Treasurer

