

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:03 a.m. April 18, 2023

Board Members: Lucas (Chair), Biasiotta, Joyce, Koomar, McCall, Pellot, Weiss, Welch

Not present: Moss

Staff: Bigger, Birdsong Terry, Blaze, Burney, Caver, Dangelo, Davidson, Dietrich, Fields, Fleig, Freeman, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Harris, Hlavacs, Jones, Kirkland, Lincoln, Marquit Renwald, Miller, Moore, Mothes, Schipper, Schnear, Sulik, Talley, Walker-Minor, Wilson, Young

Public: Alexander, Cahill, Cook, Hawkins, Loh, Stimson

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 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 Lucas stated that the minutes from the March 21, 2023 Board Meeting and Annual 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. Kenneth Wilson – He is an RTA rail operator. He was charged with a DML over a train that went through a red light due to mechanical failures. RTA management placed an unsigned arbitration award in his personnel file. The incident happened in December 2020. The arbitrator did not sign the award. Per the American Arbitration Association once an arbitrator mails an arbitration award, the decision is final and binding. The unsigned award can be brought up in a termination hearing per ORC, all arbitration awards must be signed by the arbitration. He asked Dr. Caver to verify what was in his file. He asked for these items to be removed from his file. Mr. Birdsong Terry said they can discuss the issue with him after the meeting.
2. Dontez Taylor – He said we need more paratransit operators and telephone operators. The wait on the phone is too long.
3. Sean Freeman – He complaint at the February Board Meeting requesting updates the paratransit scheduling system. The request was for keyboard access for those who cannot use a mouse and pad, separate phone lines for cancelations and scheduling and the ability to type in their own address. The website contractor Trapeze, said they would not make changes until next year. Mr. Davidson, Director of Paratransit said they are working with the vendor to come up with solutions sooner.

Committee Reports

Mayor Koomar stated that the Audit Committee will meet on May 9 at 9 a.m. He reminded the Board members who had not filed their financial statements to do so before the deadline.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

There was no report.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

There were no reports.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

New Hires:

Darryl Hampton – Operator	Porshia Smith – Operator
Vashawn Black – Operator	Shrondra Hawkins – Operator
Brittany Mcatee – Operator	Louis Swearingen – Operator
Leon Foster – Operator	Ronesha Horton – Operator
Allucretia Wilson – Operator	Chrisauna Storrs – Operator
Scharlene Ware – Operator	Rudy Birch – Operator
William Blair – Rail Operator	Sade Chambers – Rail Operator
Julio Santiago – Rail Operator	Jenetha Talley – Rail Operator
Dameon Willis – Rail Operator	Brandon Harney - Janitor
Anthony Conwell – Janitor	Catare Allen – Laborer
Ashley Neiskell – Laborer	Rodney Green – Laborer
Dan Pincombe – Material Planner	Richard Pozwick – Equipment Servicer
Alfred Rucker – Equipment Servicer	Shoneice Barton – Executive Assistant
Amy Marquit Renwald – Sr. Counsel, Labor Employment & Admin Law	Benjamin Maline – Maintainer
Vannessa Johnson – Executive Assistant	Lamaria Goldsby - Operator

Promotions:

Patrick Coffey – User Support Architect	Marcus Gibson – Material Handler/Stock Clerk
Asia Marche Hall – Material Handler/Stock Clerk	Monique Harris – Payroll Clerk
James Myers – Material Handler/Stock Clerk	Keylin Tyree – Material Handler/Stock Clerk
Chantee Williams – Dispatcher - Paratransit	

Introduction of Resolutions:

- A. 2023-25 – Expressing congratulations to the employees of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority who retired during the first quarter of 2023, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.

There were fifteen retirees. President Lucas and Ms. McCall requested the retirees be invited to attend the meetings in person again.

- B. 2023-26 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-125 with Siemens Mobility, Inc. for the design, manufacture and delivery of up to twenty-four (24) high floor light rail vehicles, spare parts, tooling and training in an amount not to exceed \$163,920,115.00 with options to procure up

to thirty-six (36) additional high floor light rail vehicles, spare parts, tooling, and training, to be exercised over the seven (7) year term of the contract (RTA Development Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. McCall suggested there be a continuous fund for new trains. She thanked the state of Ohio and NOACA. She suggested the car be sleeker and the community be engaged in the design. Mr. Cahill, President, Rolling Stock, Siemens Mobility, Inc. thanked the RTA and looks forward to engaging the Board and community.

- C. 2023-27 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-128 with Loram Maintenance of Way, Inc. to provide rail grinding services for a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,160,500.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pellot, seconded by Mr. Joyce and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2023-28 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-142 with USI Insurance Services LLC to provide casualty insurance broker services for a period of three years in an amount not to exceed \$300,000.00, with two, one-year options in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.00 for each option year, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$500,000.00 (Insurance Fund, Risk Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Ms. Pellot. Ms. McCall requested a roll call. There were seven (7) ayes and one abstention from Ms. McCall. It passed.
- E. 2023-29 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-9 with Cook Paving & Construction Co., Inc. for Project 19.45 – Central Rail Maintenance Facility Rail Shop Pit Drains in an amount not to exceed \$475,900.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Mr. Joyce and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2023-30 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-11 with White Associates, Inc. for the furnishing of remanufactured air dryers, as specified and as required, for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed \$175,500.00 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2023-31 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-019 with Railworks Track Services LLC for Project 19.68 – Waterfront Line Platform and Track Repairs, as specified, in an amount not to exceed \$1,047,832.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pellot, seconded by Ms. McCall and approved by unanimous vote.
- H. 2023-32 – Authorizing Contract No. 2023-056 with Trapeze Software Group, Inc. DBA Vontas to provide TransitMaster Software Cloud Hosting Services, including implementation, for a period of three years in an amount not to exceed \$760,101.00 (General Fund, Information Technology Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Joyce, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan D. Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer gave the report. In June 2022 inflation was at a high of 9.1%. The inflation rate has been trending lower. At the end of February it was at 6%. Because of the aggressiveness of the federal government, the interest rates have risen to 4.75%. There is discussion that these rates will continue to go up with projections in the 5% range by the end of the year. The FOMC is scheduled to meet May 3.

For the Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA), the U.S. unemployment rate has risen to 3.6% through the end of February. March numbers are not available. The total number of job openings decreased to 9.9 million. In February, they were down 632,000. The largest decreases were in professional business services, healthcare, transportation, warehouse and utilities. Major layoffs have been seen in the retail, food and technology areas like Walmart, Microsoft, Google, Roku and Amazon. All MSAs have experienced an increase in the unemployment rate since January 2023. Cleveland is 4.9%, up from 4.3%. Cincinnati is 3.6% up from 3.4%. Columbus is up from 3.3% to 3.4%. Dayton is 3.9% up from 3.7%. Toledo increased from 4.1% to 4.4%.

End of year ridership projections for 2023 is 19.97 million. Ridership for 2022 ended with 18.83 million. Ridership for 2019 was 32.05 million. March 2023 ridership was up 15.4% compared to March 2022. Passenger Fares for the same period was down by 10.6%. That decline was due to a timing issue with the collection of U-pass payments. Comparing RTA fare revenue to its peers, RTA is better positioned than transit systems in Phoenix, Portland, Pittsburgh, Charlotte and Atlanta when revenues are compared to the pandemic levels. This information was obtained from audited financial statements. Similarly, compared to the larger transit agencies, RTA is better positioned compared to systems in Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Boston, Philadelphia and New York City.

April Sales tax collections have not been received. It is generally available between the 15th and 20th of the month. March numbers were up 7.4% compared to 2022. YTD sales tax is 6.6% higher. Nineteen of the twenty-three categories were positive in March. Motor vehicles and watercraft were up 15.5%. Online sales are up 21.4%. Regular and statewide sales were 7.4% higher. Mayor Koomar asked if other agencies are not on a calendar basis. Mr. Gautam said they will include the data for systems who are on a June 30 audited basis. Mr. Joyce noted that RTA took an immediate hit while others lagged. He asked what that could be attributed to. Mr. Gautam said RTA took some steps to ensure service was provided because of the community's reliability on healthcare and food. Dr. Caver added that some of the larger cities had a more pronounced downtown ridership pattern. Our ridership was more dispersed. We had less of a hole to climb out of.

General Manager/CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO gave the report. She thanked the team at Siemens and the staff. A new 3-year labor agreement with the Fraternal Order of Police was signed March 24. It took five meetings to come to an agreement. She thanked the staff and ATU leadership. RTA partnered with the Cleveland Public Library for the Ride & Read Program at Tower City, Windermere and West Park on April 12. Mayor Bibb, Ms. Birdsong Terry, several board members and library leadership attended the event.

The RTA Positive Impact Mentoring Program for operators is showing great results - 82% of new operators paired with a mentor are still working with RTA. Other transit systems have inquired about the program. RTA is partnering with CMSD and City of Cleveland for the Stay Safe & Aware Campaign. RTA will have increased security cameras and TP presence at some CMSD schools. Promotional car cards are on RTA buses and trains. President Lucas thanked the staff for assisting with his travel.

President's Report

There were no report.

Public Comments – public transit related items

1. Loh – Riders are concerned about safety and the system being user friendly and RTA caring about them. She requested public engagement on the new rail cars. The design of the paratransit website is out of date.
2. Airric Stewart – He suggested the #15A be put back in service. It would serve retail, schools, colleges, libraries and hospitals. It would also cross all the rail lines.
3. Evangelist Renee Anderson – She asked that the #48A, #32 and #51 buses be reinstated. More police are needed. Elevators are needed at more stations. Restrooms are needed for seniors.
4. Dontez Taylor – Why is the #8 running hourly when the #11 used to go down Buckeye every 15-20 minutes.
5. Brian Shriver – He asked if two doors would be enough on the new rail cars during large events. Dr. Caver said they will have a mechanism for all high floor loading for all Red Line Stations.

President Lucas said no business will be needed after the executive session. His father was the first African American to serve on the RTA Board in 1968. He gave the integral vote in approving rail service from downtown to the airport. Ms. McCall added that RTA was the first transit system to have direct service from downtown to the airport.

Executive Session Requested

President Lucas asked for a motion and second to go into executive session to enable the Board to conference with GCRTA attorneys for information-gathering, fact-finding, and to receive legal advice. It was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Pellot. There were eight (8) ayes and none opposed.

It was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Ms. McCall to come out of executive session. There were seven (7) ayes and none opposed. Ms. Pellot left prior to the roll call.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 16, 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 10:53 a.m.



President

Attest: *Rajan D. Santam*
Secretary-Treasurer