

## Minutes

### RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

10:08 a.m. February 27, 2024

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

**Not present:** None

**Staff/Other:** Biggar, Birdsong Terry, Burney, Caver, Dangelo, Davidson, Dykes, Fields, Fleig, Ford, Freilich, Gautam, Hudson, Jones, Jupina, Kirkland, Lively, Miranda, Miller, Mothes, Schipper, Sutula, Talley, Togher, Walker Minor, Zimmerman

**Public:** Allison, Gibbons, Loh, Rubin

The meeting was called to order at 10:08 a.m. There were ten (10) 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 January 23, 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. Airric Stewart – No one has responded to his recommendations on the 15A, 48A and 50. He asked what the numbers are from the TRACTON report versus percentages. He never received feedback on why he was cut off on previous calls.
2. Dontez Taylor – Dontez agreed with Airric's comments about the 15A and 48A. Paratransit provides good service. RTA needs restrooms in the train stations.

#### Committee Reports

Mayor Weiss asked the Board to complete performance reviews prior to the Compensation Committee meeting this week.

Ms. Welch said they are still accepting applications for the Civilian Oversight Committee (COC).

Mayor Koomar said the Audit Committee recently met. The Internal Audit external assessment recommendations will be implemented after the IA International Standards change.

Ms. McPherson thanked the staff for their work with the Community Advisory Committee (CAC). She looks forward to working with the CAC to improve the customer experience metrics. The new officers were recently announced. They include:

- President – Dr. Joseph Sopko
- Vice President – Alicia Howerton
- Secretary – Nichole Laird

CAC subcommittees include Education, Rules and ADA.

#### Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

There were 38 new hires and 6 promotions. Their names are listed on the PowerPoint presentation.

#### Introduction of Resolutions

- A. 2024-14 - Authorizing an increase to Contract No. 2020-079 with K&J Safety and Security Consulting Services, Inc. for Project 66A2 – Consulting Services for Safety and Security Certification – New Railcar Fleet in the amount of \$39,002.00 for a total contract amount not to exceed \$517,024.00 and reinstating the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer's change order signing Authority in its entirety (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.

This contract is the oversight contract required by FTA to do our safety and certification of all rail car activities. It was executed in 2020. This change order is to do some additional documentation. The GM, CEO's change order authority on this contract is \$100,000.00

- B. 2024-15 - Authorizing Contract No. 2023-172 with Michael Baker International, Inc. for Project 20.01 – On-Call Bridge Engineering Services III in an amount not to exceed \$300,000.00 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 Mayor Biasiotta, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.
- C. 2024-16 - Approving revised list of positions designated to use Purchasing Cards, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2024-17 - Authorizing the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority to provide up to 400 7-day transit passes to Frontier Airlines, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mayor Koomar and approved by unanimous vote.

President Lucas commended RTA and the City of Cleveland for welcoming Frontier Airlines who recently made Cleveland their hub.

#### Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan D. Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer gave the report. From a high of 9.1% in June 2022, the inflation rate has continued to fall. At the end of January 2024, inflation decreased from 3.4% in December to 3.1% in January. The Federal Open Market Committee met on January 26. Interest rates remain steady as the FOMC will keep an eye on changing economic conditions.

Each year we see a slow recovery back to pre-COVID ridership levels. Pre-COVID numbers YTD for 2019 had 2.5 million rides. January 2024 had 1.8 million rides. A decrease of 700,000 rides or 28% lower. In January 2024, ridership was 4.6% when compared to 2023. Passenger fares for 2019 were \$3 million. For 2024 it is \$2.7 million which is \$300,000 lower or 10%. It is 6.8% above December 2023 and 48.7% above January 2023.

February 2024 sales tax was 0.7% higher compared to last year. YTD it is 0.5% lower than 2023. Sales tax is in line with projections. For February, 15 of the 23 categories that make up the sales tax base were positive. Online sales were 20% higher. Regular and statewide sales were 1.1% higher. Motor vehicles and motor craft were 6.7% lower.

### General Manager/CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO gave the report. New board member Emily Garr Pacetti was sworn in last month. She was appointed by County Executive Chris Ronayne. Cuyahoga County hosted an Ohio Loves Transit Wellness Day. RTA community engagement staff presented on several topics. RTA participated in Ohio Loves Transit Day hosted by the Ohio Public Transit Association (OPTA) in Columbus, Ohio. They met with several Ohio State representatives about public transit funding. We received several grants from NOACA totaling \$15.26 million. ODOT also awarded RTA several grants totaling \$9.5 million. Ms. Terry served on a panel called Women are the Future at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Transit CEO Seminar in Savannah, GA, February 16-28. Ms. Terry and Board member Welch plan to attend the APTA Legislative Conference next month.

Several RTA staff attended the APTA Marketing, Communications & Customer Experience Workshop, Feb. 11-14 in New Orleans, LA. RTA held a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Celebration, February 9. The four RTA Employee Resource Groups were acknowledged. Kimberly Chapmon-Wynne, Sr. Director, Race, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at United Way of Greater Cleveland was a speaker. RTA Transit Police was recognized as the March 2024 Agency of the Month by the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) and the Law Enforcement Foundation. Chief Jones thanked her team. They are getting lots of requests to participate in events. They went from an average of 25 events a year to 178 last year.

RTA was featured in a Transit Authority podcast with APTA. The focus was on the Positive Impact Mentoring Program for 1<sup>st</sup> year mentees. This program is one of the first in the country. We had 463 total new hires last year with 260 of those being operators. A video on the program is being shown throughout the country. Mayor Koomar asked for the difference between an absence and a miss. Dr. Caver said a miss is reporting late and an absence is a sick occurrence or not reporting to work.

### President's Report

President Lucas celebrated his 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday yesterday. Reflecting on Black History Month. He shared that when he was born in 1941, the hospital in Ohio did not permit "colored" people. His family had to drive to West Virginia to utilize one of their hospitals.

### Public Comments – public transit related items

1. Airric Stewart – City of Cleveland gave money to Shaker Square to improve it. RTA reduced transit service through Shaker Square. Airric's recommendation for the 15A would improve service through the Square.
2. Dontez Taylor – Dontez congratulated RTA on hiring operators. Provide A Ride is not a good contractor.

### Executive Session Requested

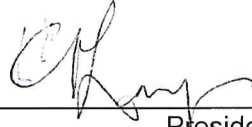
10:56 a.m. - It was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Ms. Welch to go into executive session to enable the Board to conference with GCRTA attorneys for information-gathering, fact-finding and to receive legal advice. There were ten (10) ayes and none opposed.

11:16 a.m. - It was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mr. Love to come out of executive session. There were nine (9) ayes and none opposed. Mayor Koomar had to leave prior to the roll call.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting and Annual Meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, March 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](http://www.RideRTA.com/board)) by selecting the meeting date. The public is welcome to attend in person.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:18 a.m.



\_\_\_\_\_  
President

Attest:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary-Treasurer