

## Minutes

### RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:01 a.m., January 19, 2021

**Present:** Clough (Chair), Lucas (Vice Chair), Bibb, Byrne, Joyce, McCall, Moss, Pellet, Serrano, Weiss

**Not present:** None

**Also Present:** Becker, Benford, Birdsong, Bitto, Burney, Caver, Coffey, Cottrell, Dangelo, Davidson, Feke, Fields, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Johnson, Kirkland, Martin, Miller, Mothes, Schipper, Sutula

Mayor Clough called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. The secretary called the roll and reported that nine (9) board members were present. Mr. Bibb joined after the roll call. This meeting was conducted by teleconference for members of the Board in accordance with Sub. H.B. 404 of the 133<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly, passed on November 19, 2020, signed by the Governor of the State of Ohio on November 22, 2020 and the March 9, 2020 order of the Governor of the State of Ohio declaring a public health emergency, this meeting was live-streamed on RTA's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/rideRTA](http://www.facebook.com/rideRTA)) for staff and members of the public.

The Secretary 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

Mayor Clough stated that the minutes from the December 15, 2020 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 (comments were submitted by form and phone)

1. Dominic Matthew – Cleveland, OH - Saw the news about the recently launched Transit Ambassadors program by CPT. These ambassadors are transit riders who will encourage Cleveland residents in their neighborhoods to use transit and communicate any hardships faced by them. Does the RTA propose any assistance in outreach or aiding this grassroots program, given the urgent need to restore public trust in using transit?
2. Chris Martin – Cleveland, OH - Please install mask dispensers on board buses and trains. During this pandemic, masking is extremely important when social distancing is not possible, and providing masks on board buses and trains will help any person who might not otherwise have one. RTA has taken some steps to mitigate transmission of the virus on its vehicles, but not enough. RTA does mandate wearing masks but does not enforce the mandate and not all riders follow it. RTA installed vinyl sheeting to separate operators from riders, but many of these are now broken and many were never used. RTA promised to install hard plastic barriers to separate rider and operator but they have not been installed. RTA will hire 18 cleaners this year to disinfect buses and trains even though we now know the disease spreads more through the air than through surface contact. It is not clear what, if anything, RTA has done to improve ventilation on buses and trains.

We know the more transmissible UK variant of COVID-19 is likely to become the dominant strain in the US by March. This makes it all the more important for RTA do everything it can to protect the riding public as well as its own staff. And you can afford it. RTA ended 2020 with nearly \$140

million in reserves. The second stimulus bill gave you something like \$30 million more and you will receive even more than that under the new president's announced plans. Please install mask dispensers on board buses and trains.

3. Rev. Pam M. Pinkney – Cleveland, OH – She congratulated the retirees. She is concerned about Resolution No. 2021-2 concerning Tower City. She asked if the smoking ban included in this project. She supports Cook Paving in Resolution No. 2021-3. She does not like the plastic seats on the bus in Resolution No. 2021-4. She congratulated the retirees.

Ms. Birdsong added that mask are being handed out to riders. Mask are required on RTA buses and trains. Signage is on the front of the bus and on the website. Operators are not encouraged to engage people not wearing mask to avoid altercations. If there is someone that is a nuisance to customers, the operator can contact Transit Police for assistance. The hard plastic barriers are being procured. They will be received in the next several weeks. Rev. Lucas asked if the barriers will be placed on paratransit vehicles. Dr. Caver said they are looking at what can be put on paratransit buses.

#### Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

#### Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

There was no CAC report.

#### Ad Hoc Committee Reports

There was no Ad Hoc Committee report.

#### Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

New Hires:

1. Sheila Miller, Information Technology Engineer
2. Ann Marie Prebish, Talent Acquisition Business Partner
3. Jenai Payton, Talent Acquisition Business Partner
4. Marketa Hill, Assistant Contract Administrator

Promotions:

1. Quennel Marshall, Supervisor Power and Way
2. Enjoli Anderson, Dispatcher
3. Pedro Colon, Supervisor Signals
4. Conor Miller, ITS Specialist

Mayor Clough congratulated the new hires and promotions.

#### Introduction of Resolutions

- A. 2021-1 – Expressing congratulations to the employees of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority who retired during the fourth quarter of 2020, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Rev. Lucas and approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Fields said there were 18 retirees. Mayor Clough thanked them for their service.

- B. 2021-2 – Authorizing an increase to Contract No. 2018-070 with E.L. Robinson Engineering for Project 52N Engineering Services for the Tower City East Portal Rehabilitation in the amount of \$220,459.54 for a total contract amount of \$989,942.01 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 Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.

A number of the resolutions have gone through committee.

- C. 2021-3 – Authorizing Contract No. 2020-182 with Cook Paving & Construction, Co., Inc. for Project 18.71 – GCRTA Salt Storage Facilities, in an amount not to exceed \$275,000.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Joyce, seconded by Ms. Moss and approved by unanimous vote.

This is for a salt facility, but the procurement for salt will follow the normal practice. This is our first step towards housing our salt so we can be less depended on previous practices and be more proactive for the winter.

- D. 2021-4 – Authorizing Contract No. 2020-189 with the Aftermarket Parts Company, LLC for the furnishing of Gemini Plastic Seat Inserts (back & bottom-with drain holes), as specified and as required, for a period of one (1) year in an amount not to exceed \$385,078.32 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Chief McCall, seconded by Mr. Serrano and approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Birdsong said this would bring us up to date with the plastic seating for all Gillig vehicles in the fleet. The plastic seating is easier to maintain and clean. We are moving away from the fabric seating, which is harder to clean. We are looking to have the entire fleet fitted with plastic. Paratransit has vinyl because of the longer seat ride and fabrication of the vehicles. There are variations within plastic seating to assist with sliding. That has been reviewed as well as drainage.

- E. 2021-5 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-001 with Oracle Corporation to provide Oracle Software Maintenance and Support Services for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed \$388,132.99 (General Fund, Information Technology Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2021-6 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-002 with Ultramain Systems, Inc. to provide software maintenance for the Authority's CITME Maintenance and Materials Management System for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed \$373,093.80, with two annual renewals in amounts not to exceed \$386,152.09 and \$399,667.41, respectively, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,158,913.30. (General Fund, Information Technology Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Mr. Joyce and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2021-7 – Authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Cuyahoga County Board of Health for implementation of the Baby on Board Program, the adoption of which was moved by Rev. Lucas, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.

Angela Newman White, the grant supervisor at the Cuyahoga County Board of Health was on the line. They are excited to enter into a MOU with RTA to support transportation needs of families in three targeted zip codes with the overall goal to improve birth and health outcomes. They are confident that through their partnership they will be able to disseminate the resources and provide documentation and reporting. Ms. Moss asked if this is a pilot program since it only targets three zip codes as opposed to other people who may need the service, who are not in those zip codes. Ms. Birdsong said this is a pilot. They have determined the locations in concert the County. It is important for RTA to be invested in the community and the future of Cleveland and Ohio wide residents. Ms. Feke added that this is a pilot. The zip

codes and census tracts have the highest infant mortality in the area. It is a two-year program. It will provide transportation for young women to get to the doctor and help decrease immortality rates in this area.

- H. 2021-8 – Authorizing the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority to grant a permanent right-of-way and easement to the East Ohio Gas Company (“Dominion”) to access and maintain the measuring and regulating station on Cuyahoga County Permanent Parcel Number 671-07-002, located at the Hayden Garage in East Cleveland, Ohio for the price of \$10,000.00, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Joyce, seconded by Ms. Moss and approved by unanimous vote.

#### Interim Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Dr. Caver gave the report. The unemployment rate for the nation was 6.7% in December 2020. The county and state numbers have not come out, but we have traditionally been higher than the country. Nationally, 9.8 million jobs have been lost since Feb. 2020. They have been in industries that affect our community. It is predicted that the second half of 2020 may get better as the vaccine is disseminated throughout the country. February-April, 22 million jobs were lost. Over half have been re-gained by December 2020, but there are some shifts that will affect RTA. One is that in December 2020, nearly 25% of all employees were able to telework. This will present challenges for transit agencies and city centers related to taxing and economic activity. Another aspect is that government employment is down nationwide by 45,000 jobs. Government jobs are important because they are some of the largest employers in the community. About one and six restaurants have closed. This is money that will leave the community and jobs. Leisure and hospitality had the largest loss in jobs. Other job categories are trending up.

Ridership throughout the Pandemic was down about 54%. We have kept that at 50-55% down throughout the recovery. Passenger fares has a direct impact on revenue. Revenue compared to 2019, was down by 57%. Sales tax has been resilient. It has not taken the negative drop expected. The unemployment supplemental payments have helped. The last stimulus package and the next one will help keep cash in people's hand. The technicals do not suggest that given a 7% national unemployment rate that sales tax will be robust going forward. Online sales has had a tremendous increase in sales tax. Motor vehicles and alcohol sales have been steady.

#### General Manager, Chief Executive Officer Report

Ms. Birdsong gave the presentation. In 2020, we received about \$112 million through the CARES Act. All of that funding was drownd down by October 2020. The money was used to offset operating expenses and to keep us afloat. We did not incur any layoffs or terminations as a result of COVID. We are currently operating at 93% of normal service levels. For 2021, the COVID relief package is expected to be able to provide us with \$50-\$60 million or better. This is an estimate. We have not received the final time table to determine what finances will look like through the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the Coronavirus Response & Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) for 2021. We have been advised that there is a total of \$14 billion awarded to transit agencies in the nation. The Cleveland Urbanized Area (CUZA) is expected to be awarded about \$74.3 million. This includes Cleveland RTA, Medina, Laketran, Akron, Metro PARTA and Geauga County. The Board and public will be updated on the expected funds.

There has been a lot of conversation and media coverage regarding the COVID-19 vaccine and who can take it and when. We have been in conversation with frontline employees and finding what the City of Cleveland is undergoing regarding vaccination and when it will be our turn to get the vaccine. In order to prepare for this information, all RTA employees were surveyed to gauge their interest in taking the vaccine to have data to respond regarding demand for RTA. All responses will remain anonymous. There will be a two-week turnaround for responses that should be received by the end of the month. Employees will be notified on where to get the vaccine once it is available. They are not mandating that all employees take

the vaccine. However, they will continue to update that progress as the Pandemic continues. Rev. Lucas said that he would receive the vaccine as a member of the leadership of the Board.

Ohio Loves Transit is traditionally hosted annually in Columbus. It will be a virtual event this year for format and looking through the different ways to communicate through the transit industry with legislators and staff to be able to stand behind transit and continue to advocate for funding and continuous of service. RTA will attend virtually. OLT cookies were placed at the Board desk that will be sent to our legislatures as a thank you and reminder that we are an essential service. The purpose of Ohio Loves Transit is to educate and inform passengers, stakeholders and community leaders about the importance of public transportation. The goals are to meet in person or virtually to explain our need for support whether its engagement regarding eligibility for grants and funding or whether it is general advocates for safe passage for riders and operators through COVID.

Due to reconstruction on track 13 on Tower City, Red Line riders will board and exit at a different location through spring of this year. The Blue and Green Line is not affected. Check the website for updates. Mayor Paul A. Koomar of Bay Village will join the Board in March. He was appointed by the Cuyahoga County Mayors and Managers City Managers Association. He will take the seat of current RTA Board President, Mayor Dennis M. Clough of Westlake. Mayor Clough welcomed the mayor. He has worked with him over the years through the Council of Governments in the Westshore area. He has a financial background that will be of assistance and will be a great addition to the Board. Mayor Koomar said he would be happy to serve.

All Board members are reminded to get their audit feedback to Anthony Garofoli for the 2021 Internal Audit program by this Friday. He and his staff is finalizing an authority-wide risk assessment to formulate the audit plan for your review and approval next month. Transit Police body cameras and portable radios have arrived. We have a kick off meeting scheduled and we are ahead of schedule for this project. We will come back to the Board on policies and procedures and how to distribute the cameras. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) requested to have the Rail Conference confirmed here in Cleveland in June. That will be on the heels of the NFL Draft planned for Cleveland in April/May. The rodeo was cancelled, but the conference will go forward. Interviews for Deputy General Manager positions and the Chief of Police are ongoing. There should be updates within the next quarter for all three positions. The Ad Hoc Technology Committee will meet Feb. 4 at 5 p.m. in the Main Office or virtually for those who would like to attend. Rev. Lucas asked when the hiring would be completed. She said they are wrapping up the DGM interviews. They expect to select a candidate for one DGM position by the end of this month and the end of next month for the other DGM. The Chief of Police position should be selected by the first of March.

#### President's Report

Mayor Clough reminded the Board that the Nominating Committee for the President and Vice President needs one more volunteer from the Board, namely a County appointee since someone from the City and Mayors has been identified. The committee member should not be interested in running for office. Please notify Theresa if you are interested. All interested in running for office should send a letter to the committee by the end of February so the Board can select the officers at the March Board Meeting.

#### Public comments on non-agenda items

Comments were received via form and by dial in. Comments were limited to two minutes.

1. Rev. Pamela M. Pinkney – Cleveland, OH – She hasn't received a returned phone call from Mayor Jackson. She opposes the plastic seats in Resolution 2021-4. She is concerned about the violence taking place locally and globally. She is disappointed in Ms. Birdsong's work. She requested a meeting. She has some concerns she wants to discuss with her.

2. Rico Dancy – Cleveland, OH – He is a Board member at WMATA in D.C. They have a Video Remote Interpreter (VRI) app on every phone of the police department. He asked if the Board is considering an app to assist Transit Police in communicating with the deaf community. Dr. Caver will provide an update with what his staff came up with concerning this app.

Ms. Birdsong said a few apps have come to staff's attention that have been forwarded to Transit Police. She said she would reach out to Rev. Pinkney to discuss her concerns.

3. Donte Taylor – He applauded RTA on their time and effort on the paratransit and big bus service.
4. Bob Ross - Thank you Mayor Clough for your service to GCRTA. Welcome to Mayor Koomar of Bay Village. Perhaps an expansion of the Board would be appropriate in these challenging times. I would really like to see a member that uses RTA extensively. It's time to give the Riders some representation. 2021 is the time...let's do it!
5. No Name - RTA is hiring 18 more vehicle cleaners, and has been focusing on cleaning during the COVID-19 pandemic, even though we have learned that the disease commonly spreads through the air instead of through touching surfaces. While we are waiting for vaccine rollout, new variant strains of the virus may become dominant like in the UK. We need to stay vigilant in the fight against COVID-19. To better fight COVID, it's more important to: Improve ventilation on buses and trains. Install hard barriers for drivers as promised (most buses still have plastic curtains installed, but many of these have broken or fallen). Distribute masks on all vehicles, like Detroit and Laketrans. Masks currently available at Customer Service at Tower City are not accessible to most riders. (You need a mask to walk into Tower City in the first place!)
6. Gail Long – Shaker Heights, OH - Happy New Year to Board Members and Staff of RTA! I urge you to make the following adjustments and/or additions in RTA's COVID-19 protocol. One, please install permanent (not plastic curtains) barriers in all buses and trains and two, make masks available to all riders who enter RTA vehicles - trains, buses and vans throughout the service region. RTA has received pandemic funds to be used for just these purposes.
7. Luke Robertson -To better fight COVID in the RTA and make riders safe we, we need to do more than cleaning the buses more. It's more important to: 1. Improve ventilation on buses and trains. 2. Install hard barriers for drivers as promised (most buses still have plastic curtains installed, but many of these have broken or fallen) 3. Distribute masks on all vehicles, like Detroit and Laketrans. Masks currently available at Customer Service at Tower City are not accessible to most riders. (You need a mask to walk into Tower City in the first place!).
8. Laqueta Worley-Bell – Cleveland, OH - It's very hard to seriously believe RTA couldn't find a fiscal agent to waiver the cost of fare of all transit riders. I am scratching & scraping to ride every month. I know yeah the grant is only support the drivers and maintenance of the vehicles. But what about the riders?
9. Lynn Solomon – Cleveland, OH - Please install mask dispensers on buses so that those riders who don't have a mask can grab one and put it on as soon as they get on the bus. The virus is contracted most easily thru the air we breathe. By that rider putting on a mask he is protecting all the other riders on the bus (who have masks on) and the bus driver. Having masks available at RTA in Tower City is not helpful in getting a mask to someone who is boarding a bus. Please use some of the money you are receiving from the government because of the pandemic for this pandemic-related issue. Thank you.

Related to the question on expanding the Board, Ms. Benford said the RTA Board appointments are set up by the formation of the Board by agreement between the County, the City of Cleveland and Mayors & Managers in the County. Mayor Clough said that the RTA Board has no power on expanding the Board. The three agencies would have to do that.

Executive Session Requested

There will not be any action taken after the Executive Session other than to adjourn the meeting.

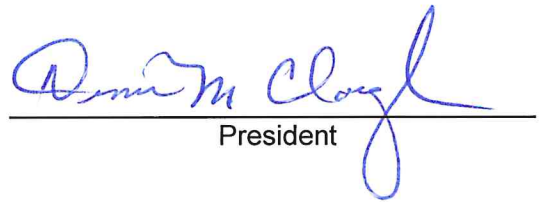
10:03 a.m. - Mayor Clough asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official. It was moved by Rev. Lucas, seconded by Mr. Bibb. There was ten (10) ayes and none opposed.

10:31 a.m. – It was moved by Rev. Lucas, seconded by Mr. Serrano to come out of Executive Session. There were ten (10) ayes and none opposed.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 16, 2021 in the Board Room of the Authority, Root-McBride Building, and 1240 West Sixth Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. This meeting will be live streamed on RTA's Facebook page for staff and members of the public at [www.facebook.com/riderta](http://www.facebook.com/riderta) Only Board members and required RTA staff will be allowed in the Board Room.

This meeting was adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

  
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President

Attest:   
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Interim Secretary-Treasurer