

## Minutes

### RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:05 a.m. December 21, 2021

**Present:** Lucas (Chair), Byrne, Joyce, Koomar, McCall, Pellot, Serrano, Weiss

**Not present:** Duarte, Moss (virtual)

**Staff:** Biggar, Birdsong, Coffey, Dangelo, Fields, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Kirkland, Krecic, Lincoln, Miller, Mothes, Petit, Schipper, Sutula, Walker-Minor

**Public:** Gibbons, Loh, Martin, Morris, Pinkney-Butts, Rodriquez

President Lucas called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. The secretary called the roll and reported that eight (8) board members were present.

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. Based on Centers for Disease Control guidance to continue to avoid large events and gatherings and Ohio Department of Public Health advice that businesses may continue to require mitigation measures, as well as RTA's interest in protecting community and employee health and safety, several measures were put in place for in-person attendance, which are spelled out on the meeting notice. The public was allowed to attend the meeting in-person.

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

President Lucas stated that the minutes from the November 16, 2021 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 in-person and by phone)

Ms. Birdsong said that public comment is a right and privilege. Keep comments civil and respectful of the work done by RTA employees. We require comments be within those boundaries, reframing from name-calling, disparaging remarks towards the staff, Board or passengers. We are here to serve you and it is our job to take comments seriously.

1. Rev. Pamela Pinkney-Butts – Cleveland, OH – She said she is always respectful but it is difficult to have communication when people do not return phone calls. That is why the public says what they say because they cannot have one on ones with RTA employees. The government has become destructive to the people. She opposes the budget. Resos 108 through 113 have vague language. People watching or who can't attend in person do not have clarity for these items. She opposes the entire agenda. The budget is racially biased. She would like to know more about the DBE goals. She asked that she be addressed directly next time rather than putting her on camera.
2. Chris Martin – Cleveland, OH – He is only able to attend in person today because he is not working. Normally the time of the meeting is a barrier to his attendance. He requested the Board host meetings outside of regular business hours. The public comment phone system is

not good. He request email comments be allowed again. Not everyone has a Facebook account to watch meetings. The last few meetings have had tech issues with the video and audio. He suggest we find a better way to stream meetings.

#### Committee Reports

Vice President Moss is not here today. The Audit Committee left a note at the desk that if any Board member has questions that they contact her or Tony Garofoli. Mr. Garofoli submitted a form for the Board to list their concerns for the 2022 Internal Audit Plan.

#### Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

There were no reports.

#### Ad Hoc Committee Reports

Ms. Pellot said she is working with staff to create the 2022 meeting schedule.

#### Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

Laura Paull and Tiffany Holder are the new Talent Acquisition Managers. Ms. Paull will introduce the new hires and promotions today. Ms. Holder was not able to be present today.

#### New Hires:

1. Keturah Oliver – Paratransit Operator
2. Myla Cllark – Paratransit Operator
3. Taniesha Carey – Triskett Operator
4. Curtis Bearden – Hayden Operator
5. Marcus Rand – Hayden Operator
6. Carmen Hudson – Paratransit Operator
7. Marilyn Milner – Paratransit Operator
8. Rakia Hollis – Hayden Operator
9. Nia Young – Hayden Operator
10. Ciera Green – Triskett Operator
11. Anthony Bryant – Hayden Hostler
12. Thomas Starkey – Hayden Hostler
13. Vincent Howell Jr. – Paratransit Operator
14. Yvon Lowe – Triskett Hostler
15. Ibraahiyim Rosa – Triskett Operator

#### Promotions:

1. Sheila Harmon – Paratransit Dispatcher
2. Robert Seay – Triskett Equipment Repair Leader
3. Shaquita Ellison – Operator Instructor
4. Chaun'Drea Clark – Service Quality Coordinator
5. Richard Williams – Hayden Equipment Repair Leader
6. Miles Varga – Power & Way Supervisor

#### Introduction of Resolutions:

- A. 2021-106 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-071 with the Segal Company (Midwest), Inc. DBA Segal to provide a compensation study for a total contract amount NTE \$170,000.00

(General Fund, Human Resources Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Weiss and approved by unanimous vote.

- B. 2021-107 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-176 with MNJ Technologies Direct, Inc. to provide laptop computers, docking stations and desktop computers, as specified, in an amount not to exceed \$494,722.00 (RTA Development Fund, Innovation and Technology Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pellot, seconded by Chief McCall and approved by unanimous vote.
- C. 2021-108 – Amending Section 460.03 of the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mr. Joyce and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2021-109– Amending Chapter 297 of the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2021-110– Repealing Chapter 852 of the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mr. Joyce and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2021-111– Amending appropriations for the current expenses and other expenditures for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, as adopted in Resolution Nos. 2020-101, 2021-019, 2021-064 and 2021-074 and increasing the transfer to the Reserve Fund by \$85,000,000, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Byrne, seconded by Mayor Weiss and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2021-112– Making appropriations for the current expenses and other expenditures for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority during Fiscal Year (“FY”) 2022, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Joyce, seconded by Mayor Koomar and approved by unanimous vote.
- H. 2021-113 – Amending budget appropriations for the FY 2022 Capital Improvement Fund budget to provide for an increase of \$34,200,000, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.
- I. 2021-114– Authorizing the establishment of a three-year Overall Annual Goal for Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation in the Authority’s federally funded contract procurement opportunities for Federal Fiscal Years 2022 thru 2024, and its submission to the Federal Transit Administration, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Chief McCall and approved by unanimous vote.
- J. 2021-115 – Authorizing the purchase of property insurance from various insurance underwriters through AON Risk Services Northeast, Inc. for a period of twelve (12) months for a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,183,061.00 (General Fund, Risk Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Byrne, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- K. 2021-116 – Authorizing a salary adjustment for Anthony A. Garofoli, Executive Director of Internal Audit, the adoption of which was moved by Chief McCall, seconded by Mayor Koomar and approved by unanimous vote.

### Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer, gave the report. In October 2021, the U.S. unemployment rate dropped from 4.8% to 4.6%. The Ohio rate dropped from 5.4% to 5.1%. Cuyahoga county rate dropped from 4.9% to 4.1%. In November, the U.S. rate dropped to 4.2%, the lowest it has been for two years. In November, the U.S. inflation rate hit 6.8%, which is the highest since 1982. The federal 12-month and 24-month forecast for inflation is expected to decline to 2.5% to 3% by the end of 2022 and slowly taper down in 2023. The assumptions that are inherent in these estimates is supply chain related with the goods not being available and too much money chasing those goods.

The Federal Reserve announced at its December meeting that it would end its pandemic era bond purchases in March. Paving away for a series of interest rate hikes by the end of 2022 as policy makers have voiced concerns over persistently high inflation and a backdrop of steady recovery in the labor market. Ridership has increased by 8% in August and September and 3% in October compared to previous months. November ridership increased by 26.4% when compared to 2020 levels. YTD ridership is still below 2022 levels representing an 8.8% decline. President Lucas asked if ridership is increasing. Ridership is higher compared to 2020 levels but in total, it is down. The first two months of 2020 were pre-pandemic.

Passenger fares have increased by 20.6% in November. YTD total passenger fares are 11.1% lower compared to 2020. Sales tax has continued to be extremely strong. The December receipts relate to September's activity due to the three-month lag for collections. It was 14% higher than December 2020. YTD it is 13.8% higher than 2020 levels. Eighteen of the 23 categories that make up the sales tax are positive. Motor vehicles and motor craft YTD are 20.3% higher than 2020. Online sales continue to be strong. YTD they are 43% higher. Regular statewide sales YTD are 11.2% higher.

### General Manager/CEO Report

India Birdsong, General Manager/CEO, presented the report. Vice President Moss asked for an update on the cyber liability program. It was discussed at committees but the outcome of the project came in under \$100,000, so it is within the GM authority. The committee discussed the IT liability and the exposure risk that we have potential for as we update our systems. This has been spearheaded by Mark Petit, Deputy General Manager of IT and Judy Lincoln, Director of Claims. USI presented a good recommendation. We were not sure what would come to us as far as options. We elected to go with Cowbell, which has a \$5 M coverage limit. This is the same limit as our expiring policy. The current expiring premium is \$64,000. The new premium is \$79,992, which is a 24% increase. It is more but less than projected. This compares to \$1 M coverage with current incumbent Chubb. Cowbell has an extensive program. Other transit systems similar to us had an excess of \$3 M of cyber coverage. President Lucas said Judy has worked hard to get us the right coverage. Ms. Birdsong thanked Mark Petit and his team.

Winter service adjustments took effect on December 12. RTA will operate Saturday schedules Christmas Eve, Christmas, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. There are no rail shutdowns scheduled. The RTA vaccination incentive program offers employees \$500 for being vaccinated. The mobile vaccination bus has been touring the Authority. The bus will go around the districts again in 2022. It will also be deployed in some downtown areas. The Board does not qualify for the incentive pay. We have 2,200 employees. We have 64% of employees who provided proof of vaccination. If a federal testing mandate happens, we will know the vaccination status of employees. We have had a surge of COVID cases. This time last year, we had a significant spike. We are ramping up the disinfectant procedures wiping down the property and using the Moonbeam technology. We had 281 cases in October with 262 back in the office. We are currently at 362 cases. We had 21 cases last

week and 25 cases the week before. Staff will meet to look at the policy going forward for the holiday and will come back to the Board about how to handle meetings if the surge continues.

We are working towards the fare collection vision for 2022. This will be spearheaded by the ITS department led by Mike Lively. He currently was promoted to Director. He will spearhead the fare collection replacement program with support from Mark Petit and IT. In the short term, we would like to replace RTA's currently mobile app RTACLE. We want to look at fare collection from a regional perspective. We want to push the tech but also be sensitive per FTA Title 6 and 7, to the unbanked who use cash to purchase fares. We want to replace the TVMs and CSKs and identify the new technology for new payment methods.

The GM/CEO recently visited the districts, TC and Main Office to connect with employees, thank them for their work and to share the mission and vision. Each employee received a RTA hat and cookie. Staff was able to engage and ask questions. A visit to Transit Police is pending. Each department had different topics that were prominent. Several Main Office staff attended the visits to take notes and show support. A workforce development video featuring RTA's partnership with Tri-C was shown. The program is also expanding. Recruitment efforts are ramped up with job fairs and offer letters on the spot.

Steve Bitto, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications will retire December 31 after 28 years of service. Mayor Anthony D. Bisiotta was elected by the Mayors & City Managers Association last week to serve on the RTA Board beginning March 2022. He replaces current Board member Mayor Michael P. Byrne of Parma Heights.

#### President's Report

President Lucas thanked the staff for their hard work. Mayor Byrne will be acknowledged at the proper time.

#### Public Comments – Non-Agenda Items (comments were submitted in-person and phone)

1. Rev. Pinkney-Butts – She congratulated Mr. Bitto on his retirement. The 2022 budget and agenda is offensive. It will cause more racial disparity. She does not see enough non-white employees making the decisions. She submitted a letter and pictures with her concerns. The public comment time has been cut. She asked that the platform is not used to threaten her.
2. Larry Rodriguez – The Transit Ambassadors will do fare validation/proof of payment on the HL and Red Line in the future. He asked the Board not to lose sight of proof of payment and getting that back in place. He urged them to ride the HL bus during rush hour and use the fare validator. We need all-door boarding. City of Cleveland needs to decriminalize fare evasion.
3. Loh – It is good that the riders and RTA has gone through the pandemic together. Fare evasion has had a long history. If staff cannot communicate, it will be hard for customers to believe that RTA is improving and working together with riders. She task Ms. Birdsong to start a serious internal culture change and Ms. Walker-Minor to help strengthen communication. Communication is combined with marketing but most of that is about the holidays instead of showing customers the new changes coming up. We do not have the service change meetings anymore so customers have less channels to understand the changes. Sherwin Williams and Next Connect projects will be long-term and require a lot of communication. This will help gain trust from the riders.

4. Arric Stewart – He reminded management staff that they have a responsibility through tax funded employment to meet the claim they want to meet. The #50 hourly bus takes longer than the #48A hourly bus to reach UH and Cleveland Clinic. If the #50 remains hourly, it would get to these hospitals and have more riders if it began at Marymount Hospital. This would allow the #48 to go back to hourly because it would share a 30-minute interval with the #50. The 48A could be put back in place, which gets to the Clinic and UH faster and still can get to Shaker Square without having to transfer and wait 15 minutes at 131<sup>st</sup> in Miles and have a better transfer point for people catching the Blue/Green Line at Shaker Square as opposed to E. 116<sup>th</sup>. The #50 should be running there. He has not received any feedback on his suggestion.
5. Ms. Montgomery – She echoed Mr. Stewart’s comments about RTA being a public agency that serves the people. Removing the #15A has taken away service to people in the interior area of Walden and E. 154<sup>th</sup> area. She requested the #15A be re-instated. She also agrees with the #48A service proposal from Mr. Stewart. President Lucas said they have been in conversation with Cleveland City Councilman Jones about a date to discuss these routes further.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 25, 2022 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) The public is allowed to attend in-person.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.



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President

Attest:

  
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Secretary-Treasurer