

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:07 a.m. February 15, 2022

Board Members: Lucas, (Chair), Byrne, Duarte, Koomar, McCall, Pellot, Serrano, Weiss

Not present: Moss (remote), Joyce (remote)

Staff: Benford, Birdsong, Burney, Caver, Coffey, Dangelo, Davidson, Fields, Fleig, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Kirkland, Miller, Mothes, Paull, Petit, Schipper, Talley, Young, Walker-Minor

Public: Gibbons, Loh

The meeting to order at 9:07 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) 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 January 25, 2022 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.

Executive Session

The Executive Session originally scheduled was cancelled.

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

1. Chris Martin – Cleveland, OH – RTA keeps having repeated problems with the technical part of live streaming meetings. Meetings are held in the morning when the public cannot attend. The audio and video does not consistently work. Public comments are not accepted via email anymore.

Mr. Petit apologized for the tech issues. They are currently streaming live on YouTube as a test today and on Facebook. There are inconsistencies with logging on to Facebook due to changes to their platform that are out of our control. They have a stream on YouTube with audio that is work that will be posted for the public.

Committee Reports

Mayor Weiss announced that the performance appraisal for the CEO/GM is due in a few weeks for the Compensation Committee review.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

There were no reports.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

Ms. Pellot said the Ad Hoc Tech Committee would meet Feb. 23, 2022 at 5 p.m. in the Board Room.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

Tiffany Holder, the new Talent Acquisition Manager introduced the new hires and promotions.

New Hires:

1. Ricardo Benson, Operator
2. Chaz Derrico, Operator
3. Yolanda Eggleton, Operator
4. James Johnson, Operator
5. Phillip Johnson, Operator
6. Julius McCorkle, Operator
7. Ian Ramsay, Operator
8. Deneshia Robinson, Operator
9. Chrishael Thompson, Operator
10. Ronald Timberlake, Operator
11. Jeffery Tyler, Operator

Promotions:

1. Bryan Dembkowski, Assistant Equipment Manager
2. Gerald Waite, Service Quality Supervisor, Rail

President Lucas asked for the number of open operator positions. Dr. Caver said there are 900 operators in the budget (350-400 Hayden, 300 Triskett, 100 Paratransit, 100 Rail). They are 100 operators short. Ms. Birdsong said there has been a strong effort to close the gap with hiring. Mr. Fields said the shortage is on bus and paratransit. Over the last 7 and 8 months, hiring initiatives have been launched to address the shortage with recruitment and outreach to Ohio Means Jobs, Tri-C and other community agencies that help influx more applicants. Currently, 50 plus people is in training. About 70 plus people are applicants in the process. They will continue to do more outreach events as COVID provides an opportunity to be more visible in the community. Of the 50, 20+ go to Hayden and Triskett and 20 to paratransit. Mr. Fields said they should be able to close the gap in May/June. Ms. Birdsong added that many things go into the hiring process including attrition, retirement, discipline and accidents. She will provide a quarterly update on this item. There is a dropout rate with drug testing and training. We should hit half the goal in the next quarter and hit the goal by year-end.

Ms. Pellot asked what the time frame is from hiring to working as an operator. Ms. Fields said the candidate has a two-four week time frame for selection. Once hired, they have 8-10 hours of training before they start driving on the streets. Depending on the student's aptitude, that could be less or more by one or two weeks. Ms. Duarte mentioned that during the holidays, she met with Marketing and HR about connecting with the community. HR is aware of how COVID has impacted human behavior. Staff is working hard to better train new hires. Ms. Moss asked where are the recruiting

events held and what has worked best in the recruitment process during the Pandemic. Mr. Fields said the event based job fairs last 3rd and 4th quarter at the West Park Station have been successful. A number of agencies prepare candidates for the job fairs. They have had virtual interview days also.

Introduction of Resolutions:

- A. 2022-13 – Expressing appreciation to the Honorable Michael P. Byrne for his service as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority and extending best wishes for many years to come, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Weiss and approved by unanimous vote.

President Lucas thanked Mayor Byrne for his service. A plaque was presented to him. Ms. Birdsong thanked him for his guidance and questions.

- B. 2022-14 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-123 with Safety-Kleen Systems, Inc. to provide parts washer tank services for a three-year period in a total contract amount NTE \$190,546.20 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- C. 2022-15 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-127 with Moore Counseling & Mediation Services, Inc. to provide an Employee Assistance Program for a base period of three years with two, one-year options in an amount not to exceed \$237,600.00 for the base three years and an amount not to exceed \$79,200.00 for each option year for a total contract amount not to exceed \$396,000.00 (General Fund, Labor & Employee Relations Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2022-16 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-188 with Ports Petroleum Co., Inc., for the furnishing of approximately 6,000,000 gallons of Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel fuel, as specified and as required, for a period of three years, at a price of \$.0223/gallon below OPIS index for year 1, \$.0223/gallon below OPIS index for year 2, and \$.0223/gallon below OPIS index for year 3 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Mr. Serrano and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2022-17 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-05 with Giro, Inc., for maintenance and support of the Hastus Software System for a period of three years for a total price not to exceed \$960,670.00 (General Fund, Innovation & Technology Division budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2022-18 – Authorizing contract No. 2022-009 with AT&T Corporation to provide managed fat pipe router services for a period of three years in an amount not to exceed \$208,800.00 (General Fund, Innovation & Technology Division budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2022-19 – Removing Section 628.03, amending Sections 628.035 and 644.10 and moving Sections 628.035 and 644.10 from the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority to the Personnel Policies, the adoption of

which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. McCall and approved by unanimous vote.

- H. 2022-20 – Removing Section 628.04 from the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority and adding a new Section 400.15 to the Personnel Policies, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.
- I. 2022-21 – Approving the Authority’s 2022 Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. McCall and approved by unanimous vote.
- J. 2022-22 - Authorizing an amendment to an existing utility agreement with Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company to relocate an existing duct bank in conjunction with extending electric service to the new Warrensville Van Aken substation (Project No. 60B) in an amount not to exceed \$163,777.12.

Ms. Benford added that this resolution needs a motion for reconsideration. Ms. McCall made a motion to reconsider. It was seconded by Mr. Serrano. Mayor Byrne asked for clarification on the reconsideration. Ms. Benford said this item failed last month. There was a request that the City of Shaker Heights pass an ordinance at the 50/50 sharing. The ordinance was passed by Shaker Heights. This resolution is now appropriate for reconsideration. The roll was called. There were seven (7) ayes and one abstention from Mayor Weiss. The reconsideration passed.

The roll was called on the resolution. There were seven (7) ayes and one abstention from Mayor Weiss. The resolution passed.

Secretary-Treasurer’s Report

Rajan Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer, gave the report. The unemployment data is from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The U.S. unemployment rate for Jan. 2022 was 4%. The December unemployment rate has steadily shown a decline when compared to early 2021. We are experiencing the lowest rates since March 2020. The U.S. rate is at 3.9%. Ohio is at 4.5%. Cuyahoga County is 4.1%. The employment growth continued in leisure and hospitality, professional and business services, retail, trade, transportation and warehousing.

At the end of the year, ridership for 2021 was 6.8% below 2020 levels. For Jan. 2022, ridership was 1.22 million riders or 1.7% below Jan. 2021. Passenger fares for Jan 2022 was \$1.5 Million or 10.1% higher than Jan. 2021 and 6.5% higher than the budgeted amount. Mobile ticketing has been strong. This month it was \$366,000, which is 16.5% higher than the same time in Jan 2021. Sales tax has been strong. Year-end 2021 vs. Year-end 2020 saw a 13.9% increase. Motor vehicles/watercraft saw a 20.3% increase. Online sales were 43% higher. Regular/Statewide sales were 11.2% higher.

General Manager/CEO Report

India Birdsong, General Manager/CEO, presented the report. FTA announced that RTA was awarded \$20.3 million for FFY 2022 for infrastructure. We are working with NOACA and state partners for the breakout. RTA will take the lion’s share because of our size. President Lucas asked if there could be a communication from the Board to the legislature about the funding award. Ms. Birdsong said staff is meeting with legislatures in Columbus tomorrow to say thank you and to discuss additional funding. They will relay the thank you to them on behalf of the Board. Marketing created a TY video to our

legislatures for Ohio Loves Transit week. President Lucas is a part of the video. Mayor Weiss asked what partial funding means. Ms. Birdsong said the full funding pot is \$70 million.

Mr. Schipper explained that the partial funding is out of the Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act for the next five years. Because Congress has not passed the full budget for the U.S. government, we are at a partial funding level instead of a full year level. This represents 3/8 or 4.5 months of the fiscal year. We do not know what the final numbers will be because of the way the programs are set up. The 5307 is our Urban grant that funds a lot of the bus related items and some of the rail items. The 5337 is targeted to State of Good Repair, but is targeted to the rail system. The 5339 is bus and bus facilities. Because of the way the formulas work, the initial allocation went to the states and now the transit agencies. That is why it is zero. It is just the way the law is set up for the distribution of the formulas. The full budget may be passed by Congress in March. Hopefully the full numbers will be funded then and brought back to the Board in the Capital Program in May.

The 31st Annual Homeless Stand Down is April 23. RTA will support the event by way of 1-day transit passes. RTA joins a list of other sponsors. This will help those who need support through transit to get back on their feet. TransitStat, the agency's performance management program has been rebranded as Traction as a means to push the performance targets and metrics through the scorecards. They will track the four success outcomes. They are on track with the customer surveys. That is the key that is missing in our current data sourcing. An update will be provided for Q1 later in May. Ms. Walker-Minor said 1,190 surveys were completed yesterday on the bus and rail. Mayor Koomar asked if this uses the Net Promoter Score methodology. That was confirmed. This is a new way to look at the data and weighing public opinion along with our deliverables to make sure we are on track with obtaining the goals in the Strategic Plan. Ms. Moss asked how we are ensuring a portionable sampling of the bus, rail and paratransit responses. Ms. Birdsong said they can bring back the details of the breakdown. There is something on the survey that identifies the mode. Ms. Pellot asked if the survey is in multiple languages. That was confirmed.

The Community Immunity Bus distributed 36 COVID vaccination shots at the Lunar New Year celebration at the Asia Plaza. We have to date giving 844 shots through the bus. We are working with Cleveland Department of Public Health and Care Alliance. CDPH has distributed 516 vaccinations. Care Alliance is responsible for 300 vaccinations. RTA is working with the CAVS and NBA on the 2022 NBA All-Star event. RTA will operate FTA approved trolley service for this event. Ms. Birdsong wished Rev. Lucas a Happy Birthday. Ms. Pellot asked if RTA ambassadors will be assisting with the NBA event. Ms. Birdsong said RTA Operations staff and City Year volunteers will be assisting with wayfinding, etc. Ms. Duarte requested wearing mask be reinforced during this event while riding RTA. Mr. Schipper said the vaccination bus would be on Public Square, Friday from 9 a.m. – Noon.

Mayor Byrne thanked the staff, directors and Board. He wants the public to realize the hard work happening at RTA. He thanked the public for attending the meetings and being patient and courteous with their concerns.

President's Report

He enjoys working with the staff. They continue to learn how to handle providing service during inclement weather. The staff is working hard on these items and working with the City of Cleveland and the County. The Election of Officers will occur at the Annual Meeting, March 29, 2022. The Nominating Committee is Mr. Joyce, Ms. McCall and Mayor Koomar. A letter was sent out requesting letters of interest by next week. He is happy to turn 81. He is very active in the community and in his personal life. Seventeen years ago he collapsed in his home. His doctor found a large tumor on his spine. He was faced with the choice of removing the tumor and being in a wheelchair or leaving it in and spending his life in a nursing home. He was encouraged by a pamphlet he saw in the hospital

with the message of not letting a wheelchair define his life. He represents the disabled community in his position on the Board.

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

1. Brian Gibbons – Fairview Park - He thanked Mayor Byrne for his service. A few years ago, he and CPT met with Mayor Byrne. It was a great meeting and way to get to know the Mayor. RTA has challenges, but Mayor Byrne was a straight shooter.
2. Loh – She said we have had good board members who share their expertise. She asked Mayor Byrne not to forget transit. She thanked Rev. Lucas for his work improving Paratransit service. She thanked the other board members who will be leaving the Board.
3. Chris Martin – Cleveland – He is frustrated with RTA and how we handled service during recent storms. He is concerned about the operator shields, mask dispensers, all door boarding on the HealthLine, fare collection and tax levy efforts. He requested the performance management information be made available to the public.

Ms. Birdsong apologized for the inconvenience to the public due to service issues Jan. 17. The public's safety was the priority that day. They continue to work with the City on road safety during inclement storms. Operator shields are on 90% of our vehicles. Operators can provide mask to riders on request. Staff will make sure they are replenished when needed. We are embarking on a fare collection program. It will be brought to the Board in the coming months. The TRACTION data will eventually be made public once the data is populated. All of these efforts are necessary to entertain a tax levy at the pleasure of the Board.

4. Ms. Holden – She thanked Ms. Birdsong for her work. She is a long time rider. She asked if RTA could shovel the snow around the bus stops. She takes the bus from the post office at 8745 Broadway. The #18 does not stop at the post office even though there is a bus stop there. She asked for service to go around the stores at Steelyard.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting and the Annual Meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, March 29, 2022** 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 Facebook page (www.facebook.com/rideRTA) and YouTube for staff and members of the public. The public is welcome to attend in person.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.



President

Attest:



Secretary/Treasurer