

## Minutes

### RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:00 a.m., September 24, 2019

**Board:** Clough (Chair), Lucas (Vice Chair), Bibb, Byrne, Joyce, McCall, Moss, Serrano, Welo

**Not present:** None

**Also Present:** Anderson, Bennett, Birdsong, Brooks-Williams, Burney, Caver, Dangelo, Davidson, Davis, Dietrich, Faith, Feliciano, Ferraro, Fields, Garofoli, Gautam, Gibbons, Gray, Holden, Howard, Jaszczak, Johnson, Jones, Kerg, Keshtkaran, Kirkland, Loh, Mecane, Pickett, Pinkney, Schipper, Scott, Shariff, Sims, Snell, Stocking, Sutula, Tarka, Togher, Vukmanic, Wiehe, Williams, Wilson, Winn, Woodford, Young, Zeller

Mayor Clough called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The secretary called the roll and reported that nine (9) board members were present.

The Secretary advised that notice of this meeting has 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 August 20, 2019 Board Meeting had been previously distributed and reviewed and asked whether there were any additions and/or corrections. The minutes were approved.

Today is the first board meeting for General Manager, CEO India Birdsong. She will speak during the GM report section of the meeting.

#### Invitation for public comment on agenda matters – (2 minutes)

1. Rev. Pam M. Pinkney-Butts – Cleveland, OH – She welcomed Ms. Birdsong. She has concerns for public transit. For Resos 2019-96 and 2019-97, she asked what will address the E. 79<sup>th</sup> Street Station concerns. There are no accommodations for the disabled on the Shaker lines and Red Line. She'd like to have elevators instead of ramps. She doesn't see equal opportunities with the contractors and disabled on the eastside. For Resos 2019-98, she asked for the language of the agreement with the County. County Resolution 2017-216 implements a pro-slavery amendment. She asked if the buses will be used to support this slavery amendment.
2. Chris Stocking – Cleveland, OH – Treasurer for CPT. He welcomed Ms. Birdsong. CPT members met her last week and they are optimistic about her leadership. CPT supports Reso. No. 2019-99 with NEORide, which would make RTA a member. Participation would not mean immediately participation in their fare platform. CPT emphasized the need for closely integrated transit around county lines. Membership would be necessary for this. With the county population declining, RTA sales tax is being eroded and Cuyahoga county residents can't access jobs outside the county. The feds said that less the 1/3 of jobs in northeast Ohio are transit accessible. RTA has to take steps to better connect transit riders throughout the region.
3. Brian Gibbons – Fairview Park, OH – Member of CPT. One way to make RTA a more compelling choice is through improved coordination with other transit agencies. Membership in NEORide may coordinate efforts on a state level. Their goals include statewide mobile ticketing, joint proposals to secure grant funds and multi-agency procurement that can result in cost savings. Jarrett Walker stated that RTA services is stretched so thin as to be useful by few people. By coordinated

schedules with other transit agencies, enjoying cost savings gained through multi-agency grant awards, coordinating procurements between agencies this can generate savings for reinvestments and improved services, passenger experience and passenger communications during service disruption. This could win back riders who increasingly choose other transit options. CPT supports the Board approval of the NEORide resolution.

### Committee Reports

*External and Stakeholder Relations and Advocacy Committee* - Chief McCall said the community meetings on the system redesign begin today at the Cleveland Public Library and CSU.

*Community Advisory Committee (CAC)* - Mr. Bibb said there will be five new CAC members up for Board approval at the next meeting. The CAC is working to get public input from their members on best ways to enhance rider's experience. He will present the suggestions to the Board and management. CAC member Sylvia is in attendance.

*Operational Planning & Infrastructure Committee* - Mayor Welo thanked Karen Moss of the bylaw committee for reporting in her absence and for Rev. Lucas for handling her committee meeting. Oct. 1 there will be a Committee of the Whole Meeting to review the proposed changes.

### Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

Nick Davidson is the new Director at Paratransit District. He comes from Canton, Ohio's transit system. He was just honored as 40 under 40 in transit. Rev. Lucas said that he has been received well at the district. Gabrielle Shipley is the new legal secretary. She has a degree in criminal justice. Gerald Crayton was promoted to SQM Field Supervisor. D'von Gay was promoted to Service Quality Coordinator. He comes from Hayden District. Daniel Kerg was promoted to Manager of Fleet Planning & Engineering.

### Introduction of Resolutions

- A. 2019-96 – Authorizing Contract No. 2019-105 with Cummins Inc., (dba Cummins Sales and Service) for the furnishing of nine (9) Cummins ISLG engines, as specified and as required, for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed \$331,090.47 (RTA Development Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Chief McCall and approved by unanimous vote.
- B. 2019-97 – Authorizing Contract No. 2019-121 with Ohio CAT for the purchase and delivery of one Caterpillar 440 Backhoe Loader and Accessories, as specified, through the State of Ohio, Department of Administrative Services, Cooperative Purchasing Program for a total price not to exceed \$132,572.50 (RTA Development Fund, Rail District Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Welo, seconded by Mr. Serrano and approved by unanimous vote.
- C. 2019-98 – Authorizing a three (3) year Intergovernmental Agreement with Cuyahoga County for the purchase of supplementary unleaded 87 octane fuel from the Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.

When this was presented to committee, a two-year agreement was requested. After that meeting, the County requested a three year agreement. There was a limit of 70,000 gallons annually, but they wanted it to be 70,000 gallons for the length of the contract and a \$120,000 limit in price.

- D. 2019-99 – Authorizing Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority membership in NEORide, a Regional Council of Governments, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Welo, seconded by Mr. Bibb and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2019-100 – To amend the fiscal year 2019 revenues and appropriations for the General Fund, as adopted in Resolution No. 2018-119 and amended in Resolution No. 2019-034, to provide for an increase in the appropriation to the Insurance Fund in the amount of \$1,100,000, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Welo, seconded by Mr. Joyce and approved by unanimous vote.

The insurance cost for catastrophic insurance came in higher than expected. This will allow for the payment. This fund has a \$5 M balance. This will allow us to keep the \$5 M balance with an appropriation throughout the year should any claims be settled.

- F. 2019-101 – Authorizing the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District for student fares for school year 2019–2020 and ratifying the issuance of passes for the first day(s) of school, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Welo, seconded by Rev. Lucas. There was a roll call. There were seven (7) ayes and two (2) recuse from Chief McCall and Mr. Serrano.

Mayor Welo and Rev. Lucas thanked the staff and CMSD for their work on this agreement.

#### Former Interim General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Dr. Caver will give his report and transition to India Birdsong. September sales tax was \$19.2 M. Compared to 2018, it is 3.5% higher or \$650,000. YTD we've collected \$2.8 M or 1.8% above budget. Sales tax is still performing solidly. Passenger fares for August is \$3.4 M compared to the \$4 M budget. YTD it's \$2.7 M or 10% less than budget. August ridership was down 7% on an average weekday compared to August 2018.

The Red Line west and the S-Curve reopened August 26 allowing for better service and helping to recapitalize the system by putting it in a state of good repair. The next parts of the capital budget will take the recapitalization projects to the Shaker Line. Next summer there will be work on the trunk line. Reconstruction of the Tower City Customer Service Center has been complete. They began moving into the new space late last week. They expect staff will be fully moved in the next few weeks. There is a rail shutdown this weekend, Sept 28-29 that will include the trunk line from Tower City to E. 55<sup>th</sup> for work on the portal walls outside of Tower City and Track 13 project. Replacement bus service will be used during this time.

There will be an increase in funds from the State Gas Tax in fiscal year 2020 for bus replacement. This will allow for replacement of buses with state funds as compared to using the federal or local funds. The total state program increased from \$25.8 M to \$44.4 M. Of this amount for the competitive side of the grants, they are asking for projects totaling \$17.6 M. Last year, RTA won \$8 M. Mike Schipper and the grants team have been working diligently to increase the amount of funding from the State. A team of employees and Mayor Clough will attend a TRAC funding meeting with ODOT tomorrow to request \$60 M or 25% of the rail vehicle replacement. They have been invited to a second meeting. Staff met with Ms. Birdsong and Mayor Clough on the strategy. Community meetings on the system redesign and fare study begin today. Twenty-one meetings are scheduled.

#### General Manager, Chief Executive Officer Report

Ms. Birdsong is excited about being the new General Manager and CEO. During her first week she met with around 1,100 customers and staff. She met with employees first, the public, Clevelanders for Public Transit (CPT) and media. She was strategic in how she met with staff and customers. She has a

community development background so that is important to her. Customers at Tower City said they wanted faster boarding. They were also interested in fare equity, fare media and accessibility through Paratransit. She met Nick Davidson, Director of Paratransit. They spoke about things that can improve the system. She visited the Hayden District, Triskett District, CBM and Rail. They rolled out the red carpet for her. Her priorities are communication, breaking down silos and emphasizing training. Employees can only give the best of what they have been given. She congratulated the promoted employees and new employees. Accessibility and transparency is important. It will not be easy and immediate, but she will work on it with staff daily.

Rev. Lucas thanked the staff for the work they did to clean up after a major thunderstorm last week. The Shaker Square Station was impacted. Staff cleaned up the area by the next day.

Questions or comments from the audience (2 minutes)

1. Rev. Pam M. Pinkney-Butts – Cleveland, OH – She is passionate about public transit. Racial barriers need to be overcome. Funding is taken away when people of color are placed into leadership. She asks that the staff and public work with Ms. Birdsong. She asks for follow-up on her E. 79<sup>th</sup> Street concerns.
2. George Zeller – Cleveland, OH – Sales tax is mysteriously doing well mainly because last year was bad and the State put their data out late this month. The Ohio jobs US jobs figures were bad. We're getting \$27.8 M or 12% less from the sales tax compared to 18 years ago. The U.S. job rate fell to 0.4%. The last time it was that low was March 1993 at the end of the Great Recession. Ohio job rates fell over the last four months to Feb. 2014 numbers. There is no sign that there is a recovery. There will not be much of an effect from the General Motors strike. They can still sell off inventory. There will be a problem if it goes for a long period of time.
3. Diane Howard – Cleveland, OH – She is a member of Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality (NOBLE). She presented a letter with recommended locations to be added to the community meeting schedule. They are pleased with RTA's effort to host meetings on the system redesign and fare study. They are concerned about no meetings being scheduled in certain Cleveland neighborhoods. There are no meetings on the northeast side between CSU and Collinwood and on the southeast side between downtown and Maple Heights, Slavic Village, Buckeye, Mt. Pleasant and Lee/Harvard. There are meetings at the Mike Zone Center and Gunning Center, but none on the near west side, West Park and Lakewood. Community input is critical to create a system that reflects the needs of the region's residents.

Chief McCall likes the recommendations. She doesn't believe there was an intentional oversight from the staff. Ms. Birdsong said the locations will be reviewed and some will be added to the list.

4. James Lamb – Cleveland, OH – He thanked Dr. Caver for serving as the interim GM. He was happy about Ms. Birdsong speaking with customers her first week. He is disappointed about declines in ridership. Broken fare boxes result in loss of ridership. He is upset about the loss of service on the #81 which he fought for five years to get. He has cerebral palsy. He had to carry his groceries from W. 7 to W. 5. Walking from W. 5 to Professor and Church for a bus only to miss the bus is hard. He voices his opinion for the public. RTA needs to provide the needed service. Everyone can't call paratransit.
5. Lenny Stover – Cleveland, OH – He represents Keep Our Greenway Green, who suggest there not be any development along Columbus Road. He welcomed Ms. Birdsong. The Red Line Greenway will be a 3 mile multipurpose trail that will connect 58,000 people, including 20,000 children, 52% of whom live in poverty. They represent those children. Exposure to nature is something they lack. It enhances their learning ability. The average cost of a Greenway is \$5 M per mile. The High Line in New York was \$145 M for 1.5 miles. The Indianapolis greenway was \$7.9 M per mile. RTA has

\$3 M per mile for the first two phases. He invited the Board to tour the area. He opposes the plan to destroy the only urban forest on that Greenway. The area looks so good because volunteers have spent 42 years grooming it. That has reduced the building cost by \$2 M. The public has not seen any of the plans. NOACA did a TLC study that shows that the W. 25th Street Station is a mature TOD area. TOD is not needed there. There were 800 new housing unit built there last year and 800 new ones coming this year. Development is needed at W. 98<sup>th</sup> and E. 116<sup>th</sup> Street, which are more challenging sites.

6. Loh – Cleveland, OH – She welcomed Ms. Birdsong. RTA’s image is not the best because of service cuts and fare hikes. People in the community are in need of transit. The workers and customers are RTA’s best assets. The union negotiations have not been successfully secured. She ask that Ms. Birdsong listen to the employees.
7. Deborah Gray – Cleveland, OH – She is an advocate for the Buckeye neighborhood. She has attended meetings for the last 10 years. She advocated for the #50. She thanked Dr. Caver for his service.

Old Business

*Executive Session Requested*

10:10 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 Chief McCall, seconded by Mr. Serrano. There were nine (9) ayes and none opposed. There will not be any action after they come out of executive session.

11:04 a.m. – It was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Welo to come out of executive session. There were seven (7) ayes and none opposed. Mr. Bibb and Chief McCall left before the roll call

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 22, 2019 in the Board Room of the Authority, Root-McBride Building, 1240 West Sixth Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44113.

This meeting was adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

  
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President

Attest:   
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Interim Secretary-Treasurer