



RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

August 19, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

Board Members: Mayor Koomar (President), Ms. Elder, Mayor Gallo, Mr. Love, Ms. McPherson, Ms. Pacetti, Mr. Sleasman, Mayor Weiss, Ms. Welch (Vice President)

Not Present: Rev. Lucas

Staff/Other: Shawn Becker, Nick Biggar, India Birdsong Terry, Janet Burney, Floun'say Caver, Sharon Cottrell, Nick Davidson, Drew Dimmick, George Fields, Lynne Finnigan, Bob Fleig, Ida Marshall, Joel Freilich, Anthony Garofoli, Rajan Gautam, Sharon Jenkins, Lawrence Jupina, Carl Kirkland, Jennifer Martin, Sheila Miller, Joshua Miranda, Charles Morgan, Holly Mothes, Mike Schipper, Kelly Smith, Wendy Talley, John Togher, Carolyn Young

Public: Brian Gibbons, Kevin Hinkle, Loh, Chris Martin, Tommy Oddo, Rev. Pamela M. Pinkney-Butts, Maurice Rhoades, James Rubin, Lauren Schenk, LaQueta Worley

- I. Call to Order
 - a. Ms. Welch, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.
- II. Roll Call
 - a. There were Nine (9) Board members present, representing a quorum.
- III. Certification regarding Notice of Meeting
 - a. It was advised that the notice of this meeting had been posted more than twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting, that the usual notification had been given to 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.
- IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - a. The minutes from July 15, 2025, Board Meeting had been previously distributed and reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mayor Weiss and seconded by Ms. Elder and unanimously approved.
- V. Public Comments – Agenda and Non-Agenda Items

Members of the public addressed the Board regarding both agenda and non-agenda items. Public comments submitted through the webform will appear in their original form and have not been edited for grammar or content. GCRTA reserves the right not to publish any explicit language, derogatory remarks, or personal attacks against individuals.

1. Rev. Pamela M. Pinkney-Butts – Cleveland, OH (in person) – A Cleveland resident, Rev. Pinkney provided comments regarding Resolution No. 85 and raised several concerns on behalf of RTA operators and passengers. She reported that operators at the Windermere Station expressed the need for a designated area where they can rest, refresh, eat, and take breaks during their shifts. She emphasized the importance of ensuring fairness in working conditions, particularly noting that operators only receive two paid personal days per year, which she described as unfair and unreasonable. Additional concerns included operators working extended hours without adequate breaks. Rev. Pinkney expressed appreciation for the updates to the 79th Street Station, while also stressing that the improvements should not be used as a basis for racial profiling or marginalization in the community. She urged that the investment in the station be protected and not allowed to deteriorate. Concerns were also raised about roadway conditions on West 150th Street and Puritas, which have been reported as causing difficulties for both operators and passengers. She further recommended that the Adopt-a-Shelter Program be reinstated to promote cleanliness at bus shelters, similar to efforts already underway for the rail system. She also noted the need for fare scanners to better differentiate between disabled and student passes in order to reduce fare evasion. Rev. Pinkney concluded her remarks by reiterating the community's commitment to a safe and non-violent public transportation system, thanking the Board for their work, and encouraging continued attention to the concerns raised.
2. Kevin Hinkle – Cleveland, OH (in person) – A longtime Cleveland resident and member of the RTA community, offered a suggestion regarding snow removal during heavy winter weather. He recommended that RTA consider forming a partnership with the County Court Community Service program to assist with clearing snow from bus stops. Mr. Hinkel noted that snow accumulation at stops creates hazardous conditions, particularly for seniors, who may be forced to climb over snow piles and curbs to access transit. He emphasized that such a partnership could improve safety and accessibility for the community.
3. LaQueta Worley – Cleveland, OH (in person) – A resident of Cleveland, addressed the Board regarding cleanliness and funding for RTA. She expressed concern that the system is not being adequately staffed to maintain cleanliness and suggested that RTA install hand sanitizers and provide access to paper towels on all vehicles, allowing riders to clean surfaces themselves if needed. Ms. Worley noted that unclean conditions can be especially difficult for individuals suffering from anxiety. She also proposed that RTA explore additional funding by adopting revenue boosts from county taxes on sports arenas and downtown parking, an idea that community groups have advocated for over the past eight years. She encouraged the Board to pursue this initiative as a way to increase income for public transit.
4. Chris Martin – Cleveland, OH (in person) – A Cleveland resident, provided comments related to funding, service improvements, and ongoing projects. He emphasized the need for clarity regarding RTA's taxing authority, asking what maximum rates could be levied beyond the current 1% county-wide sales tax and what additional services could be provided with increased revenue. He expressed frustration that this information has not yet been provided despite repeated requests and noted that he has also submitted a public records request for the contract between RTA and Cleveland State University (CSU). Mr. Martin requested an update regarding the press release concerning the opt-in nature of the CSU program. He urged the Board and city representatives to continue supporting dedicated bus lanes on West 25th Street, stressing that organized business opposition should not outweigh the need for reliable and timely transit access for employees. More broadly, he noted that while RTA projects often focus on capital improvements, there must also be attention to operating dollars, which directly support service

improvements and increase transit use. Mr. Martin requested updates on the current shortage of operators, noting that while additional police hires had been reported, the operator and mechanic shortages are of greater concern to riders. He also inquired about the status of fare capping and smart cards, which had been approved in RTA's code changes but not yet implemented. Lastly, he asked for an update on the microtransit pilot project.

Ms. Terry wanted to thank everyone for their comments and acknowledged that a presentation was forthcoming. She noted that several of the questions and concerns raised would be addressed in the presentation, including the Adopt-a-Shelter program, which remains in effect under the direction of Sharon Jenkins. Questions related to marketing should be directed to her. An update on the West 25th Street project will also be provided, and thanks were extended to Mr. Martin for his input. Additionally, questions about the Euclid Avenue pass will be covered, with Public Information Officer Bob Fleig and the legal department present to ensure public requests are addressed, including confirmation that the related contract has been signed. Ms. Terry acknowledged audience concerns regarding operator fill rates. Ida Marshall provided a brief update, reporting that the vacancy rate for operators has dropped to 35, which is considered very strong. Outreach efforts are ongoing across both the east and west sides of town, and the organization is maintaining a training pipeline of over 80 operators daily to ensure continued progress. Ms. Terry addressed two additional topics - the microtransit program is being retooled and redesigned to make it more attractive to riders, as ridership under the previous model was insufficient to sustain the program. Second, fare capping is on the agenda, with upcoming updates on the necessary software to support implementation. Finally, cleanliness concerns were noted, particularly around litter and sanitization. While challenges persist, the organization is committed to maintaining safe and clean environments for riders, recognizing heightened expectations for sanitization that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Terry closed by acknowledging the anxiety some riders experience and reaffirmed the commitment to address these issues moving forward.

5. Loh – Cleveland, OH (in person) - A resident of Cleveland, raised two primary issues for discussion. First, she noted that survey efforts around paratransit service remain focused on administrative perspectives rather than customer needs. While presentations were made to the ADA Subcommittee in 2022, results have yet to be shared with the Board, and surveys often lack options or open fields for riders to fully express their views. Loh urged reconsideration of survey design to better align with customer perspectives. Second, she highlighted ongoing communication issues, citing that CAC members were not notified about an upcoming GCRTA open house and instead learned about it through neighborhood connections. She emphasized the need for improved communication and reminded the group that essential workers, who largely fund GCRTA through sales tax, are disproportionately impacted. She encouraged exploring alternative revenue sources, noting that Clevelanders for Public Transit has provided helpful ideas.
6. Airric Stewart – Cleveland, OH (caller) – A resident of Cleveland, requested clarification on survey data presented by James Rubin and Nick Biggar, raised concerns about the accuracy and timeliness of public comments being entered into the record, and emphasized the need for comments to be documented verbatim. He suggested that resources be redirected to enhance cleaning efforts and requested consideration for additional bus shelters along Harvard near Whitney Young School and at Invermere Avenue to support ridership. Stewart also noted concerns with public participation procedures, asking that individuals joining by phone be allowed to remain engaged for the full duration of Board meetings rather than being referred to YouTube.

In response to Mr. Stewart's comments, Ms. Terry thanked him for his input and reiterated the expectation that all participants engage respectfully, regardless of personal opinion. It was noted that public comments are copied into the record as appropriate, with the exception of expletives or personal disparagement, which are not published. Ms. Terry emphasized that maintaining respectful dialogue serves the best interests of customers, staff, and the Greater Cleveland community. Following this reminder, IT was directed to conclude Mr. Stewart's call, and the Board confirmed that his remarks would be reflected in the meeting minutes.

7. Airric Stewart – Cleveland, OH (webform) – Post this verbatim. On 7-15, at approx. 7:45 pm, two emails each were sent to the Board of Trustees (BOT) and Community Advisory Committee (COC). Subject lines are labeled "Touchpoints for the 15A" and "Transfer Points for the 15A and 48A." These emails should be made available for public examination distributed by the 2 previously mentioned entities. This should have been done prior to the implementation of the 6-13-21 NextGen project. The suggested 48A going on the southbound route would best be labeled "Kerruish Park." Kerruish Park is approximately six blocks from E. 177th and South Miles. It is a significant part of the route. It is close enough to the end for there to be no confusion. The suggested 48A will pass through Shaker Square where there is a stable CVS pharmacy and Dave's supermarket. This route will serve people traveling from Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals for those purposes. It will give grocery shoppers and pharmacy customers from Ward 1, 2, and 4 one-bus easy turn around service. There can be bus shelters at the NE and SW corners of Invermere and Lee Rd for the 15A. In 2015, construction of Pinecrest Shopping Center began. It opened for business in June 2018. The 15 via Walden should have been examined for the good purpose of making adjustment during this time. RTA leadership had knowledge of the construction of Pinecrest. The suggested 15A gives healthy strength to the responsibility for the socioeconomic well-being of the public implemented through public transit.
8. Isaac Shimsky-Agosto – Cleveland, OH (webform) – It's great seeing the plans for the West 25th BRT. Especially in Ohio City, those bus lanes are going to make a real difference.
9. LaQueta Worley – Cleveland, OH (webform) – A great transit system looks very fresh and clean. We should definitely be able to use plenty of paper towels and hand sanitizer so we can wipe off the seats and handrails. Our city is so very dirty these days. There isn't enough janitorial staff at RTA to clean and sanitize the vehicles. This is exactly why it's so very hard for us who suffer from anxiety.

The other part of my public comment is: why you initiate a tax income for RTA from the sports arenas and downtown Cleveland parking? Actually, this could have been taken place we need this to help boost RTA's income CPT has been saying this income idea for seven years. Well I La Queta will keep encouraging this until it happens and I will not give up.

- VI. Board Governance Committee Report
 - a. No committee report
- VII. Operational Planning & Infrastructure Committee Report
 - a. No committee report
- VIII. Organizational, Services & Performance Monitoring Committee Report
 - a. No committee report
- IX. Audit, Safety Compliance and Real Estate Committee Report
 - a. No committee report

- X. External and Stakeholder Relations and Advocacy Committee Report
 - a. No committee report
- XI. Committee of the Whole
 - a. No committee report
- XII. Civilian Oversight Committee (COC) Report
 - a. No committee report
- XIII. Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
 - a. No committee report
- XIV. Ad Hoc Committee Reports
 - a. No committee reports.
- XV. Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

Ms. Marshall, Senior Manager, Talent Acquisition provided an update on new hires and promotions for August. She noted that this month's additions are primarily in operations, including a group of new bus operators as well as two equipment servicers. Ms. Marshall welcomed the new employees, emphasizing their role in ensuring safety and reliability for riders. In addition, five staff members received promotions in August: Nicholas Switzer to Signal Maintainer, Christopher Switzer to Line Maintainer, Jacqueline Scott Reynolds to Line Maintainer, Jennifer Martin to Program Contract Manager, and Sean Becker to Director of Procurement. The Board extended congratulations to all new hires and promoted staff.
- XVI. Introduction of Resolutions
 - A. 2025-84 - Authorizing Contract No. 2025-112 with Oracle America, Inc. to Provide Oracle Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) Subscription Services for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed \$305,830.00 (General Fund, Management Information Services Department Budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. McPherson and approved by majority vote.
 - B. 2025-85 – Authorizing Contract No. 2025-055 with Televic US Corp. to Provide a Multi-Tenant Hosting Solution in an amount not to exceed \$1,053,723.00 for a period of four years and one month (General Fund, Information Technology Department Budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Ms. Elder and approved by unanimous vote.
 - C. 2025-86 – Authorizing Contract No. 2025-047 with DLZ Ohio, Inc. for Project 20.31 – On-Call Architect/Engineer Services – 2025 in an amount not to exceed \$400,000.00 for a period of twenty-four months (RTA Capital and/or RTA Development Funds, Engineering & Project Development Department Budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Love, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
 - D. 2025-87 – Authorizing an Increase to Contract No. 2022-082A with Future Age Inc. dba Provide A Ride to Provide Contracted Paratransit Services in the amount of \$6,772,206.71, for a New Base Contract amount not to exceed \$23,816,692.06 (General Fund, Paratransit Department Budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pacetti, seconded by Ms. Elder and approved by a majority roll call vote.

- E. 2025-88 – Authorizing an Increase to Contract No. 2022-082B with GC Logistics of Mississippi, LLC to Provide Contracted Paratransit Services in the amount of \$4,397,910.56, for a New Base Contract amount not to exceed \$15,503,986.47 (General Fund, Paratransit Department Budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pacetti, seconded by Ms. McPherson and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2025-89 – Authorizing an Increase to Contract No. 2022-082C with Senior Transportation Connection to Provide Contracted Paratransit Services in the amount of \$1,060,425.48, for a New Base Contract amount not to exceed \$6,460,796.37 (General Fund, Paratransit Department Budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Ms. Pacetti and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2025-90 - Authorizing the Purchase of Casualty Insurance from Various Insurance Underwriters Through USI Insurance Services, LLC and Price Forbes & Partners Limited, or Their Successors, for a period of twelve months, in a total amount not to exceed \$2,318,174 (Insurance and General Funds, Risk Management Department Budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Elder, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- H. 2025-91 – Authorizing Revisions to Personnel Policy 400.04: Payroll Deductions of the Personnel Policies of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. McPherson and approved by unanimous vote.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan D. Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer, presented the Secretary-Treasurer's report. The economic conditions remain stable, with interest rates at 4.5% and inflation at 2.7%. Consumer sentiment increased for the second consecutive month, though year-over-year measures showed modest declines, which will be monitored for potential impacts on sales tax revenue. Year-to-date ridership was slightly below 2024 levels and 24% below pre-COVID 2019 levels, with fare revenue reflecting similar trends. July sales tax receipts rose 1.5% compared to July 2024, with 17 of 22 categories showing positive growth, including online sales (+9%) and motor vehicles/watercraft (+2.6%). Long-term debt remained steady at \$22.3 million, and investment yields averaged 4.07%. Total cash and investments were \$349.7 million, including \$320.3 million in restricted funds. July transfers to the Railcar Reserve and Budget Stabilization Funds brought total reserves to \$25 million, meeting annual targets.

General Manager, CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO began by recognizing the bravery and professionalism of the transit police. On August 11, 2025, transit officers apprehended two dangerous suspects involved in a robbery and homicide after identifying them sleeping in a parking lot on the east side of Cleveland. The officers pursued the individuals through challenging conditions, including breaching two fences, and safely turned them over to local authorities. Ms. Terry highlighted the critical role of the transit police in protecting both staff and the public and expressed gratitude for their dedication. Chief Jones also addressed the Board, underscoring the department's commitment to community safety and the professionalism of the officers in carrying out high-risk duties.

Ms. Terry then reviewed recent community engagement and outreach initiatives. Fifty students attended a National Urban League conference hosted at RTA facilities, gaining hands-on experience in transit operations, marketing, and training. The RTA also collaborated with the Black Data Processing Associates (BDPA) to recruit the next generation of IT professionals, providing

exposure to digital operations in public transit. Additionally, first-year medical students from Case Western Reserve University participated in a field experience exploring the social determinants of health and how public transportation intersects with community health outcomes.

Ms. Terry highlighted participation in the Downtown Cleveland Executive Committee retreat, emphasizing discussions on downtown mobility, business engagement, and defining measures of success for the area's revitalization. The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) was also discussed, with RTA staff presenting on organizational culture and psychological safety as part of a national research initiative. Recognition was given to Joe Uherc, a facilities maintainer completing 50 years of service, reflecting a family legacy of dedication to the RTA.

Ms. Terry also provided updates on community events and internal programs. The Cleveland Puerto Rican Day Parade saw a 21–25% increase in ridership on relevant routes, and employee recognition efforts continued through the Connecting the Community awards, highlighting staff contributions across multiple districts. The West 25th Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project was discussed, noting that the design is over 60% complete. The project incorporates community feedback, including raised crosswalks, rumble strips, delineators, and visual markers to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety while maintaining transit efficiency. Multiple neighborhood and corridor meetings have engaged over 200 participants each, ensuring community voices are incorporated into the project.

Ms. Terry then reviewed the Cleveland State University U-Pass agreement, which provides eligible full-time CSU students with semester-long discounted transit access at \$57.50 per semester. The program is revenue-neutral, with eligibility determined by the university. This program allows students to access transit for commuting, errands, and other activities, promoting equitable mobility and encouraging integration with the public transit system.

Finally, the Board received an update on the summer rail system shutdowns conducted to maintain the state of good repair. The six-week project was divided into three two-week phases, addressing the Red Line, and Light Rail Blue and Green Lines. Work included station renovations, viaduct inspections, turnout installations, yard track connections, emergency power cable repairs, grounding system upgrades, and fiber optic surveying. These shutdowns involved coordination between internal staff and contractors and were necessary to ensure safe, reliable operations, particularly ahead of the arrival of new rail cars. Clarification was provided regarding the extended Green and Blue Line shutdowns, confirming that all work was planned, with additional emergency repairs incorporated into the schedule.

The report concluded with no further questions. Mayor Koomar and the Board expressed appreciation for the dedication and achievements of RTA staff, the transit police, and the CEO's leadership in community engagement, operational excellence, and safety initiatives.

President's Report

No President's report at this time.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, September 23, 2025** 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) by selecting the meeting date. The public is welcome to attend in person.

There being no further business to bring before this Board, a motion to adjourn the meeting by Mayor Weiss and seconded by Mr. Sleasman was approved by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 am.

President

Attest: _____
Secretary-Treasurer