



Organizational, Services & Performance Monitoring Committee

January 6, 2026

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Committee Members:** Ms. Pacetti (Chair), Ms. McPherson, Mr. Sleasman

**Staff/Other:** Shawn Becker, Nick Biggar, India Birdsong Terry, Muriel Bowen, Janet Burney, Floun'say Caver, Brent Charnigo, Nick Davidson, Drew Dimmick, Maribeth Feke, George Fields, Bob Fleig, Joel Freilich, Catherine Galla, Anthony Garofoli, Rajan Gautam, Orlando Hudson, Robert Jefferson, Sharon Jenkins, Chief Deirdre Jones, Lawrence Jupina, Carl Kirkland, Jonathan Laule, Derek Meinke, Sheila Miller, Charles Morgan, Jason Rosenlieb, Mike Schipper, Joe Shaffer, Kay Sutula, Dawn Svancara, Wendy Talley, Brian Temming, Donald Tereba, John Togher, Carolyn Young

**Public:** Loh, Chris Urban

I. Roll Call

Ms. Pacetti called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. with roll call. A quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes – November 18, 2025

Mr. Sleasman moved, and Mayor Gallo seconded to approve the minutes; the motion carried.

III. Landscape Maintenance and Parking Lot Snow Removal (Shaker Heights Maintenance Agreement) for Two Years.

James Reed, Property Manager, Programming & Planning, stated that he was presenting a two-year agreement with the City of Shaker Heights for landscaping and snow removal along the Blue and Green lines within the City of Shaker Heights. The location in question are the median areas along Shaker Blvd. and Van Aiken Blvd. The work will be performed by the City's Public Works Department.

Mr. Reed stated that this arises from the 1975 acquisition of the Shaker Rapids System and subsequent 1982 agreement for the provision of landscape services and setting a series of three-year maintenance agreements.

GCRTA reviews these costs diligently and are comparable with landscaping contractors. Shaker Heights has the necessary staff, equipment and management in place. Any complaint calls go to the Shaker Heights Public Works Department, saving the time and expense to respond to. Shaker Heights also bears the risk of contingencies that would increase the cost through this contract. The two-year average under this agreement represents less than a 1% increase.

Staff recommends approval of an agreement with the City of Shaker Heights for the provision of Labor and materials for all landscape maintenance and snow removal for a two-year term at a cost of \$311,520.71 in 2026 and \$283,127.40 in 2027.

Mr. Sleasman moved and Ms. McPherson seconded to advance the item to the Board of Trustees; the motion carried.

IV. Non-Rail and HealthLine Landscaping – This is a competitive negotiated procurement for Non-Rail and HealthLine Landscaping Services for a period of three years with two one-year options.

Ellisia Turner, Supervisor, Janitorial Services, stated that landscaping supports the Authority's public image and compliance with applicable laws and regulatory requirements. GCRTA does not have the specialized equipment or in-house expertise to maintain the non-rail and HealthLine sites to required standards. A professional contractor is required to deliver consistent performance across a large multi-site footprint.

Dawn Svancara, Contract Administrator II, Procurement, stated that the request for proposal was issued on October 12, 2025, and two firms proposed. Staff recommends awarding the contract to ESK Landscaping, LLC to provide non-rail and Healthline landscaping services for three-year based term in an amount not to exceed \$791,636.40 with two one-year options in amount not to exceed \$272,654.76 and \$280,259.80, respectively, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,344,550.96.

Ms. Pacetti stated that this is one of three main landscaping contracts for GCRTA: non-rail, rail and Shaker Heights.

Ms. Elder requested clarification regarding the difference between non-rail and rail landscaping. Ms. Turner explained that the non-rail landscaping refers to land owned by GCRTA that does not have a rail line. Additionally, snow removal does not fall within landscaping services and is performed in-house.

Ms. Whigham appreciated negotiating the contract amount 11% below the independent cost estimate.

Mr. Love stated that other large public property owners have begun to determine whether there are low- or no-mow zones or putting pollinator habitat in as opposed to having the land be a constant maintenance challenge. He inquired whether GCRTA has considered alternatives where it owns large tracks of land from a cost savings or environmental benefit standpoint. Jason Rosenlieb, Manager of Rail Facilities, advised that GCRTA has bioretention basins and green roofs for cost savings and have researched natural alternatives but has not yet implemented a strategy.

Mr. Love recommended talking to other public landowners about their land management strategies.

Mr. Sleasman moved and Ms. McPherson seconded to advance the item to the Board of Trustees; the motion carried.

V. Title VI – 2026 Program Update to the Federal Transit Administration

Robert Jefferson, OEO & ADA Program Administrator, stated that Title VI derives from the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and states that no person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Every three years GCRTA is required to perform a Title VI update to comply with FTA regulations.

Mr. Jefferson explained that GCRTA must ensure that customers receive the benefits and services available and be fair and equitable. This looks like members and customers being able to have an opportunity to participate in planning and decision making. Decision making in terms of where services are located and that these decisions are consistent with the Title VI regulations. A public participation plan ensures that all community members are being heard.

Maribeth Feke, Director, Programming & Planning, stated that the Language Assistant Plan helps equalize languages for people who do not speak English very well and communicates their rights and allows for participation in GCRTA services. All vital documents are translated into Spanish online and on each bus. Census data indicates that Spanish is by a large margin the most common language besides English in the area, followed by Arabic, Ukrainian, Chinese and French.

Joel Freilich, Director of Service Management, stated that GCRTA is required to prepare a report every three years to identify how service is equitably distributed. Each year staff have found that it is equitably distributed. Title VI considerations as a criterion of service development and service planning process.

Title VI compliance is considered with vehicle assignment, distribution of bus shelters, levels of service and when making service or fare changes, as well as vehicle assignment.

Mr. Jefferson stated that GCRTA must follow all Title VI requirements to be in good standing with FTA.

Mr. Sleasman expressed appreciation for the work staff has performed on this matter and that it is very important.

Ms. Elder inquired whether the FTA implemented any changes Title VI update and why this is being presented as an update.

CEO Terry stated that GCRTA is required to provide an update to FTA every three years under Title VI. However, the Authority has consistently exceeded these requirements and holds it to the highest standard. Ms. Terry also stated that she requested taking the position of Civil Rights Officer to hold the CEO accountable for these requirements.

Ms. Elder was interested in looking at the ability to provide interpretive services more readily. Sharon Jenkins, Marketing Director, advised that staff monitors changes over time for translation and interpretive needs.

Ms. Pacetti inquired whether GCRTA receives feedback from its Title VI update. CEO Terry explained that no response is a good response. Staff meets quarterly with FTA Region 5 to go through topics that include capital projects and operations, and DBE is a component of it.

Mr. Sleasman moved and Ms. McPherson seconded to advance the item to the Board of Trustees; the motion carried.

#### VI. Adjournment

There being no further business to bring before this Committee, Mr. Sleasman moved to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Ms. McPherson. The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 a.m.

  
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Rajan D. Gautam  
Secretary/Treasurer

  
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Brent Charnigo  
Board Administrator