



GCRTA Board of Trustees Meeting

January 20, 2026

MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members: Mayor Koomar (Chair), Ms. Pacetti (Vice Chair), Ms. Elder, Mayor Gallo, Mr. Love, Ms. McPherson, Mr. Sleasman, Mayor Weiss, Ms. Smith Whigham

Staff/Other: Shawn Becker, India Birdsong Terry, Muriel B, Felicia Brooks-Williams, Janet Burney, Floun'say Caver, Brent Charnigo, Drew Dimmick, Maribeth Feke, Michael Fesler, George Fields, Bob Fleig, Joel Freilich, Anthony Garofoli, Rajan Gautam, Fiona Gibbons, Chief Deirdre Jones, Carl Kirkland, Ida Marshall, Nicholas Miller, Sheila Miller, Charles Morgan, Mike Schipper, Joe Shaffer, Kay Sutula, Wendy Talley, John Togher, Gerald Ware, Kimberly Wright

Public: Rhonda Chesney, Belinda James, Matt Krauss, Lauren Lynch, Calley Mersmann, Beatrice Osbey, Perry Osbey, Clark Suital, Chris Urban, Dagmar White, Jerome Windsor

I. Call to Order

Mayor Koomar called the meeting to order at 9:52 a.m.

II. Roll Call

A quorum was present.

III. Certification regarding Notice of Meeting

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

Ms. Pacetti moved, and Mr. Sleasman seconded to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2025, Board Meeting. The motion was 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. Airric Stewart (phone)

I want to know how many parking spaces are going in at the Irish Town Bend area. They didn't give the species of trees are they planning over in the Irish Bend and how many of them are they going to put in place in reference to the bus lanes where they're concerned with people driving through the lanes.

Is there going to be signage posted on what the fines will be if people are caught driving in those lanes so there's no discrepancy that they should have known because the signage was in place separate from that.

I also want to know is there someone in the Board of Trustees or leadership that would know how much are you paying cleaners for the shelters and what's the maximum pay they're giving right now? The same question applies to the bus drivers and train drivers.

I'd also like to address that if you are still running a bus every 15 minutes to Tri-C in each direction. How is it that you are still not putting the information out so that people can consider a bus going to the Pinecrest Shopping Center where there are 61 businesses. Those transit riders would go to midday movie sessions, then go to the grocery store, then go to some of the restaurants, get back on the bus and go back home if they didn't have to walk a half mile from Tri-C just to get up there.

Please address all these questions that I have just now posed to you and not ignore them. Like you did not hear any of them.

2. Airric Stewart, Cleveland (webform)

Post this verbatim. There should be an adjustment to the routes for the new year. Practical pursuits to better accommodate budget problems should be now implemented. This includes a through public examination of the repeatedly suggested hourly bus routes of the 15A, 48A, and 50. There has been no indication that the BOT and CAC have done anything to consider these practical routes. Bus shelter consideration should be examined as well. The 15A could have shelters in the following listed 6 places: 1) Pinecrest shopping center; 2) the southside of Harvard in front of Whitney Young school; 3) the northeast corner of Invermere and Lee Road; 4) the southwest corner of Invermere and Lee Road; 5) the north side of Bartlett Avenue between 154th and 153rd; and 6) the north side of Barlett Avenue between east 140th and East 142nd. This particular stop is approximately 4 residential blocks south of the Mount Pleasant library. The 48A will share hourly service with the 48 from north of Miles and 131st to 93rd. This is the vast majority of where the service is needed. This essentially keeps the service to every 30 minutes. The 48A can run 16 times each direction 5 days a week and a maximum of 14 times a day each direction on weekends. The hourly 50 bus would better connect Marymount, University, and Cleveland Clinic hospitals 7 days a week if my suggestion is followed. RTA has a responsibility to the socioeconomic wellbeing of the public through the implementation of public transit.

VI. Board Governance Committee Report

No committee report.

VII. Operational Planning & Infrastructure Committee Report

No committee report

VIII. Organizational, Services & Performance Monitoring Committee Report

No committee report.

IX. Audit, Safety Compliance and Real Estate Committee Report

No committee report.

X. External and Stakeholder Relations and Advocacy Committee Report

No committee report.

XI. Committee of the Whole

No committee report.

XII. Civilian Oversight Committee (COC) Report

No committee report.

XIII. Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

No committee report.

XIV. Ad Hoc Committee Reports
a. Ad-Hoc Compensation Committee

The Committee is continuing through the process with the two direct reports to the Board.

b. Ad-Hoc Nominating Committee

No committee report

XV. Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

Ms. Marshall, Senior Manager of Talent Acquisition, provided an update on new hires and promotions for December, emphasizing the essential nature of these additions, particularly in operations.

Floun'say Caver, Chief Operating Officer, explained that most new bus operators were hired as part-time employees, a strategy designed to address budget concerns and potential service reductions. The organization has reduced its operator deficit from 150 to just 10, allowing for greater flexibility and reliability in service delivery.

XVI. Introduction of Resolutions

- A. 2026-1 – EXPRESSING CONGRATULATIONS TO THE EMPLOYEES OF THE GREATER CLEVELAND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY WHO RETIRED DURING THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 2025

Ms. McPherson moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. Smith Whigham. The motion was approved unanimously.

- B. 2026-2 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2025-109 WITH EXPERT OF CANTON DBA COMPLETE PEST SOLUTIONS FOR PEST CONTROL SERVICES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$205,200.00 FOR THE BASE THREE-YEAR PERIOD AND IN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$68,400.00 FOR EACH OF TWO OPTION YEARS, FOR A TOTAL CONTRACT AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$342,000.00 FOR FIVE YEARS (GENERAL FUND, CENTRAL FACILITIES MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Mr. Sleasman moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mr. Love. The motion was approved unanimously.

- C. 2026-3 – AUTHORIZING A RENEWAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF SHAKER HEIGHTS FOR LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE AND PARKING LOT SNOW REMOVAL FOR A PERIOD OF TWO (2) YEARS BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2026, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$277,915.81 FOR 2026 AND \$283,127.40 FOR 2027 (GENERAL FUND, PROGRAMMING & PLANNING DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Mr. Sleasman moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. McPherson. The motion was approved with one abstention by Mayor Weiss.

- D. 2026-4 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2025-130 WITH ESK LANDSCAPING LLC TO PROVIDE NON-RAIL AND HEALTHLINE LANDSCAPING SERVICES FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$791,636.40 AND IN AMOUNTS NOT TO EXCEED \$272,654.76 AND \$280,259.80, FOR EACH OF THE TWO OPTION YEARS, RESPECTIVELY, FOR A TOTAL CONTRACT AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$1,344,550.96 (GENERAL FUND, CENTRAL FACILITIES MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Mr. Sleasman moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. McPherson. The motion was approved unanimously.

- E. 2026-5 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2026-001 WITH AT&T CORP ON BEHALF OF AT&T NATIONAL MOBILITY ACCOUNTS, LLC TO PROVIDE MOBILE DATA SERVICES THROUGH THE STATE OF OHIO'S DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES, COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM, IN AN AMOUNT NOT EXCEED \$300,000.00 FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR. (GENERAL FUND, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Mayor Weiss moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. Pacetti. The motion was approved unanimously.

- F. 2026-6 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2025-143 WITH DELTA RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION, INC. FOR CENTRAL RAIL MAINTENANCE FACILITY TRANSFER TABLE AT TRACK 3 RECONSTRUCTION IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$1,093,055.00 (RTA DEVELOPMENT FUND, ENGINEERING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Ms. Pacetti moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mr. Sleasman. The motion was approved unanimously.

- G. 2026-7 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2025-153 WITH STANDARD CONTRACTING & ENGINEERING, INC. FOR THE CENTRAL RAIL MAINTENANCE FACILITY MODIFICATIONS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$9,505,365.00 (RTA DEVELOPMENT FUND, ENGINEERING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Mayor Weiss moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mr. Sleasman. The motion was approved unanimously.

- H. 2026-8 – AUTHORIZING AN INCREASE TO CONTRACT NO. 2025-007 WITH R.L. HILL/PLATFORM CONTRACTING JOINT VENTURE FOR PROJECT 24X – EAST 79TH ST. GREEN AND BLUE LINE STATION RECONSTRUCTION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$67,550.00 FOR A NEW TOTAL CONTRACT AMOUNT OF \$10,549,329.86 AND REINSTATING THE GENERAL MANAGER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S CHANGE ORDER SIGNING AUTHORITY IN ITS ENTIRETY (RTA DEVELOPMENT FUND, ENGINEERING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Mr. Sleasman moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. McPherson. The motion was approved unanimously.

- I. 2026-9 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2025-151 WITH SCHIRMER CONSTRUCTION LLC FOR PROJECT 66E1 – RED LINE STATION PLATFORM MODIFICATIONS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$11,111,000.00 (RTA DEVELOPMENT FUND, ENGINEERING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Mr. Sleasman moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. Pacetti. The motion was approved unanimously.

- J. 2026-10 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2025-145 WITH RAILWORKS TRACK SERVICES, LLC FOR PROJECT 55B - REPAIR OF MAIN AVENUE BROKEN RAIL IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$424,924.00 (RTA DEVELOPMENT FUND, ENGINEERING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Mayor Gallo moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. Smith Whigham. The motion was approved unanimously.

- K. 2026-11 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2025-136 WITH AECOM TECHNICAL SERVICES, INC. TO PROVIDE CONSULTING SERVICES TO UPDATE THE AUTHORITY'S EXISTING STRATEGIC PLAN IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$465,000.00 (DEVELOPMENT FUND, PROGRAMMING & PLANNING DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Mayor Koomar moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mayor Gallo. The motion was approved unanimously.

- L. 2026-12 – APPROVING THE 2026 TITLE VI PROGRAM UPDATE FOR SUBMITTAL TO THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA)

Mayor Weiss moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mayor Gallo. The motion was approved unanimously.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer, presented the Secretary-Treasurer's report.

Consumer sentiment increased marginally. Year-to-date ridership was 1.4% lower than 2024 levels and 23.6% below 2019 pre-COVID levels, with fare revenue reflecting similar trends.

Passenger fares December fare revenue was 8.9% below December 2024, largely due to some timing of receipts that were collected in December 2020.

On a year-to-date basis. Fares were 3.3% below 2024 levels. A quick comparison to pre-COVID levels. Passenger fares were roughly 11,000,000 lower or 25.7%.

Receipts were 5.4% higher than December 2024 on a year to date basis. We were 3.8% higher when compared to 2024. Out of the 21 categories that make up the sales tax base were positive. In December, online sales were 11.38% higher. motor vehicles and watercraft 3.4% higher and regular and statewide sales were 1.3% higher.

Sales tax is 6.6% higher compared to January 2025 levels.

Long-term debt remained steady at \$13.9 million. Investment yields on a year-to-date basis averaged 4.05%. Total cash and investments were \$331.7 million, of which \$296 million is in restricted funds. The unrestricted or General Fund cash and investments amount is \$35.7 million, which exceeds the one (1) month reserve policy.

While specific figures were not yet available, Mr. Gautam stated that the Board-approved spending authority for November and December healthcare expenses were lower than anticipated.

CEO Terry advised that staff could provide more detailed information regarding ridership trends.

XVII. General Manager, CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager and CEO, provided a required temporary promotional program update to the Board. Code Book Section 840.09 authorizes the CEO to offer fare incentives for complimentary rides to promote ridership. Such programs are not utilized very often as it is considered when there is significant economic impact to the Authority by way of participation in a particular program that might affect the region.

Two entities were divided amongst these promotional programs which afforded the region to invest into public transportation by way of assistance and support for those regional programs. The CEO has the flexibility to have GCRTA participate in regional programs that benefit the Authority as well as promotion of its service.

CEO Terry advised the Board that staff participated in outreach events such as La Gran Parranda which partners with the Northeast Ohio Hispanic Center for Economic Development.

A service ceremony was held for employees commemorating their service to the Authority which was from 5 to 35 years of service.

CEO Terry advised that part of the management team traveled to Sacramento, California to see the railcars that are under construction as part of the railcar replacement plan. The railcars are on schedule and will begin to be delivered to Cleveland this summer. We stand at 54 cars on order with Siemens. The possibility of purchasing an additional six (6) railcars will be evaluated.

Dr. Caver advised that during this trip staff got clarity on items that were related to scheduling and cost. This program will be transformational for this community. for the first time We'll have one train that can service every territory within the system, which will unlock new trips and travel patterns for future generations, and bring economic development to different nodes of the community.

The Board recognized the transit police team for their dedication and service, including recent promotions within the department.

The new chaplain program was introduced, providing counseling and spiritual support for staff and riders during traumatic events. Four chaplains with pastoral experience have joined the team, enhancing the agency's ability to respond to emergencies and support the community.

XVIII. President's Report

Mayor Koomar noted ongoing planning for the upcoming Board retreat and encouraged Board members to review and provide feedback on the agenda framework that is expected several weeks prior.

XIX. Old Business

No items.

XX. New Business

No items.

XXI. Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 17, 2026.

XXII. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Pacetti and seconded by Ms. Elder; the motion was approved by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

Attest:


Secretary-Treasurer


President