

Minutes

RTA Operational Planning & Infrastructure Committee Meeting 9:05 a.m., March 6, 2018

Present: Clough (Acting Chair), Dixon, Elkins, Lucas, McCall, Moss, Norton, Serrano

Not present: Nardi, Welo

Also Present: Anderson, Benford, Bober, Boyd, Burney, Calabrese, Catalusci, Caver, Cottrell, Cripps, Davis, Feke, Fields, Garofoli, Gautam, Hampton, Jaszczak, Johnson, Kirchmeir, Krecic, Lincoln, Pierce, Pinkney, Raguz, Rusnov, Schipper, Shaffer, Smith, Sims, Vukmanic, Walton, Wiehe, Wilson, Zeller

Mayor Clough called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. The secretary called the roll and reported that four (4) committee members were present.

Fiber Optic Communications System Improvements Design

Robert Piggery, project manager in Engineering and Louis Catalusci, contract administrator in Procurement, made the presentation. The purpose of this project is for a Fiber Optic Communication System Improvement Design. The current fiber optic network consist of several different generations of electronic equipment and fiber optic cable. The fiber optic network provides communications, transport services to Operations, IT, Transit Police, emergency call boxes and Assett Configuration. The network is mission critical for several departments. It enables data to be received and transmitted along the cables. It's critical for the Safety Department because they receive alarms from the fire alarm control panels, for security for cameras and 911 call boxes. The CTDS Consolidated Train Dispatch System ensures proper distances are maintained between trains and the SCADA system that controls the electricity from the substations to the cantenary that powers the trains. All that data is transmitted along the fiber optic network.

Most of the fiber optic equipment that has been in service since 1992 is at the end of its service life. Many of the components of the system are discontinued and no longer supported. The fiber optic cable has become severely deteriorated. He showed a schematic showing the function of the fiber optic network. There will first be an assessment of the current network and identify the communication needs of the Authority. They will develop fiber optic specs, contract drawings and cable test plan. They will create technical specifications for the electronic equipment, specs for the fiber optic cable; ariel and underground. They will identify all fiber splicing locations. A construction document for an Invitation for Bid (IFB) will be developed. They will specify dedicated fibers for various functions such as Signals, Substations, IT, Emergency Call Boxes and any dark fibers. Dark fibers are not used, but reserved for future expansion or redundancy.

Mayor Elkins asked if this project would sustain technological advances over the next 10 years. Robert said the changes should last for the next 20 years. The new technology would use modern equipment and would be Ethernet based. Mr. Serrano asked how long the project would take to implement. Robert said it would be one year to design and another year for construction. Joe added that it could take three years.

This RFP was issued October 2, 2017. It was assessed on the website by 23 parties, which includes subcontractors. Four firms proposed and three were interviewed. The DBE goal is 10%. The evaluation panel consist of various RTA departments. The criteria was set. The recommended vendor is Clifton, Weiss & Associates, Inc., located in Gwynedd Valley, PA. They are a certified DBE,

in association with sub-consultant SYSTRA, New York, New York. The 10% goal will be exceeded by Clifton, Weiss & Associates, who will do 60% of the work. Denise's Flagging & Construction will be 3% of the work. They have worked on studies and projects for RTA, Ohio Turnpike and others. They first worked with RTA in 1992. They have qualified staff. Staff requests that the Operational Planning & Infrastructure Committee recommend award to Clifton, Weiss & Associates, Inc. for the Fiber Optic Communications System Improvements Design. The contract will be in an amount not to exceed \$799,572.00.

Mr. Dixon asked what qualifies the primary firm to be a DBE. Louis said they are female, veteran owned. Louis added that they are also Caucasian. Mr. Dixon questioned whether a female Caucasian firm lives up to the spirit of the DBE classification program. Ms. Moss expressed her disagreement and believes this is an appropriate classification. Rev. Lucas questioned what the company's demographics look like. Steve Sims explained that RTA follows the law. A number of public sector organizations have two DBE programs. One for women and one for minorities. This happens to be a federal program where the two are combined into one program. The OBD receives and analyzes the company's demographics. It's not a company that is only headed by someone who is classified and eligible to be certified as a DBE, but it could be and it wouldn't be illegal. There is an Affirmative Action element to what they do.

Mayor Clough asked for a motion to move this to the full Board. It was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. Moss and approved by unanimous vote.

Mayor Elkins expressed the importance of the topic and asked if the discussion could be more constructive, creating inclusivity versus a division. Mr. Dixon added that he believes the classification has been used as a ruse to take advantage of the program. Joe added that Steve Sims does a great job making sure that the certified DBE firms are certified and that the leaders of the firms are actively involved in management, but there has been cases where that hasn't been the fact.

2018 Budget

Joe Calabrese, CEO, general manager, Tom Raguz, executive director of the Office of Management and Budget, made the presentation. To recap, the MCO sales tax was eliminated, resulting in a \$20 M annual loss to RTA. That's \$55,000 a day. The Board approved a budget last December, interim until the sales tax results were known. A modified Budget was promised. The goal is to have a minimum ending balance of one-month Operating Reserve or \$21 M. The budget the Board approved had a \$16.9 M ending balance for this year, which is less than optimum, with a lot of red going forward. Although lobbying and advocacy at the State level did not result in a permanent, long-term funding solution for the MCO sales tax loss, it did result in a one-time \$28 M soft landing support. The year finished the year \$24 M to the good of budget. A service change goes into effect March 11. The changes will connect workers to jobs. It will also increase some headways on 15 of the 52 routes. No routes were cut, but headways were reduced on low ridership conditions in the off peak and peak service hours. The changes will be of minimal impact to customers. It will also reduce the annual Operating Budget by \$4 M or 20%.

Tom Raguz will discuss the proposed budget amendments and proposed financial forecast. Some of the budget amendments are to reduce capital appropriation, \$5.5 M in 2019 and \$500,000 in 2020. Usually \$20 M in preventative maintenance is drawn down from the capital program from the federal government and transferred to the Operating Fund. In 2019, they propose to increase that amount by \$5 M to \$25 M and another \$500K reduction in 2019 and 2020. For the 2018-2022 budget, a proposed change is not fund the Reserve Fund for rail cars. Currently, \$5 M in funding from the General Fund over to the Reserve Fund in 2018-2020 is proposed to be eliminated, reducing the General Fund burden. The proceeds from the Harvard Garage and Brooklyn Garage sales will be put

into the Reserve Fund. Other proposed budget amendments is to reduce non-personal expenses, which includes a \$5 M reduction comprised of inventory and contractual obligations. They propose to reduce non-bargaining staff positions by 40 and to require mandatory and voluntary non-paid furloughs for non-bargaining staff for a 12-month period beginning April 2018 through March 2019. The mandatory furloughs will be for four or five days.

Other adjustments include no planned service reductions for 2018. They propose to defer the August 2018 fare increase, allowing staff to conduct a comprehensive fare study to assess the impact on low-income customers and to assess the rates on ridership as a whole. They proposed to continue the Kids Ride Free summer program for a 10-week program from June 3 through August 11. This program ran last summer. In regards to the 2018-2022 Forecast, all of the amendments will maintain fund balance through 2019. Discrepancies begin in 2020. They minimized the gap between revenue and expenses in 2018 to \$3 M. Initially there was a gap of \$18 M. In 2019, there was a gap of \$25 M. It was minimized to \$10 M. From 2020 going forward, the gap gets bigger as a result of revenue loss from the preventative maintenance and no state aid.

By deferring some expenses, this will give staff a chance to advocate for more permanent funding. They are looking at various options. One option would be continued discussion with the State of Ohio and the new governor about how they expect to address public transit. They will continue to look at cost with the TransitStat program and other ideas. A few pilot programs will be instituted this year. Eleven other transit systems around the country are piloting programs with Uber and Lyft. RTA's program will launch April 2, where they will identify a certain number of paratransit operators who volunteered to call Lyft. The customer will pay their paratransit fare of \$2.75 to Lyft and RTA will pay the next \$14. Staff will work with Uber and Lyft to have more wheelchair equipped vehicles. There will be another program with a company called TransLoc out of Raleigh, Durham area. The program is simulating areas in Cleveland where their technology may be successful. It's a flexible routing system that assigns buses to a region on an on-call bases with Uber type technology. It may be a way to serve more people.

Key takeaways is budget stability through 2019. Service stability in not cutting anymore service this year. Staff will look at an economic impact study. The community needs to ask what the city would look like without RTA.

Service Change Update

Joel Freilich, director of Service Management, made the presentation. The last update on the service change was about balancing the budget. RTA is always responding to transportation needs in the community. The Amazon center will open soon at the former Randall Park Mall. There is a large growth of medical and retail jobs near the I-271 Harvard interchange and a mix used development on the northeast part of the interchange that currently has no transit service. Service will be improved to Tri-C east as a part of the U-Pass program. There is an opportunity in the Euclid area to combine three small transit markets to create a bus load to the Euclid Park N Ride lot. It includes the Babbitt Road and Bratenahl area, which creates a decent bus load. Realignment of the #14 and #15 to take advantage of Superior Avenue bus lanes to avoid the congestion on Prospect during sports events will be proposed.

Currently, Route 19 stays on Miles Road along the southern part of Randall Mall. For the change, it will stop on the western side of the Amazon facility. The north/south side is served by the route 41. Instead of staying along the southern perimeter, the 19 will serve this area. Another benefit is people not going to the facility, but getting off the 19, going to Solon, currently have difficulty making the transfer from the east/west 19 to the north/south 41, because that's not an intersection. Route 5 will have a modification. The west end will still end at Blue Line Van Aken Rapid Station. The eastern end

will still end at the Lander Circle. It will continue to serve retail area in Woodmere and Pepper Pike. The proposed change is that it will serve the northeast quad of the Harvard I-271 intersection. The new Pinecrest development opening this spring will be served. UH Ahuja Center will be served. Currently, route 5 only serves hotels at Park East Drive. Tri-C will now have a direct bus to Van Aken Station from Harvard and Richmond.

Route 15 will be slightly streamlined to give a direct service to Tri-C eastern campus. Route 39 PNR will be combined with riders boarding at Babbitt and Bratenahl area. Currently, route 14 and 15 travel on Prospect, downtown. They get delayed by 10-15 minutes when there is a game so riders further out on the route have to wait. The proposal is to reroute the 14 on a route that is another 1,000 feet longer, but reliable. It may take a few minutes, but can be built into the schedule. The delays have gotten worse with the construction at the Q. The route will have an exclusive bus lane on Superior and then it will follow Chester. Benefits include better access to Tri-C Metro and CSU, which can be picked up at E. 21 in Euclid.

Chief McCall asked if the 14 and 15 will stop serving Prospect. Joel said that Prospect will continue to be served by the 8 and 11 to E. 21. Routes 14 and 15 will serve as far as E. 14th. She said that people working at businesses and the Q along Prospect rely on the 14 and 15. She asked how they will be able to connect to the 8 and 11 to get to lower Prospect. Joel said that outreach will be needed and they can switch from the 11 to those routes. She added that the 14 and 15 have historically stopped on Prospect. She asked if the 8 and 11 can be redirected since they are not as populated. Mayor Clough asked for the ridership differences on the 8 and 11 and the 14 and 15. Joel said the 8 and 11 serve all of Prospect to E. 21, but the 14 and 15 do not, only the congested part of Prospect as far as E. 14. Workers will be in the field to communicate the change. The 14 and 15 go longer so the riders are waiting longer due to the congestion. Mayor Clough added that bus service is usually not removed where there is a high ridership.

Notices will be posted on the buses and the changes will be sent to the media. Staff will be at stops on Prospect to help customers. Most people who stay on the bus beyond CSU are going to Prospect, but a lot are connecting to stops on Public Square, so this change will get them there more reliably. The change would be to get on the 8 and 11 at E. 9th in Prospect, ride to E. 21 in Prospect and catch the 14 and 15 there. Joe added that it could be changed back if it doesn't work. He played a video with stakeholders talking about what life would be like without RTA.

Staff request that the 2018 Budget be approved at their March 27 meeting. It was moved by Mr. Serrano.

Mayor Elkins asked if the 40 positions mentioned earlier would not be filled. Tom said 30 vacant positions won't be filled and the remaining 10 could potentially be cut, but they are minimizing the impact. Mayor Elkins confirmed that 2019 could finish with a \$21.4 M surplus. The one-month operating goal is \$21 M. Mayor Elkins asked what impact the 10 positions would have on the budget and whether employees need to be laid off. Joe said the positions are no longer critical to delivering service and the impact would be \$700,000 to \$800,000. Mayor Clough remembers staff stating that the 10 positions could be shifted elsewhere. Mayor Elkins asked where the savings would come from if other positions are offered. Joe stated that fillable positions would be an option. Mayor Elkins asked if there were more changes that would affect any other units or bargaining positions or have an impact in conducting business within the agency, if they were to recommend the amendment to the 2018 Budget, Joe said there are a number of other cost saving areas that they are investigating that are not included in the budget.

Mayor Elkins seconded Rev. Lucas in asking how RTA will ensure the ride share companies will be equipped similar to the Authority's vehicles. Joe said the pilot will monitor this with a small number of

individuals. The Board will have further input after the pilot. **Ms. Moss seconded the motion made earlier.** Ms. Moss asked what the difference will be in what is not being put in the rail car fund. Tom said from 2018-2020, the budgeted amount is \$15 M in aggregate. The sale of Brooklyn and Harvard will be \$4 M - \$5 M so the difference is \$10 M. She asked why staff didn't look at a fare study last year when she voted for the fare increase. Joe said that things change, mainly around the country as fare increases have been implemented, the drop in ridership has been more significant. There is more competition, more people telecommuting, ride sharing and more people walking to work. He now realizes the potential negative impact of low income riders if there was another fare increase. Other systems, through help with partner agencies have reduced fare prices for low income riders. That wasn't being done a few years ago. The study will allow time to reach out to partners.

Mr. Dixon reiterated the issues with the 14 and 15 and urged staff to be prepared. Joe added that staff suggested the changes because of service issues on Prospect. Chief McCall said this needs to be looked at before the calls start coming in. She commended the changes with service to Amazon, etc., but urged that the same effort should be considered for downtown. It would take 5-6 weeks before the changes could be reversed. Mayor Elkins asked what amount of revenue was generated from the fare increase. Tom said the revenue from the 12 month prior year to the first 12 month period of the fare increase was \$1.5 - \$2 M. Mayor Elkins reminded staff that he had suggested a sunset provision in the rate increase and to build good will, the fare increase should be rolled back in light of the agency projecting a \$21 M surplus in 2019. He added that this can't be sustained without a fundamental increase in revenue. If staff wants riders to buy in to what could be a levy, rolling back the fare increase will send the right message.

Mayor Clough recognizes the opportunity to study this because of the surplus and because Ohio decided to make RTA whole for the remainder of the year. He asked for updates on revenue. **The final vote was called and there were none opposed.**

Service Code Amendment

Joel Freilich, service management director, made the presentation. This will need approval by the full Board, March 27. It is a proposed change to the Service Availability Standard that is contained within the service policy. The standard says that route coverage and spacing should be based on demonstrated need or potential demand ridership. The language has been RTA's policy since 1990. It's been reaffirmed when policies were revisited. But recently in November 2017, FTA conducted a review of RTA's compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. They recommended two items be changed. One change required that RTA have a more specific Service Availability Standard, something quantitative. It's required that the Board adopt this standard no later than March 2018. A revised standard was drafted for the board to review. The proposed new standard is as follows. The first three are general principles.

1. Transit service availability is critical for providing access to opportunities, especially jobs.
2. "Ideally, 365-day bus or rapid transit service should be located near every Cuyahoga County resident.
3. "Resource limitations and low-density settlement patterns currently preclude realization of the ideal. *This means that some areas of the County are not suited for fixed bus or rapid transit service.*
4. "RTA will provide 365-day public transit service within ¾ mile of at least 60% of county residents."

Next steps would be to receive feedback from this committee. A presentation will be made to the Citizens Advisory Committee at their March 8th meeting to get their comments. Staff will review all the


comments. FTA will be consulted if needed. Final language would then be built into a resolution for the board's consideration at its March 27th meeting.

Mayor Clough asked how the 60% was determined. Joel said they look at what percentage of the population is currently within the $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. They also looked at recent and future scenarios. They found percentages in the upper 60s. All the population statistics were collected from April 2010. The trends since 1970 has always been population growth in the outer portion of the county versus the inner portion. Census data will be collected again in two years. The goal is to build a policy that is a standard that can be met even if the latest population statistics were available. If the Board adopted a 60% standard, they could revise it if they'd like. The detail is not available at the 2018 level. The census issue was discussed with FTA. They asked that the logic behind the standard be explained.

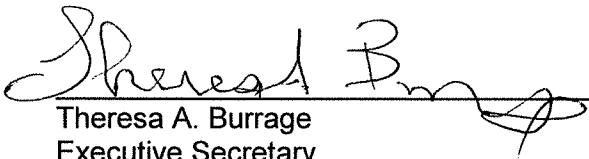
Mayor Clough asked how RTA compares with other agencies with respect to the 60% versus the ideal of 100%. Joel said that RTA is the best in Ohio. Mayor Clough expressed concerns about being at 60%. Joel confirmed that the 60% would be the minimum if the Board concurs. Joe said that staff will find out how that compares to others around the country. Chief McCall asked what the 60% means in terms of routes. She agrees that it's kind of low. Mayor Clough is not sure this percentage is right without having additional information. Mayor Elkins suggested this be kept in committee. Mayor Clough brought up the FTA deadline constraints. Mayor Clough asked if the percentage needs to be included. Joel said that in the Board adopted standard, there has to be a percentage. The 60% doesn't have to be committed to at this meeting. Mr. Dixon doesn't have a problem agreeing to the 60%, with the idea that staff will improve it. Joe suggested a goal be set to get from 60% to 80%.

Mayor Elkins asked when FTA sent the letter. Joel said the letter was sent in Feb, requiring a 60-day response. Chief McCall required more due diligence before any action it made. She requested a copy of the letter and suggested another committee meeting if it isn't resolved. It was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Elkins and approved by unanimous vote to move this to the full board. Joe said information will be brought back to the Board.

Mayor Clough adjourned the meeting at 10:38 a.m.



Joseph A. Calabrese
CEO, General Manager
Secretary/Treasurer



Theresa A. Burrage
Executive Secretary