

## Minutes

### RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:01 a.m., August 20, 2019

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

**Not present:** None

**Also Present:** Anderson, Astolfi, Bitto, Brooks-Williams, Burney, Catalusci, Caver, Cottrell, Cranford, Dangelo, Davis, Draper, Feliciano, Ferraro, Fields, Finnerty, Garofoli, Gautam, Gibbons, Gibson, Gillan-Shafron, Goodin, Gray, Haer, Hout, Jaszczak, Johnson, Keshtkaran, Laule, Lewis, Lincoln, Loh, Manus, Martine, Pickett, Pinkney-Butts, Porcella, Ross, Rowe, Russell, Schipper, Scott, Snell, Sosic, Stocking, Sutula, Tarter, Ulrich, Wiehe, Williams, Winn, Woodford, Young, Zeller

Mayor Clough called the meeting to order at 9:01 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 July 16, 2019 Board Meeting had been previously distributed and reviewed and asked whether there were any additions and/or corrections. The minutes were approved.

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

1. Brian Gibbons – Fairview Park, OH – Member of CPT. His comments are related to the External and Stakeholder Relations and Advocacy Committee meeting report. CPT supports many of the fare study recommendations. They request other possible short term solutions. RTA increased the base fare in 2006 to \$2.50. The fare increase was delayed in 2018 and 2019. Over this period, ridership has continued to decline even with the 2016 fare increase, fares have been revenue neutral. The 2019 budget predicts the fare revenue will be even lower in 2019 than in 2018 and predicts declining fare revenue for the future. As riders suffer the impact of the fare increase without receiving additional value for their purchase, meaningful additional revenue has not be realized by RTA. They thanked RTA for recognizing there is a problem. During the update provided at the Aug. 6 External Committee meeting, information was provided validating key issues riders experienced for years like the 2009 elimination of transfers on single trip fares. The fare equity studies shows that riders are overpaying, including minority and low income riders. Riders would be best served by a monthly pass, but only 20% purchase that pass. CPT is pleased that many of the solutions recommended for consideration align with their 2018 Fair Fares platform, including reducing the price of day passes and implementation of a modern fare collection system, replacing the aging system and fair capping.
2. Chris Stocking – Cleveland, OH – Member of CPT. His comments are related to the External and Stakeholder Relations and Advocacy Committee meeting report, today's Executive Session and fare study presented recently. He found an article from Feb. 2008 in Metro

Magazine entitled *"Fare Collection Update Good for Operators and Riders."* The article said that *"GCRTA expects the new system to reduce maintenance cost and allow them to eventually introduce the use of Smart Cards. We're not using the smart card reader yet, but the technology is there. The cards are not being issued to customers yet. Once the agency introduces the smart card part of the system and customers learn how to use them, this will speed up boarding times and be very helpful to riders."* To facilitate the project LTK was used at that time, which is the current fare study firm. The plan was to roll out the cards in a phase approach starting 2010. It's 2019 and still no cards. He mentioned that riders want the payment of fares to be fast. He supports Mr. Bibb and Dr. McCall's comments at that meeting about the Conduit contract and a new fare system. Other cities have had smart cards for years. Cities like Columbus is looking at fare capping. While CPT is pleased about the new CEO, they want to work beyond that to get the new fare payment system right. They ask the Board to terminate the contract with Conduit and move forward with a next generation system that can do fare capping.

3. Speaker did not give his name – his comment relates to the fare study and the External Committee update. Fare capping has many benefits. You can pay the lowest eligible fare without upfront cost. There is no need to choose a fare product ahead of time because you get the best deal and have an incentive to earn daily, weekly and monthly passes after which riding RTA becomes the obvious choice. The Fare Study update said that riders place high value on fares that are easy to understand, afford and that are fast. This could be achieved with fare capping through a modern collection platform. Fare capping would eliminate the price disparity. Other systems are doing this like COTA in Columbus, The Rapid in Grand Rapids and Indigo in Indianapolis. CPT recommends the reduction of the cost of day passes and increasing the availability of the 5-trip cards as recommended in the study. They encourage rolling time periods for passes or converting from single ride tickets to 2.5 hour passes and 24-hour passes as opposed to day passes and 31-day passes opposed to calendar month passes. They would like a system that reverses the ridership decline and attract more riders.
4. George Zeller – Cleveland, OH – He pointed out to the other speakers that the Red Line ridership is down because of construction from West Blvd. to the airport, which is unavoidable. West Blvd. Station is not handicap accessible because the elevator is out of order.

Mayor Clough appreciates the input from CPT and the rest of the public. He recognizes that they are behind with the smart cards.

#### Committee Reports

Dr. McCall said the External Stakeholders committee will hold community meetings on the system redesign and fare study. The dates will be posted soon. There will be 21 meetings at different times and locations beginning mid-September. She ask that CPT and the media help share the dates. Dr. Caver said there will be meetings in the day, night and weekend. The schedule will be shared on social media through Rider's Digest and other mediums.

#### Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

Kathryn Porcella was promoted to manager of claims. Alroy Gibson was promoted to assistant manager at Hayden. Jennifer Martin was promoted to contract administrator in procurement. Kathryn Pavliga is the new benefits specialist.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Jose Feliciano, made the update. There are seven proposed new CAC members. Background checks were finished on two of them. The candidates have to sign a disclosure that is returned to Jose. The information is filled out by him along with the vendor. The vendor auto populates a sheet that is faxed with the signed disclosure to the candidate. When the background check is completed, the completed form comes back to Jose.

Executive Session Requested

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. The discussion is to consider the proposed employment contract with India L. Birdsong for the position of General Manager, Chief Executive Officer for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority.

9:18 a.m. - It was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Mr. Serrano to go into executive session. There were nine (9) ayes and none opposed.

9:40 a.m. – It was moved by Mayor Welo, seconded by Mayor Byrne to come out of executive session. There were nine (9) ayes and none opposed.

Introduction of Resolutions

- A. 2019-83 – Authorizing an increase to Contract No. 2019-009 with PIRC Company Landscaping & Snowplowing, LLC to revise the scope of services for rapid transit station grounds maintenance in an amount not to exceed \$70,274.46 for the base three years and in an amount not to exceed \$23,424.82 for each of the two option years, for a new total contract amount not to exceed \$1,071,689.22 (General Fund, Rail District Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Chief McCall and approved by unanimous vote.
- B. 2019-84 – Authorizing Contract No. 2019-062 with Trillium Transportation Fuels, LLC, dba Trillium CNG to provide installation of the CNG fueling system at the Triskett bus garage for a base contract amount NTE \$4,974,113.00 and a three year extended warranty at \$300,000.00 per year, for a total contract amount NTE \$5,874,113.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department Budget, & General Fund, Triskett District Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Mayor Welo and approved by unanimous vote.
- C. 2019-85 – Authorizing Contract No. 2019-078 with Roma Designs Construction, LLC for Project 17.95 – Windermere Rapid Transit Station platform column repairs, in an amount not to exceed \$206,000.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Bibb, seconded by Mr. Serrano and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2019-86 – Authorizing Contract No. 2019-079 with Envirocom Construction, Inc. for Project 17.94 – GCRTA Shaker Square Station ADA ramps, in an amount not to exceed \$239,500.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Rev. Lucas, seconded by Mayor Welo and approved by unanimous vote.

- E. 2019-87 – Authorizing Contract No. 2019-093 with Northeast Battery & Alternator, LLC for the furnishing of bus batteries, as specified and as required, for a period of three years in an amount not to exceed \$274,536.00 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Welo, seconded by Mr. Serrano and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2019-88 – Authorizing the Interim CEO, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer, to enter into an updated Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), establishing the conditions under which Transit Police officers may be detailed to and/or associated with the local Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) created by the FBI, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mr. Bibb and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2019-89 – Authorizing the Interim CEO, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer to enter into an agreement with Medina County to exchange operating funds for Medina County's grant funds and to provide for Medina County to fund a portion of the cost of the Authority's 251 flyer route, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Welo, seconded by Chief McCall and approved by unanimous vote.
- H. 2019-90 – Authorizing the Interim CEO, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer to enter into a Discount Fare Agreement between the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority and Downtown Cleveland Alliance, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Bibb, seconded by Mayor Welo. Chief McCall asked to recuse herself. There were eight (8) ayes and one recuse from Chief McCall. It passed.
- I. 2019-91 – Authorizing the donation of obsolete traction motors to the Northern Ohio Railway Museum and authorizing the Interim CEO, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer to execute all documents necessary for such transfer, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Welo and approved by unanimous vote.
- J. 2019-92 – Authorizing the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority to enter into a purchase and sale agreement in the amount of five hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$550,000.00) and an additional fifty thousand dollar (\$50,000.00) contribution for planning additional Transit Oriented Development projects with Civic Property Development LLC, an Ohio non-profit limited liability company, for property known as Cuyahoga County permanent parcel numbers 118-11-004, 118-11-005, 118-11-007, 118-11-008, 118-11-009, 118-11-010 and 118-11-011 and located at 5508-5810 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44113, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Mayor Byrne. Chief McCall and Mayor Welo asked to recuse themselves. There were seven (7) ayes and two recusals from Chief McCall and Mayor Welo. It passed.
- K. 2019-93 – Authorizing the purchase of casualty insurance from various insurance underwriters through USI Insurance Services National, Inc. and Price Forbes & Partners Limited, or their successors, for a period of 12 months in a total amount not to exceed \$1,496,743.00 (GCRTA Insurance Fund, Risk Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Welo, seconded by Mr. Serrano and approved by unanimous vote.

Resolution No. 2019-94

Mayor Clough asked for a motion to add Resolution No. 2019-94 to the agenda. It was moved by Chief McCall, seconded by Mr. Joyce. There was no opposition.

- L. 2019-94 – Appointing India L. Birdsong as General Manager, Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority and authorizing the execution of an employment contract, the adoption of which was moved by Chief McCall, seconded by Mayor Welo and approved by unanimous vote.

Mayor Clough said the CEO search has been extensive over the last 10 months. They searched for a candidate to make a difference at RTA and fit well at the Authority. India will bring great enthusiasm to build the team and make changes where it is needed. She is excited about coming to Cleveland. She has extensive experience. He ask for each board member to make a comment. Mayor Byrne said that besides her experience and enthusiasm, he was moved by her energy. She connected with each board member during her interview. He is excited to work with her. Mr. Joyce gave kudos to the search firm for bringing qualified candidates. India stood above the rest and he is proud to welcome her to RTA and the City of Cleveland.

Ms. Moss is excited about her coming to RTA and looking forward to a great start. Rev. Lucas is also excited to have a person of her capabilities. She stood tall in comparison to the other candidates. A lot of the candidates were excited about coming to Cleveland. She said she may not start off in her office each day. She may start the day on the bus or somewhere else. He thanked Mayor Clough and the board's attorney for getting the contract together. Mayor Welo said this was the most important decision they had to make. They dug deep to listen and gain the knowledge of each candidate. India was at the top all along. She can explain why and will listen to come up with the strategy. She is anxious for everyone to meet her. Mr. Serrano was impressed with the pool of candidates. India pointed out what needed improved at the Airport Station when she came to Cleveland. He was impressed with her observations. She rose to the top.

Mr. Bibb said she brings a bottom-up perspective on how to get things done with a focus on the fundamentals. She has been exposed to what best in class transit looks like. She has a community development background. This will enable RTA to go to the next level. Chief McCall said the process was fantastic and transparent. They will work to introduce her to the community. There is a new wave of GM's across the country. The industry is shifting. They picked the best candidate. She is a good leader and very enthusiastic. They have added another female to the public transit industry. She is the first female leader at RTA. She will take RTA to the next level. She is confident and excited about what India will bring to the board and RTA. Mr. Bibb added that India's success will depend on how staff greets her and welcomes her. Rev. Lucas added that there will be a team effort with India and Dr. Caver. Mayor Clough thanked the board for all of their hard work. He thanked Dr. Caver for his leadership.

Interim General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Dr. Caver presented the report. He thanked everyone for the last year. It's been a growth opportunity for him. He had lunch with India and is invigorated by her energy. He will ensure the transition of leadership will be professional. She will start mid-September. Sales tax is \$2.5 million above budget projections. Passenger fares is 7% or \$1.7 million below budget estimate. Several large payments are expected to close that gap. Staff is working on a few punch list items for the E. 116<sup>th</sup> Street Station. Several meetings have been held with the community. The Farnsleigh Station ribbon cutting is this Thursday. The Red Line west project will reopen after the work on the S-Curve and the retaining wall. Seventy-five steel frames were erected to hold the wall up. They are putting in

anticorrosion protection along the beams, which will extend the life of the steel by 15-20 years. Today, the rail team will reestablish the overhead catenary and signal system and run test trains. Service should be restored by the end of the month. Construction is being completed on the Tower City Customer Service Center. It will be inspected by the City of Cleveland today.

There has been a lot of advocacy work over the last year. The UTP funds will be increased to \$3.7 million for bus replacement. The goal is to replace 1/12<sup>th</sup> of the fleet each year. This will result in the decrease in maintenance cost and better service. They continue to look at federal funding. The main goals are rail car replacement and rail infrastructure. A team presented to the ODOT Track Committee. A \$60 million request was made to the track board for rail replacement or 25% of the total program of \$240 million. The committee will come back and confirm whether RTA is eligible for these funds. The cars will give RTA 30-40 years of life. Between late September and mid-October, there will be 21 public meetings on the system redesign and fare study.

The WiFi Homework Hotspots event was August 13. The Mayor of East Cleveland was in attendance. There was great press coverage. This will close the digital divide by having this available in the customer waiting environment. The E. 34<sup>th</sup> Street Station dedication is October 2. An RFP for a rail car consultant was posted last week. A contract is planned by the end of the year. They will help with rail car specs, quality assurance and acceptance and end of contract items. Staff will meet with CTA, which buys cars every year. The 4<sup>th</sup> Management Development Program (MDP) internship program was complete. Four of the eight graduate and undergraduate students will be invited back as full time employees.

RTA was recognized by the Public Transit Institutes for Homework Hotspots in the eGovernment category and for the internal P-card initiatives, which uses data and performance matrixes to evaluate P-card purchases. This year's advertising campaign will look at RTA's premium brands like the HealthLine, CSU Line, Park-N-Ride and rail. It will run on the radio, TV, direct mail and outdoor with the digital kiosk.

#### Resolution 2019-94

This resolution was approved earlier, but Mayor Clough asked for a roll call. There were nine (9) ayes and none opposed.

#### Questions or comments from the audience (2 minutes)

1. Biserka Socic – Cleveland, OH – She complained about having to fold up her grandchild's stroller on the bus. She spoke to customer service and threatened to contact the media. The rules are not common sense. Wheelchairs are not secure even though they can become a projectile. Another driver didn't require her to fold the stroller. She put the stroller in the wheelchair area.
2. William Tarter – Broadview Hts, OH – On Oct. 23 the director of the Ohio Department of Transportation will be speaking at the City Club of Cleveland. This is an opportunity to hear the director's vision for the state and to share the local perspective on the impact on the state on transportation ability to meet the needs of the residents.
3. George Zeller – Cleveland, OH – Sales tax this month is a mixed bag. We've had two months in a row where it has increased. The inflation rate is steady at 2% this month and will be 1.8% next month. Even though the sales tax has increased, we still have not recovered from the 2000 recession. We're down \$2.5 million a month. That's a 12% decrease or \$29.4 million a year. We've gone 80 months in a row where Ohio job growth has been slower than the

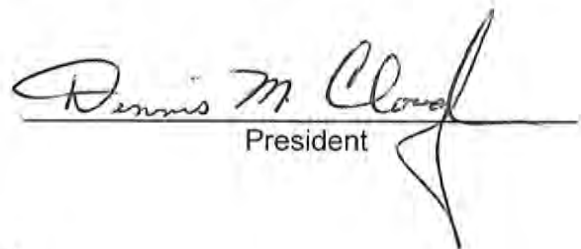
national average. The unemployment rate in Ohio has gone 30 months in a row where the rate was higher than the national average.

4. Marcous Manus – Cleveland, OH – He is the chairperson for CPT. He understand trying to drum up ridership in the suburbs with the ad campaign, but he believes it should be focused on the city routes like the route 51.
5. Rev. Pam Pinkney-Butts – Cleveland, OH – She asked for an antislavery agenda for public transit. Operators are still not satisfied with the contract and they haven't received their increase.
6. Chris Stocking – Cleveland, OH – The ads are well produced, but he would like to see if it affects ridership. Is there a better way to spend the money to get more ridership? Maybe the focus should be on city residents. Fare payment should be streamlined across all services. The current system will confuse new riders. It is inconvenient to get on the bus with strollers and wheelchairs at the front of the HealthLine since passengers can't board at all of the doors.
7. Maurice Rhoades – Cleveland, OH – RTA has a problem in the Accounting department. He asked how long the issues with George Dixon has been going on. RTA is vital to him. RTA rules of no talking to operators has been violated. This is about public safety. He wants to decrease liability. He doesn't agree with bus drivers being fired over repeated violations. Ms. Wright is ignoring his request for Ride Free tickets. A Tower City operator closed the doors on him. He's complained to Dr. Caver's office for six months. He is pursuant to Title VI disability. He will speak to someone after the meeting.
8. Loh – Cleveland, OH – On July 26 at 8 a.m. she fell while riding on the E-Line trolley on Euclid Avenue before it turns into East Roadway. The operator called for assistance and displayed the emergency sign. RTA didn't have a supervisor to come to the incident. TP and EMS came to the incident and took a report and checked her out. She doesn't want to sue. RTA internal decision makers are making mistakes. This reflects on the fare study and system design study. The ads don't reflect every day struggles people have on the system. Riders should be asked to test the vehicles to see if they are suitable. Riders will not come back with a fancy advertising video.

#### Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 24, 2019 in the Board Room of the Authority, Root-McBride Building, 1240 West Sixth Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44113.

This meeting was adjourned at 10:41 a.m.

  
President

Attest:   
Interim CEO, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer