

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:17 a.m., May 25, 2021

Present: Lucas (Chair), Moss (Vice Chair), Byrne, Duarte, Joyce, Koomar, McCall, Pellot, Serrano, Weiss

Not present: None

Also Present: Benford, Burney, Catalusci, Caver, Coffey, Dangelo, Davidson, Fields, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Johnson, Jones, Kirkland, Laule, Miller, Penning, Petit, Rusnov, Schipper, Sutula, Talley, Walker-Minor

President Lucas took his oath of office to renew his three-year term on the Board. He thanked the Board Executive Assistant for her work with the Board.

President Lucas called the meeting to order at 9:17 a.m. The secretary called the roll and reported that ten (10) board members were present. This meeting was conducted by teleconference for members of the Board in accordance with Sub. H.B. 404 of the 133rd General Assembly, passed on November 19, 2020, signed by the Governor of the State of Ohio on November 22, 2020 and the March 9, 2020 order of the Governor of the State of Ohio declaring a public health emergency, this meeting was live-streamed on RTA's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/rideRTA) for staff and members of the public.

The Secretary advised that notice of this meeting have 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

Rev. Lucas stated that the minutes from the April 20, 2021 Board meeting had been previously distributed and reviewed, and asked whether there were any additions and/or corrections. There were no corrections. The minutes were approved.

Public Comments – Agenda Items (comments were submitted by form and phone)

1. Rev. Pam Pinkney – Cleveland, OH – She congratulated former City Councilwoman Cleveland for her support of public transportation. The mobile ticketing needs to be transferable to an alternate phone number along with more pass options. She is in support of the rehabilitation projects. She wants to see our stations opened back up. We are losing money. Zadar Tech camera information must be made available to the public. Who is Kronos Inc. and what is their purpose? How will they help the east side and the poor people? She supports Paratransit coaches and having more of them. Some of the drivers need the smaller vehicles also. She is in opposition to Police Canine Vehicles because of its negative impact. Who and what is the Capital Improvement Fund Budget helping? The east side and poor do not benefit from it. What does other expenditures mean and for who? For what and who are the Purchasing cards for? Reso No. 2021-57 is Non-Binding for whose benefit? She asked for clarity on the CARES Act funding and the nepotism policy.
2. Paula Rigo – North Olmsted, OH - I'm asking that the North Olmsted Park and Ride bus (263) not be eliminated. Soon we will be going back in to work and will require RTA bus service.
3. Dennis Hancy – North Olmsted - I am concerned about the demise of the 263 Park N Ride route from North Olmsted. When I started riding public transportation 30 years ago, we only had the #75 to take us downtown. It was a long slow commute as we traveled on city streets to get to work. When the 263 was introduced, that was a welcome change. Given that we traveled only on the highways, the commute was quick, efficient, and safe. Last month, I learned that RTA decided to

do away with this route and replace it with a city bus once again. This "Next Generation" looks an awful lot like the generation of 30 years ago. I want to add that I only learned of this by chance. I do not follow you on twitter or any other social media site. Had it not been for the pandemic, I imagine many of us would have been notified on the bus itself. Obviously, this did not happen. This news came as a surprise to many of us, and now we are left to scramble as we race to find other options to get us downtown. I am asking that you reverse this decision so there is NO disruption in the 263 service. When we are given the go-ahead to go back into the office, I'd like to return to "normal" and ride the 263 again. I suspect I am not the only 263 rider who feels this way. Please do not take this route away from all of us who rely on it.

President Lucas asked if route #11 will no longer go to Shaker Square. Mr. Freilich said the rail and #48 will remain at Shaker Square. Everywhere that the #11 stops in Shaker Square and Buckeye, a #8 will stop there instead. The NextGen #8 and current #11 both go downtown. This will give Quincy Ave. residents access to jobs on Cedar Road.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Ms. Roberta Duarte was appointed as the new Board Liaison to the CAC.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

There were a little over 1,600 Paratransit trip to get vaccinated and 2,700 shuttles to Wolstein for vaccination.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

Promotions:

1. Leon Williams – Warehouse Supervisor
2. Ellisia Turner – Supervisor - Janitorial
3. Daniel Waken – Assistant Supervisor
4. James Hunt – Supervisor - Rail Traffic
5. Rickie Buck – Assistant Supervisor - Equipment
6. Everett Clark – Assistant Supervisor - Track
7. Carla Hunber – Serve Quality Coordinator
8. Terrance Phillips – Terrance Philips

New Hires:

1. Steve Fernandez – Payroll Specialist
2. Richard Jeschelng – Desktop Engineer II
3. Joshua Klabik – Financial Accountant I
4. Margaret Swetel – Assistant Contact Administrator
5. Deirdre Jones – Security/Chief of Police
6. Karen Sforzo – User Support Analyst
7. Barbara Zawal – Office Manager

Introduction of Resolutions:

- A. 2021-44 – Expressing appreciation to the Honorable Cleveland Councilwoman Phyllis Cleveland for advocating for public transportation while serving on Cleveland City Council and wishing her well on her retirement, the adoption of which was moved by Chief McCall, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.

Rev. Lucas said she has been an excellent Councilwoman working on several projects like E. 34th Station. Chief McCall said she extends her gratitude and thanks in her absence. She will be missed.

- B. 2021-45 – Authorizing the exercise of option year two of two under Contract 2016-140 with Passport Labs, Inc., fka Passport Parking, Inc., for the purchase of a Mobile Ticketing Solution in an amount not to exceed \$96,000.00 (General Fund, Innovation & Technology Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- C. 2021-46 – Authorizing Contract No. 2020-197 with Hardesty & Hanover, LLC for Project 27Z – Engineering Services for the Waterfront Line Bridge Rehabilitation in an amount not to exceed \$1,468,163.84 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2021-47 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-016 with Railworks Track Services, Inc. for Project 16.85 – Red Line West Catenary Rehabilitation, as specified and as required, in an amount not to exceed \$2,101,300.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2021-48 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-028 with Apex Construction & Management Co., Inc. for Project 18.45 – Michael's Diner Roof Replacement, as specified and as required, in an amount not to exceed \$279,900.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Mr. Joyce and approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Schipper said this building will undergo roof, heating and air conditioning work. The lessee will also do work on the doors and ADA accessibility.

- F. 2021-49 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-044 BECDIR Construction Co. for Project 27Y – Rehabilitation of the Cuyahoga Viaduct (Phase 1), as specified and as required, in an amount not to exceed \$4,698,429.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2021-50 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-55 with Zadar Technology, Inc. to provide Camera Equipment and Services for an amount not to exceed \$100,000.00 for the base one-year period with two, one-year options in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.00 per year, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$300,000.00 (RTA Capital Fund, Transit Police Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.

This is our camera equipment service. We use it to communicate from the field to central locations. This allows us to purchase the licenses for older analog cameras as we begin to upgrade the system to be digital and come through the fiber. Traditionally we spend less than \$100,000. This was brought to the Board just in case that amount is exceeded.

- H. 2021-51 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-057 with Kronos Incorporated to provide Kronos Annual Subscription and Support Renewal for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed \$117,844.03 (General Fund, Innovation and Technology Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Byrne, seconded by Chief McCall and approved by unanimous vote.

This is our timekeeping system. Last year it was moved to the Cloud. This allow us to have that service.

- I. 2021-52 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-064 with Myers Equipment Corp. for the purchase of up to 10 Eldorado National Aerotech Paratransit Coaches, as specified, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$877,810.00 (RTA Development Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Chief McCall and approved by unanimous vote.
- J. 2021-53 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-065 with Statewide Ford Lincoln, for the purchase and delivery of two (2) 2021 Ford Police Utility Canine Vehicles, Equipment, and Accessories, as specified, through the State of Ohio, Department of Administrative Services, Cooperative Purchasing Program for a total price not to exceed \$111,308.00 (RTA Development Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.

This is a replacement vehicle. We have a replacement process. This will provide two vehicles that will be outfitted for the canines. We have seven (7) canine dogs.

- K. 2021-54 – Amending budget appropriations for the FY 2021 Capital Improvement Fund budget to provide for an increase of \$144,603,665, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Byrne, seconded by Chief McCall and approved unanimous vote.
- L. 2021-55 – Making appropriations for the current expenses and other expenditures of the Capital Improvement budget for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority for Fiscal Year (“FY”) 2022, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mr. Joyce and approved by unanimous vote.
- M. 2021-56 – Approving revised list of positions designated to use Purchasing Cards, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Mayor Weiss and approved by unanimous vote.

These are the Authority’s credit cards. This identifies all of the positions that use the card.

- N. 2021-57 – Authorizing the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority to execute a Non-Binding Letter of Intent with AJAPPJR, LLC, an Ohio Limited Liability Company, for Transit-Oriented Development of GCRTA property located at Columbus Road and Abbey Avenue, adjacent to the West 25th Street Rapid Transit Station, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mr. Joyce and approved by unanimous vote.

Secretary-Treasurer’s Report

Rajan Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer presented the report. The 72% April Ridership increase for 2021 is not a fair comparison to 2020 because we lost a lot of ridership due to the shutdown from COVID-19. Passenger fares has a similar trend. April 2021 has an 85.9% increase over April 2020 which was in total shutdown. YTD PF is still down 34.1%. Sales tax has been strong. It is up 12.9% compared to 2020. The collections relate to economic activity in Feb. 2021. There is a three-month lag from the point the sales tax is generated to the point of receipt. The increase in receipts could be partly contributed to the \$600 Stimulus checks distributed late December through the end of January. The \$1,400 Stimulus checks were distributed in March/April so that will affect sales tax for June-August.

At the April Board meeting, we committed to discuss the strategic use of the projected ending balances resulting from the stimulus payments. After reviewing the data, we have made sure we stayed in

compliance with any grant restrictions and existing financial board policies pertaining to the required one month operating reserve and the transfer of 10% of sales tax to support capital fund. There were three rounds of stimulus funds that we received or in the process of receiving.

GRANT	AMOUNT	STATUS
CARES Act	Approximately \$112 million	Fully drawn down Oct. 2020
CRRSAA	Approximately \$ 67 million	\$36 m drawn down/balance by July
ARP	Approximately \$136 million	Not available for draw down yet
Total	Approximately \$315 million	

The funding is at 100% federal share with no local match required. The intent of the grants was to keep transit systems around the country running. It was intended to pay for operating expenses: salaries, fuel, PPE and cleaning supplies included, net of passenger fares. Such reimbursements will likely lead to improve projected ending balances, because Sales Tax revenue, which normally paid for operating expenses was not used. Once the money is drawdown it becomes unrestricted because it's on a reimbursement basis. When the stimulus grants paid for operations from March 2020-Oct. 2020, the sales tax and the reduced passenger fares ordinarily that would pay for the operations was not used. That's what's creating the balances. Without the stimulus funds, we'd be running a deficit of \$20 M for 2020 and \$50.2 M for 2021. For the out years it averages out to an operating loss of \$40 million. The assumptions we used for passenger fares and sales tax were conservative. Passenger fares shows a slow recovery over the next six years ranging from 1%-1.5% year over year. Sales tax ranges 2%-2.5% year over year.

Projected ending balances of the unrestricted cash we would have once the three grants are drawn down totals \$315 million. We have an opportunity to use these funds in a strategic manner with long term impact in mind and to provide as much stability to the operations as we can. These funds will be used to support the Operating Budget (\$98.8 M or 31%), Unfunded Capital Projects (\$152.2 M or 50%) and Debt reduction (\$60 M or 19%). The \$98.8 M for the Operating Budget will stabilize the operations through 2026, mitigate economic risks, avoid lay-offs or furloughs, service reductions and reduced reliance on Preventative Maintenance. Rev. Lucas said this is commendable to not have to layoff or furlough employees. The \$152.2 M for the Unfunded Capital Budget will ensure RTA will address projects from the RTA 10-year strategic plan approved December 2020 and identify specific projects in process. Current unfunded capital projects total \$344 M. The \$60 M for Debt Reduction will pay off debt. Average savings of \$3.1 M are projected annually through 2026. It will cut down the bonds payable from 2039 to 2030. Our average debt service varies from year to year based on the maturity dates of the bonds. By not having any debt for those nine years using \$14 M annual debt service will create savings of \$126 M. Those savings will reduce expenditures in the future for additional capital and/or operating use. The have engaged our bond counsel and financial advisors. A resolution will be brought to the Board in June 2021.

With these projections, we expect to end 2026 with an amount that slightly exceeds the 1-month Operating Ratio of 25%, remaining in full compliance of Board Policy. Ms. Duarte said that in addition to no layoffs or furloughs, it's also important to provide professional training and development to retain the staff to create long term impact.

Acting General Manager/CEO Report

Dr. Caver presented the report. RTA received approx. \$970,000 from ODOT and the Ohio Emergency Management Agency to provide transportation to vaccination sites through 15,000 All Day passes provided to social service agencies and shuttle services to free parking lots. As of May 20, we had 1,317 rides on Paratransit and 2,616 from the ADA shuttle. Transit Police continued to provide security and maintain traffic flow. He showed a slide that showed the top 10 vaccination destination sites. Approx. 70% of trips originated in an environmental justice community. And 80% of people who went to the Wolstein Center were from environmental justice communities. A report will be presented at a later date on how the grant money was spent and where the trips originated.

The Center for Disease Control and Governor DeWine recently lifted certain face mask requirements. However, the CDC and Governor still requires masks on public transit. It also requires masks for transit support staff such as mechanics and facilities workers. As such, the current RTA mask requirement will remain in place for all customers and staff. This past winter, Ms. Birdsong, Board and management looked at the mission and vision. The new mission and vision rolled out to the staff. The new mission is "Connecting the Community". The new vision is "Leading the delivery of safe and creative mobility solutions and community connections". Connecting the community can be realized in ways other than providing transportation such as vaccinations, fiber and Wi-Fi. The vision ensures we play that role in connections. We will become much more active in community forums. We'll ask our community partners to consider us in ways that one can start to look at transportation and mobility and in other ways we can serve in connections like employment. Our success outcomes will focus on Customer Experience, Community Value, Financial Sustainability and Employee Growth.

As a part of the Next Gen RTA launch we will have a week of free rides from June 13-19 on bus, rail, Park N Ride and Paratransit. This will give customers the opportunity to experience the new routes for free. The Office of Business Development received the 2021 Civil Rights Transportation Symposium Award for Excellence in Diversity & Inclusion "Transit System of the Year" for efforts to serve small and minority businesses. RTA's 2020 Annual Report is now live on the website. It is digital and interactive. RTA was named "Most Innovative" at the 2021 Trapeze-Vontas Conference for most innovative and forward thinking organization. This was for a project that Mike Lively and his team worked on to update the radio system on all RTA buses. The new system was funded through a grant. The new communication system has state-of-the-art vehicle alarms, priority cellular service, new radio communications towers and a turn-by-turn navigations system.

RTA Hayden Operator Godwin McNeal received 2nd place award from LYTX's 2021 National Driver Safety Awards in the transit motor coach category for dedication to safety. LYTX is a technology we use that reports when operators have risky driver behavior such as slamming on the brake or if they turn too quickly. Mr. McNeal drove with no risky behavior for a year. Rev. Lucas thanked the staff for the work they do.

Public Comments – Agenda Items (comments were submitted by form and phone)

1. Rev. Pam Pinkney Butts – Cleveland, OH – She asked about a hanging beam near the light rail and #8. She asked what the vision is for the new Police Chief. She asked when Rev. Lucas would meet with the clergy. She asked when the light rail on E. 79th Street would be upgraded and what is happening with the Superior Station and Windermere Station. Elaborate on nepotism. She wants to know when the ticket booths will be filled with workers. She does not want any route cuts. She requested the media director and Joel Freilich contact her.
2. Chris Martin – Cleveland, OH - Why does the Board of Trustees no longer even discuss the creation of a Civilian Police-Oversight Review Board? The creation of such a body was promised within the first year of hiring a new CEO. We are well past that time now. Already this year, we have seen two violent outbursts from RTA police. In one of these incidences, the cop pushed a rider onto live rail tracks imperiling that rider's life, and the cop received no substantive punishment. The Board of Trustees must follow through on its promise to establish a civilian police-oversight review board.
3. Erin Gay Miyoshi - Cleveland Heights, OH – I want to thank the GCRTA board and leadership team for offering a week of free rides starting June 13. This is a wonderful way to help our community become familiar with the new routes. I hope people from throughout the Greater Cleveland community will take advantage of GCRTA service during the week and enjoy the many benefits of opting to use public transit. This week will also provide the GCRTA board with data to take into consideration when evaluating fare collection versus the possibility of a fare

free system. Free public transit could have a major impact on increasing access to transportation and equity in Cleveland.

4. Jason Wu – Olmsted Falls - I was told that you are going to cancel the bus 263. Please reconsider this decision. I understand we are in pandemic of Covid-19. Most of us work from home but with vaccines available and OH is going to open soon, we will come back to work in downtown CLE soon with company order. At that time, we don't want to be left behind. Please postpone this decision.

Rev. Lucas asked Chief Jones to work with Dr. Caver on the Transit Police Civilian Board.

Executive Session

10:33 a.m. - Rev. Lucas requested an executive session to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee of official and to confer with RTA's attorney regarding a dispute that is the subject of pending or imminent litigation. It was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Mayor Byrne. There were ten (10) ayes and none opposed.

11:08 a.m. – It was moved by Mayor Koomar, seconded by Ms. Pellet to come out of executive session. There were ten (10) ayes and none opposed.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 29, 2021 in the Board Room of the Authority, Root-McBride Building, and 1240 West Sixth Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. This meeting will be live streamed on RTA's Facebook page for staff and members of the public at www.facebook.com/riderta Only Board members and required RTA staff will be allowed in the Board Room.

This meeting was adjourned at 11:08 a.m.



President

Attest: 

Secretary-Treasurer

