

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

10:09 a.m. November 16, 2021

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

Not present: Joyce

Staff: Benford, Birdsong, Caver, Dangelo, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Johnson, Kirkland, Krecic, Miller, Mothes, Petit, Schipper, Sutula, Talley, Togher, Walker-Minor,

Public: Gibbons, Loh, Pinkney-Butts, Rodriquez

President Lucas called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. The secretary called the roll and reported that nine (9) board members were present.

This meeting was live-streamed on RTA's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/rideRTA) for staff and members of the public. Based on Centers for Disease Control guidance to continue to avoid large events and gatherings and Ohio Department of Public Health advice that businesses may continue to require mitigation measures, as well as RTA's interest in protecting community and employee health and safety, several measures were put in place for in-person attendance, which are spelled out on the meeting notice. The public was allowed to attend the meeting in-person.

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

President Lucas stated that the minutes from the October 26, 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.

Rev. Lucas attended the APTA Annual Conference in Orlando, FL on behalf of RTA and the Board. He will share information he brought back with staff. He thanked the staff for their support and Vice President Moss for approving his trip.

Public Comments – Agenda Items (comments were submitted in-person and by phone)

1. Rev. Pamela Pinkney-Butts – Cleveland, OH – She is the former chaplain for the East Cleveland Chapter of League of Women Voters and the former chaplain for Black on Black Crime Inc. She is the founder for the Heterosexual International Clergy Alliance. She is concerned with all the agenda items. She asked for more information about Resolution Numbers 100, 101 and 103. Who are the contractors and how are they affecting our community through public transit. Who made the NextGen name decision. The voters need to have input.
2. Hayes Rowan – Cleveland, OH – He asked if the Board considered the bus idling policy and practices and public records request of bus and CCTV when there is operator misconduct. He ask for the baby stroller policy to be reviewed and enforced and for an ergonomics audit of paratransit coaches and minivans. Ms. Birdsong asked for the Operations staff to review and get back to Mr. Rowan about the outcome.

Committee Reports

There were no reports.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

There were no reports.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

Ms. Pellot said the Ad Hoc Tech Committee would meet Nov. 18 at 5 p.m.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

New Hires:

1. Heath Bowman – Transportation Safety Specialist
2. Wayne Colonna – Risk Analyst II
3. Tyronne Bailey – Operator
4. Sherrelle Scott – Talent Management Coordinator
5. Delfin Figueroa – Signal Technician
6. Bilesa Herndon – Laborer
7. Latrice Hauser – Operator
8. Timothy Chatmon – Laborer
9. Otmane Elansari – Electrical Equipment Maintainer
10. David Skillern – Janitor
11. Michael Oswald – Operator
12. Sir Baron Williams – Operator
13. Harold Hansbro – Laborer
14. Tareckia Hudson – Operator
15. Manletoe Hurt – Operator
16. Sonja Bivens – Operator
17. Arthemus Herndon – Operator
18. Justin Sims - Operator

Promotions:

1. Amy Snell – Senior Planner

Introduction of Resolutions:

- A. 2021-100 – Authorizing a change order to exercise an option under Contract 2020-071 with Gillig, LLC for the purchase and delivery of up to 20, 40-ft. low floor CNG coaches, as specified, for a price not to exceed \$11,211,397.40 (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.
- B. 2021-101 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-098 with Brokaw, Inc. to provide advertising services for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed \$850,000.00, with two, one-year options in an amount not to exceed \$850,000.00 for each option year, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$2,550,000.00 (General Fund, Administration & External Affairs Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Chief McCall, seconded by Mayor Koomar and approved by unanimous vote.

2021-102 – this resolution was pulled and will be presented at a later date. It is under going a Procurement technical review.

- C. 2021-103 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-105 with Harsco Rail, LLC to provide an Occupied Zone Warning System for a total contract amount NTE \$335,000.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering and Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano seconded by Ms. Pelot and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2021-104 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-164 with CBTS, LLC DBA CBTS Technology Solutions, LLC to provide Next Generation Telephone Service for a base one-year period in an amount not to exceed \$205,000.00, with two one-year options in amounts not to exceed \$205,000.00 per option year, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$615,000.00 through the State of Ohio, Department of Administrative Services Cooperative Purchasing Program (General Fund, Innovation and Technology Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Mayor Byrne and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2021-105 – Authorizing Contract No. 2021-165 with Computer Sciences Corporation, a DXC Technology Company to provide Riskmaster to assure claims migration, software, and services in an amount NTE \$114,870.00 for base year one, and in an amount not to exceed \$59,077.00 for each of the two additional years, for a total contract amount NTE \$233,024.00 for the three-year period (RTA Capital and General Funds, Innovation and Technology Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Byrne, seconded by Chief McCall and approved by unanimous vote.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer, gave the report. The unemployment data for Cuyahoga County and Ohio compared to the U.S is from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. September 2021, the U.S. rate dropped from 5.2% to 4.8%. The Ohio rate remained at 5.4%. The county rate dropped to 4.9%. In October, the U.S. rate dropped to 4.6%, which has been the lowest in nearly two years. Ridership still remains low compared to pre-COVID levels. The 2021 ridership was steady from May to July and increased by 8% in August and September when compared to the previous month. October ridership decreased by 11.9% when compared to 2020. YTD ridership is 14.3% below 2020 levels.

Passenger fares (PF) and sales tax represent the largest source of revenue. PF has increased by 5% in October. YTD passenger fares are 14.1% lower than 2020. Sales tax has remained strong. November receipts, which is based on August activity, is 18.9% higher than November 2020. YTD we are 13.9% higher than 2020. Of the sales tax base, 18 of 23 categories are positive. Comparing November 2021 to November 2020, motor vehicles and watercrafts was 6.8% higher. Online sales are 36.4% higher. Regular and statewide sales were 23.2% higher. This is the fourth consecutive month were liquor receipts were less than the previous year at 9.9% less than November 2020. YTD liquor sales are 12.4% higher than last year.

Through October 2021 CRRSAA funds of \$67.4 million are fully drawdown. ARP funds of \$54.8 million has been drawn down and \$81.3 million will be drawn down in 2022. Federal stimulus funds for the Operating budget is \$98.8 million. Unfunded capital projects is \$152.2 million and Debt reduction is \$60 million totaling \$315 million. Mayor Weiss asked if the unfunded capital projects have not been funded. Is this the last piece from the 2022 budget? Mr. Gautam said back in May

2021 when the Board approved the CIP, unfunded and underfunded projects were identified for \$344 million. This became a strategic effort to say how the funds will be used. The \$156 million was allocated to further reduce the number. They will accomplish this by the reduction in the preventative maintenance dollars/capital funds we were permitted to use to support operations ranging from \$15 million - \$20 million a year. The commitment included no more than \$1 million, which is largely reserved to close out some grants, etc. A significant amount of those dollars will be used to address the unfunded capital projects.

General Manager/CEO Report

India Birdsong, General Manager/CEO, presented the report. RTA has a vaccination incentive program for employees to ensure the staff is healthy. The program will provide \$500 to employees who submit a valid vaccination card through Dec. 31, 2021. The plan is to boost the vaccination rate during the holiday season and cold/flu season. Participation doubled once the incentive program was announced. To date 958 vaccine cards were reported. This is not a vaccine mandate. Currently 281 COVID cases have been reported since March 2020. Moreover, 262 employees have returned to work. We have 2,300 employees. There were spikes during the winter months in quarter four last year. The mobile vaccine bus will rotate through the districts to give vaccines. Hayden District had 54 vaccines given in one day.

Staff attended an information exchange with the Port Authority in Pittsburgh, PA. They met with Katharine Kelleman, CEO & Mike Heidkamp, COO. They looked at their rail operation and busway and historic Incline Wheelhouse. They talked about hiring practices and labor practices. They are in negotiations with their labor unions as well. They visited RTA's operations a few months ago. The Holiday Train will return this year. The Holiday Trolley will be new this year during the Holiday Lighting, Nov. 27 at Public Square for Winter Fest. An ad campaign called The Month of Merry running Nov. 15 – Dec. 23 is supposed to re-engage customers. There will be radio, social media and ads on RTA assets. There will also be prizes for an online quiz.

The Opportunity Corridor ribbon cutting was held recently. This is a new roadway from E. 105 to E. 55th. Several leaders attended including Mayor Frank Jackson and Dr. Marchbanks of ODOT. Dr. Marchbanks also visited our rail facility. RTA is part of the mission and vision for the greater Cleveland area. RTA completed station construction on several stations in the corridor. Staff attended a ground breaking for Woodhill Homes with several city and federal leaders. These type of projects are paramount in connecting RTA with the community.

The Employee Workplace Experience survey was administered Sept. 7 through October 1, 2021. Nearly 900 employees responded, a 50% increase over 2020. The results will be used to develop programs in 2022. There are areas of improvement for supervisor, investment in employees and programs. APTA awarded RTA with the 2021 Rail COVID-19 Gold Award for the use of the Moonbeam 3 disinfecting technology. RTA was one of the first to use it on public transit. It is canine friendly and no liquids are dispersed during its use.

President's Report

President Lucas witnessed RTA receiving the APTA Gold Award. He requested it be brought to a Board Meeting.

Old Business

The Board reviewed the proposed 2022 Board and Committee Meeting schedule and moved to approve the dates.

Public Comments – Non-Agenda Items (comments were submitted in-person and phone)

1. Rev. Pinkney-Butts – She ask that the cameras be checked on the vehicles. She ask that the Superior rapid be checked for updates. How long will people ride free on the train. We're spending too much money policing and not getting people to places safely.
2. Larry Rodriguez – He is a member of NOBLE. Paratransit operators are not being given lunch breaks. They are essential to our mobility and independence.
3. Loh – RTA should use a webform for people who can't submit public comments or having technical difficulties. RTA should consider using YouTube for meetings. The County uses Zoom and YouTube to livestream. Are all the buses taking people where they need to go. Sherwin Williams and NextConnects will change the routes. We need to level up our customer service.
4. Brian Gibbons – He is a member of CPT and rides the #22. He suggested RTA consider having meetings in the evening for those who can't attend early meetings.
5. Hayes Rowan – He asked for a response to buses idling and the stroller policy. Ms. Birdsong stated that staff would follow up.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 21, 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 The public is allowed to attend in-person.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:57 a.m.



President

Attest: 

Secretary/Treasurer