

Minutes

RTA Committee of the Whole Meeting

9:28 a.m., Tuesday, August 9, 2022

Committee Members: Lucas (Chair), Moss (Vice-Chair), Koomar, McCall, Pellot, Weiss, Welch

Not present: Joyce, Biasiotta

Staff: Birdsong, Bober, Burney, Catalusci, Caver, Cottrell-Peffer, Dangelo, Dejesus, Ferraro, Fesler, Fields, Fleig, Garofoli, Gautam, Jones, Kirkland, Kopp, Lincoln, Martin, McGervey, Miller, Miranda, Rusnov, Schipper, Sutula, Walker-Minor, Woodford

Public: Duncan, Farian, Finucan, Gibbons, Goodwin, Loh, McGuinea, Rutledge, Venci

The meeting was called to order at 9:28 a.m. Seven (7) committee members were present. President Lucas welcomed Ms. Burney in her new position as General Counsel, Deputy General Manager, Legal Affairs. Ms. Benford will serve as Senior Advisor through November. President Lucas indicated that he had participated in the Puerto Rican Parade this past Sunday. RTA was well received by the public. Transit Police also participated in the parade.

Transit Police Update

Chief Deirdre Jones, Director, Security/Chief of Police, Lt. Richard Kopp, Transit Police and Ron Woodford, Project Manager gave the presentation.

Transit Ambassador Program

Transit Police believes in proactive policing. They want to demonstrate to the public that they are heard and valued.

Progressive policing and community engagement:

- Reduces law enforcement footprint on GCRTA transit systems
- Integrates unarmed professionals to handle non-criminal issues
- Provides enhanced connection with community
- Addresses rider concerns
- Two-pronged approach:
 - Transit Ambassador (TA) program
 - Crisis Intervention Specialist (CIS)

Transit Ambassador Program:

- Partnership with Transit Police and Service Quality.
- Act as customer service representative for GCRTA
- Increase presence of uniformed personnel on transit system
- Engage public by assisting with fares and deterring fare evasion

TA uniforms will be red shirts and long sleeve polo shirts with the RTA logo on the front and Transit Ambassador on the back. They will wear tan khakis, black uniform shoes or boots.

Duties:

- Provide general information/assistance to riders and members of the public
- Assist riders needing help with navigating the transit system

- Assist riders with boarding/disembarking
- Routinely ride transit lines
- Support operators with implementation of onboard rules for riding
- Maintain high degree of visibility
- Advise Service Quality of security or safety hazard-related issues
- Perform public monitoring for special events
- Request Transit Police assistance as needed
- Serve as liaison for GCTRA approved events
- Help maintain a safe and clean environment

New approach to interact with and assist riders with fare payment:

- Provide riders with service information, fare programs
- Increased presence on RTA system to deter/reduce fare evasion
- Help riders comply with fare policies
- Support and coordinate with operators
- Deployed on routes with high ridership

Crisis Intervention Specialist (CIS)

- Work 1st and 2nd shifts
- Licensed social workers/specialized training
- Perform mental health, homelessness, crisis and substance abuse outreach
- Defuse immediate crises/serve as gateway to resources
- Establish relationships with social service agencies
- Embedded with Transit Police

CIS uniforms will be black, short and long sleeve polo shirts with the RTA logo on the front and Crisis Intervention Specialist on the back. They will wear tan khakis, black uniform shoes or boots.

Partnerships

Agency	Resources
Cuyahoga County Diversion Center	Assist individuals with homeless and substance abuse issues, alternative to arrest
May Dugan Center	Trauma assistance for victims of violent crime on RTA system
NEOCH	Assist individuals with homeless/shelter issues
Stella Maris	In conversation to create MOU

TP is forging new partnerships with a variety of agencies to provide additional support for people who may be in crisis.

Schedule/Hours

- 1st & 2nd shifts (7 am to 3 pm and 2 pm to 10 pm)
 - Subject to change based on need
- Eight to 10 TAs/CIS
 - One to two teams per shift
 - HealthLine
 - Rail stations

REQUIRED TRAINING

Crisis Intervention Specialists and Transit Ambassadors:

- 40 hours Crisis Intervention Team training by the Cuyahoga ADAMHS Board
- Human Trafficking –TSA first observer
- De-escalation
- Defensive tactics
- First Aid/CPR/Narcan
- Customer service
- All required training by human resources
- Flex RMS Training for **(CIS)**, ArcGIS Survey 123 for **(TA)**
- Field orientation/ride along/shadow
- Additional continuing training

ArcGIS Survey 123:

- Real time data collected and entered on a tablet by the TAs
- Partnership between TP, Intelligent Transportation Systems, and Service Quality
- New technology used to gather stats and later create maps and reports
- Information used to monitor and assign TAs

Status Update:

- Six TAs onboarded 8/8/22
- One CIS onboarded 8/8/22
- Modifications to West 65th station being made to accommodate Transit Ambassador office
- Uniforms identified; working with local vendors
- Four weeks of orientation and training for TAs and CIS

Next Steps:

Q1 2022

- Funding sources - Completed
- Policy draft - Completed

Q2 2022

- Recruitment/Hiring TAs - In process

Q3 2022

- Recruitment/Hiring CIS - In process
- All personnel onboarded and trained; first group hired August 8th, 2022

Q3 – Q4 2022

- Program evaluation begins

Ms. McCall said there was a session on this topic at the APTA Transit Board Members Seminar she attended recently. COTA hired off duty officers to ride their bus. Every agency had a different model. She gave kudos to the staff for their work. RTA's program should be highlighted by APTA. The wording on the back of the CIS uniforms needs to be enlarged to help people with visual impairments know that the CIS and TA are riding the system. Will they be on call after 1st and 2nd shift.

Consider partnerships with the City of Cleveland. Clarify the numbers hired for each position. Lt. Kopp said there will be four CIS. To address the on-call issue, they are required to do all reporting. Ms. McCall said the Board should watch the budget for a possible expansion of the program. Think about support for the staff. She asked who is doing the training. Lt. Kopp said they are working with on staff training and with the ADAAMS board. They receive a pin and certificate after their training. She asked if the CIS and TA will have body cameras. Staff said they are still in discussion.

Ms. Moss noted that winter is approaching so the CIS and TA will need jackets. She asked how long will this be a pilot program. Six ambassadors over two shifts mean their presence will not be large on a system our size. She asked what the goal is. Chief Jones said the goal is for this to be a permanent program. It will be 10 TA to start with hopes for expansion to cover more ground on the system. They are working on jackets for the cold weather. Ms. Moss rode a few different transit systems abroad and her ticket was checked twice. It was professional and non-intimidating. And there was a fine for not having your ticket. She asked what will staff do if someone does not have a ticket and what is the consequence. Dr. Caver said the TA will be customer service agents to help them pay the fare and understand the rules. They do not want them to engage in police action. They can call TP for assistance on their radios. They will not inspect fares. Fare enforcement officers will continue to check fares. They can call TP if someone does not purchase a fare. TA can radio Service Quality for assistance. CIS can contact TP directly on their radios.

Ms. Welch thanked the staff for their work. She asked where the CIS and TA will be stationed and if there is a way for civilians to contact a TA if they are in an uncomfortable position. Dr. Caver said the TAs will work on the HealthLine. They will have an office on W. 65th on the Red Line. TP will use data to look at calls for service to improve deployment. Lt. Kopp said we have a security number 575-EYES that allows 24-hour access to TP dispatch via text messages, videos, etc. Ms. Pellot asked if the program includes bilingual services or sign language service. Chief Jones said we have a language bank. Dr. Caver said they continue to recruit bilingual people to fill these positions. They have advertised in Hispanic publications. Ms. McCall suggested Global Cleveland as a partner for bilingual and language services. Ms. Birdsong asked for clarification on the number of TA and CIS and the plan to continue recruitment. Chief Jones said there will be 10 TA and four CIS. Lt. Kopp said they will continue the recruitment process to keep the applicant pool open.

It was moved by Ms. Pellot, seconded by Mayor Weiss and approved to move this program to the full Board.

Civilian Oversight Committee

Chief Deirdre Jones, Director, Security/Chief of Police and Ron Woodford, Project Manager gave the presentation. The purpose of the Civilian Oversight Committee is to review/investigate public complaints filed against GCRTA Transit Police employees and make recommendations. Recommendations must be consistent with GCRTA/TP rules, policies, procedures, collective bargaining agreement.

Police Oversight:

- Increases police accountability
- May assist in liability management/reduce the likelihood of costly litigation
- May identify areas of concern/offer options to improve policing
- Helps improve quality of Internal Affairs investigations
- Increase public understanding of police policies and procedures
- Fosters communication between community and police

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Member Qualifications:

- Ability to remain objective/unbiased
- Reflect customer base
- At least 18 years of age
- Resident of Cuyahoga County
- No criminal history
- General understanding of GCRTA and TP services

Committee Selection:

- Application process
- Screening Committee
 - One or more Board members (selected by Board Chair)
 - GCRTA Chief Executive Officer
 - GCRTA Chief of Police
 - Two or more GCRTA employees (selected by GCRTA Chief Executive Officer)
- Board of Trustees makes final selection from qualified applicants

Committee Composition:

- Seven individuals from diverse communities within Cuyahoga County
- At least one retired police officer with Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA) training and investigative experience
- Selected by application to the COC by the Board of Trustees
- Terms for COC members shall be three years (staggered)
 - Two initial appointments for one year
 - Two initial appointments for two years
 - Three initial appointments for three years

Compensation:

- Recommended \$1,200 per annum paid at \$100/month
- Unlimited transit privileges for COC member
 - COC member shall receive GCRTA badge/ID card

Committee Training:

Internal/External

- Constitutional and other relevant law regarding police-citizen encounters, use of force, stops, searches, and arrests
- Police tactics
- Investigations of police misconduct
- Bias-free policing
- Policing individuals in crisis
- GCRTA/TP policies, procedures, and disciplinary rules
- GCRTA Code of Ethics
- Ohio Sunshine Laws
- Community outreach
- May also include Police ride a-longs, assimilations, and online police training

Complaint/Investigative Process:

- Complaint received by Transit Police
- TP conducts Internal Affairs investigation (if necessary)
- Administrative Commander forwards complaint and investigative materials to COC
- COC hears case within ten days
 - Interview officers, complainant, etc.

- - Majority required to carry any action forward
- COC makes recommendation(s) to Chief of Police

Civilian Oversight Committee:

Phase 1 – Initiate 10/1/21 – 7/29/22

- Present the Board with initial concept
- Gather necessary resources to support development of COC - Completed

Phase 2 – Plan 6/1/22 – 8/30/22

- Develop necessary plans; seek BOT approval
- Review and finalize proposed Operating Procedures
- Execute steps to formally establish COC
 - BOT to pass resolution for creation of the COC

Phase 3 – Execute 8/31/22 – 11/28/22 (Tentative)

- BOT approves finalized Operating Procedures
- Recruit and screen applicants
- BOT appoints seven members to the COC
- COC members receive training

Phase 4 – Control 11/29/22 – 12/28/22 (Tentative)

- Ensure COC functions are carried out in accordance with BOT policy
- Continue training for COC members

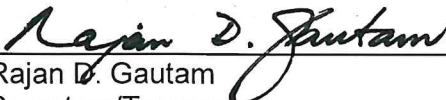
Phase 5 – Close Project 12/29/22 (Tentative)

- COC becomes operational unit

Staff requests that the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Board of Trustees the creation of the Civilian Oversight Committee. Ms. Birdsong said today's presentation is a summary of the structure of the COC. A resolution would be presented at the August Board meeting. The goal is to get into the implementation in the 4th quarter. Some of the information gathered at the Board Retreat was included in today's recommendation. Ms. McCall thanked the staff for their work. Mayor Weiss thanked the staff for incorporating the Board's suggestions into the program. He asked for clarification on the authority of the committee if the COC needs a majority vote to make a recommendation to the Chief of Police about cases. Chief Police confirmed. Ms. Birdsong said the intent is to have this function in a quorum format where a majority of the committee approves a recommendation.

It was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved to move this to the full Board.

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



Rajan D. Gautam
Secretary/Treasurer



Theresa A. Burrage
Executive Assistant