

## Minutes

### RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:05 a.m. September 20, 2022

**Board Members:** Lucas (Chair), Moss (Vice Chair), Koomar, McCall, Pellot, Welch

**Not present:** Biasiotta, Joyce, Weiss

**Staff:** Birdsong Terry, Brooks-Williams, Burney, Caver, Dangelo, Dietrich, Feliciano, Fields, Fleig, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Jones, Kerg, Kirkland, Miller, Mothes, Schipper, Sutula, Talley, Walker-Minor, Young

**Public:** Gibbons, Lau, Loh, O'Reilly, Pinkney-Butts, Rodriguez, Ryan

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. There were six (6) board members present.

It was 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. President Lucas asked for a moment of silence for Board member Mayor Biasiotta who recently lost his father.

## Minutes

President Lucas stated that the minutes from the August 16, 2022 Special Board Meeting and August 23, 2022 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

1. Rev. Pinkney-Butts – The Superior Station is still not fixed. She asked for inclusivity of other issues in East Cleveland. The E. 79<sup>th</sup> Street Station is old. She was not present for the committee report out on the Code Book agenda items. Operators are not getting communication about the agenda items.
2. Larry Rodriguez – Paratransit scheduling wait times are long. Schedulers hang up on him. The wait time for dispatchers is 45 minutes to one hour.
3. Chris Stocking – (web form) - Thank you for adding route #35. After NextGen was completed, parts of the eastside, like East 123rd Street lost service, but #35 has restored this service. I have two suggestions to improve route #35 at no cost.
  1. Right now, #35 runs every 45 minutes, this does not connect well to make transfers at Windermere where many routes run every 30 minutes.
  2. After service cuts and fare increases took effect in August 2016, service south of Severance in Cleveland Heights was discontinued. This was before the MetroHealth Cleveland Heights Clinic was opened there. Patients are not able to access this clinic easily on RTA that live south of Severance.

I have looked at the #35 schedule and think it could be extended south on Taylor Road to Chagrin-Lee to improve access to MetroHealth Cleveland Heights. RTA can do this at no cost by reducing service to hourly. Although hourly service is not ideal, it will create better bus connections at Windermere and allow better access to Severance. That is a win. Could you forward this request to Service Management to evaluate and report back to the board? Thank you for your attention to this matter. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

#### Committee Reports

Dr. Caver reported on behalf of Mayor Biasiotta's Organizational, Services & Performance Monitoring Committee. Mr. Ryan of Western Reserve Coach Sales is present. A paratransit vehicle is outside for touring. He's worked with staff on the paratransit bus project. They are a diamond coach dealer. The coach is built in Kansas. They are a fiberglass honeycomb body manufacturer built on Ford and Chevrolet chassis. They have experience in the RTA and private sector. Their buses are sold and distributed nationally. The fiberglass construction has no metal, so it is conducive to Cleveland winters. You won't see the rust and corrosion. The chassis is lighter for a better ride. They added the MORryde suspension. The buses will be in next summer.

Mr. Garofoli announced that the next meeting of the Audit Committee to review IA quarterly work is November 3, 2022.

#### Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

There was no report from the CAC.

#### Ad Hoc Committee Reports

There were no reports.

#### Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

##### New Hires:

- Linda Powers – Operator
- Shirley James – Operator
- Dagmar White – Operator
- Taneesha Gaston – Operator
- Ryan Graham – Janitor
- George Anderson Jr. – Operator
- Andre Dunnican – Janitor

##### Promotions:

- Ricky Williams Sr. – Service Quality Supervisor
- Nicole Campbell – Benefits Specialist
- Juliana Schultz – ITS Manager
- James Schmidt – Assistant Equipment Manager/Rail
- Tonina Campbell – ITS Manager

#### Service Pins – Board of Trustees

- Rev. Charles P. Lucas – 5 years
- Karen Gabriel Moss – 10 years
- Valarie J. McCall – 15 years



Introduction of Resolutions:

- A. 2022-84 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-017 with B&C Transit, Inc. to provide a Consolidated Train Dispatch System replacement in an amount not to exceed \$4,000,000.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- B. 2022-85 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-080 with the Great Lakes Construction Co. for Project 27Z – Waterfront Line Bridge Rehabilitation, as specified and as required, in an amount not to exceed \$8,481,900.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. McCall and approved by unanimous vote.
- C. 2022-86 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-081 with Rail Development Group, LLC for the furnishing of remanufactured switch machines, as specified and as required, for a period of three years in an amount not to exceed \$155,700.00 (RTA Development Fund, Power and Way Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2022-87 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-087 with Perk Company, Inc. for Project 19.41 – GCRTA pavement repairs, as specified and as required, in an amount not to exceed \$645,000.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pellot, seconded by Mayor Koomar and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2022-88 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-089 with Northeast Battery & Alternator, LLC for the furnishing of bus batteries, as specified and as required, for a period of two years in an amount not to exceed \$144,117.50 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pellot, seconded by Ms. McCall and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2022-89 – Authorizing Contract No. 2022-103 with Western Reserve Coach Sales, Inc. for the purchase of up to 20 Western Reserve Diamond paratransit coaches, as specified, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$2,454,880.00 (RTA Development Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by President Lucas, seconded by Ms. Welch and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2022-90 – Authorizing the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District for student fares for the 2022-2023 school year and ratifying the issuance of passes and tickets for the first day(s) of school, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Moss, seconded by Ms. Pellot. There were five (5) ayes and one abstention from Ms. Welch. It passes.
- H. 2022-91 – Authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of East Cleveland for bus pad rehabilitation along Euclid Avenue, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.
- I. 2022-92 – Amending Section 642.09 Relocation Assistance of the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority and Section 300.05 Relocation Assistance of the Personnel Policies, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Moss added that this was discussed in committee. It's moving these policies from one document to another. Ms. Burney noted that the changes are not a deletion, but simply a cleaning up of redundancies in the Code Book, Personnel Policies and Bylaws.

- J. 2022-93 – Removing Sections 628.05 Housing Allowance, 642.05 Employment at Will, 642.06 Employee Selection, 642.07 Employment of Relatives and 642.08 Employment Eligibility Verification, from the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority as duplicates of the Personnel Policies, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McCall, seconded by Ms. Pellot and approved by unanimous vote.

President Lucas asked for an update from Chief Jones on the Transit Ambassador Program. Chief Jones said the Transit Ambassadors are getting positive feedback. They are doing a hop on/hop off technique on the HealthLine where they talk to the patrons in teams. One ambassador was able to assist a customer that was having a medical emergency. Request have been made for more ambassadors and to expand their territory to other areas.

#### Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Kay Sutula, Director of the Office of Management & Budget gave the report on behalf of Rajan Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer. The U.S. unemployment rate dropped from 3.6% in June to 3.5% in July. Ohio's unemployment rate has remained steady at 3.9%. The county unemployment is not seasonally adjusted which causes the increase. The Bureau of Labor Statistics does not have any updated data for the State and County for August.

Over the past three years the height of the labor force was February 2020 due to the pandemic. After the pandemic we are back to pre-COVID unemployment levels for the five major Metropolitan Statistical Areas in Ohio. For July, unemployment rates for Cleveland are 5.4% down from 5.5%. Cincinnati is 3.4% up from 3.3%. Columbus at 3.3% up from 3.2%. Dayton at 3.8% up from 3.7%. Toledo remains unchanged at 3.9%. August ridership was 19.8% above August 2021 levels and YTD ridership is 19% above 2021. Increases are showing healthy gains compared to the 2021 levels. We are currently in a new contract transitioning from Passport to Masabi for the purchase of fares.

Passenger fares are 16.7% lower than August 2021 and 19.5% lower than budget. YTD they are 17.5% higher than the same period in 2021. Sales tax for September 2022 is 5.7% lower than September 2021 and 7.6% lower than budget. YTD receipts are 6.8% higher than 2021. Sixteen of the 23 categories were positive for September. Motor vehicles/watercraft are 3.0% lower. Online sales were 33.3% higher. Regular/Statewide sales were 7.0% higher. Ms. Moss asked why passenger fares are down. Ms. Sutula said this is due to the transition from Passport to Masabi. Passport provided daily revenue. Masabi is a month in arrears.

#### General Manager/CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO gave the report. Staff attended the TRAC competitive grant hearing, September 14, 2022. Funding requests were made for the Light Rail Track Replacement and 25Connects/MetroHealth Line BRT project. Funding decisions will be announced this December. NOACA was also present. Staff hosted a Legislative Update for several Cuyahoga County state delegation members, September 16, 2022 at the Main Office. Updates included upcoming projects, current state funding and next year's state budget. The installation of the new Transit Ambassadors and Crisis Intervention Specialist was held September 2 at the Main Office. They begin work on the HealthLine and Red Line September 6.



The RTA Cleans Program launched back in June. Cleaning includes interior of buses: high touch points, windows, doors, removal of trash, deodorizing, etc. RTA employees received service pins and certificates for milestones years (5 years to 40 years) of service, September 7 at the Main Office. RTA participated in the City of Cleveland Senior Day, September 15. RTA distributed promo bags to the attendees. GM, CEO Birdsong Terry participated in Trinity Cathedral Sunday Forum, September 11. Topics included transportation access, fare equity and operating beyond traditional expectations. In recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month, RTA placed Hispanic/LatinX diaspora country flags at W. 25<sup>th</sup> Street Station and on bus stop signs along the Clark-Fulton route. Several staff members were a part of the team to make this project possible. Ms. McCall congratulated the staff and suggested we do the same for other special cultural celebrations.

Mr. Feliciano reported that Latinos in Transit was created in 2016. He will attend their leadership conference in Dallas, TX. The group has been growing along with their collaboration with other national groups like APTA and COMTO. Board member Luz N. Pellot and Paratransit Reservationist Operator, Pablo Santiago were honored as 100+ Latinos Cleveland Must Know 2022 Cohort.

RTA's DE&I team created a short film entitled "From Ashes to Beauty: Art, Transportation & Place Making" as part of the "We Wear the Mask" project. It aired at the Atlas Shaker Square, September 18 during the Greater Cleveland Urban Film Festival. The film highlighted the partnership with Elevate the East and the importance of art and public transit. Ms. McCall congratulated the team. She was one of the founding members of the Elevate the East 93<sup>rd</sup> group. She added that the collaboration was started to include more art in the ward and to be connected to the Burten, Bell, Carr, Bell Development area. The connectivity to the E. 93 / E. 105 transit project is important. She asked that the film be shown at the next Elevate meeting.

#### President's Report

President Lucas thanked the "We Wear the Mask" committee. He participated in the 11<sup>th</sup> District Labor Day parade. He thanked Chief Jones for allowing him to parade with the Transit Police during several special events.

#### Public Comments

1. Rev. Pinkney-Butts – She wants a conversation with the public and the police. She wants people of color in the media and communications department. She doesn't see fairness for people of color in the media at RTA. There needs to be more personnel empowerment. She asked if there are issues with transitioning to EZfare. There was no vote on the NextGen title. She asked for a more open line of communication with personnel, staff and public.
2. Loh – Kudos for RTA for leading. Cleveland was selected for a national study. RTA designated some advocates to lead the survey. Riders should have input on the rail cars and fixed route buses.
3. Evan O'Reilly – He represents Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality (NOBLE). He's met with several board members about paratransit service. NOBLE conducted a survey on the service in the spring. He requested to get on the agenda to share the survey results.
4. Airric Stewart – He said there is a change to the call-in format. In previous meetings he could hear the meeting in the background while waiting to be cued up. He repeated his proposal for restoring service on the #15. RTA works for the public.

5. Sherita Montgomery – She asked about the watercraft tax mentioned by Ms. Sutula. She is in favor of the #15 route proposal mentioned by Mr. Stewart. She lives in Ward 1. The proposal is good for the community.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 25, 2022**, in the Board Room of the Authority, Root-McBride Building, 1240 West Sixth Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44113. This meeting will be live streamed on RTA's Board page ([www.RideRTA.com/board](http://www.RideRTA.com/board)) by selecting the meeting date. The public is welcome to attend in person.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

  
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President

Attest:    
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Secretary-Treasurer