

Minutes

RTA Audit, Safety Compliance & Real Estate Committee Meeting

9:01 a.m. August 8, 2023

Committee Members: Koomar (Chair), Moss (Vice Chair), Mersmann, Weiss

Other Board Members: Lucas, Sleasman **Not present:** Biasiotta, Joyce, Welch (virtual)

Staff/Other: Becker, Birdsong Terry, Burney, Caver, Dangelo, Davidson, Fields, Fleig, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Gettings, Hlavacs, Jones, Jupina, Lively, Kirkland, Marquit Renwald, Miller, Schipper, Schultz, Talley, Tarka, Walker Minor

Public: Loh

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m. There were four (4) committee members present.

Security Update

Chief Deirdre Jones, Director, Security/Chief of Police and Michael Gettings, Deputy Chief of Police gave the presentation.

Part 1 Crimes

Part 1 Crimes are more serious offenses that fall under felony statutes. Most of these crimes have stayed consistent over the last three years. A 2023 comparison to 2021 and 2022 from Jan. - June shows a total decline in total offenses. But there is an uptick in felony assaults and auto thefts which is consistent with the rise in thefts of Kia's and Hyundai's.

Quality-of-Life Crimes

A three-year comparison of Quality-of-Life crimes are down. There is an increase in trespassing from 34 in 2022 to 59 in 2023. TP has increased the number of station checks to reduce these and other Quality of Life and Part 1 crimes. TP deploys its crisis intervention co-responder teams to assist trespassers who may need resources. In addition to providing customer service, Transit Ambassadors (TA) now conduct station checks and alert security to station issues.

Operator Assaults – Citations - Electronic Device Thefts

There has not been an increase in operator assaults over the last two years. TP has increased coach checks to increase visibility on the system. They board and ride the coach for several stops and engage the operators. TAs have expanded their checks to the Red Line. The number of citations has decreased from 480 in 2022 to 358 this year. This is related to staffing issues. Once they return to full staff, the number of parking tickets and uniform traffic citations will increase. There is an overall decrease from 2022 regarding electronic device thefts from 36 to 23. The increase in June is due to riders inadvertently leaving their devices on the train. They will work with Marketing to create signs to remind riders to take all belongings before they leave the system.

Free Steering Wheel Lock Program

The Crisis Intervention Specialist (CIS) team has extended their reach by working all three shifts. TP started a Free Steering Wheel Lock Program for Kia's and Hyundai's in July of 2023 as result of an

increase of thefts of these vehicles. This is a nation-wide issue. Fifty-three (53) employees have received a lock. Hyundai and Kia have provided the free locks nationwide. The goal is to stop thefts and destruction of vehicles.

Collaboration on School Safety and Cleveland Hopkins Airport

A cross-agency team was created to develop strategies to increase high school student safety. The team includes representatives from CMSD, CDP, and RTATP. All three agencies meet bi-weekly to share intelligence, maximize visibility at hot spots, and develop proactive cross-agency solutions for emergent issues. Officers will patrol the four hot spot schools.

A cross-agency team was created to develop strategies to address safety concerns at Cleveland Hopkins. The team includes representatives from CLE, CDP, and RTATP. Transit Police Crisis Intervention Specialists are assisting by providing crisis assistance to the unsheltered community and individuals experiencing mental health related issues. A lot of the unsheltered ride the RTA.

Transit Police Staffing

At the start of 2023, TP was down 27% of officers. Human Resources and Transit Police met to review former practices and to understand TP leadership needs. They collaborated with the FOP on the collective bargaining agreement and implemented the following items:

- Enhanced Pay Structure – FOP CBA 2023
- 12-hour shifts in October 2023
- Created a lateral transfer process that allows State certified officers to transfer from other law enforcement agencies
- Reduced TP vacancies by 41%
- We anticipate we will be fully staffed by the end of 2023

Transit Ambassadors

There are currently 10 TA's. They are currently interviewing with a plan to expand the program to 16. They should be fully staffed by mid-September. President Lucas commended the TAs and have noticed them on the trains. Their responsibilities include:

- Coach Checks, Train Checks, and Station Checks
- Customer Service Interactions
- Law Enforcement Referrals
- Service Quality Referrals

Crisis Intervention Specialist Interactions

We currently have 4 CIS. They currently work all three shifts. They team up with TP officers.

- 327 case files created since October 2022
- 307 interactions Jan – June 2023
- We interact with 66 social service agencies in the Greater Cleveland area (NEOCH, FrontLine)
- Five Orders of Detention from the Cuyahoga County Probate Court were issued to require mandatory mental health assessments

Ms. Mersmann asked what RTA TP jurisdiction is and what things they respond to. Deputy Chief Gettings said under the ORC they patrol anywhere our buses and trains travel in addition to our

facilities, stations and shelters. Chief Jones added that the TAs and CIS assist with community engagement events. Ms. Moss asked if the TAs have enough presence. She'd like to see the program expanded. Deputy Chief Gettings said now that they are trained, they are spreading them out to other locations. Chief Jones thanked the executive staff for their support. The LA Metro modeled their TA program after RTA. Ms. Terry ask that the program be reviewed at the end of the year for possible expansion. Mayor Weiss asked if the CISs have a social work background. Chief Jones said they are license social workers. They respond to calls along with one officer. She hopes to expand this program. The CISs work around the system and have worked at the airport.

Mayor Weiss asked if a breakdown of the CIS cases could be presented next time. Mayor Koomar added that lateral transfers receive background checks, psychological evaluations and their personnel files are reviewed. Their physical test is waived since they do that when they join the police force.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 a.m.



Rajan D. Gautam
Secretary/Treasurer



Theresa A. Burrage
Executive Assistant