

## Minutes

### RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:03 a.m. April 16, 2024

**Board Members:** Koomar (Chair), Welch (Vice Chair), Biasiotta, Lucas, McPherson, Mersmann, Pacetti, Sleasman, Weiss

**Not present:** Love

**Staff:** Birdsong Terry (virtual), Brooks-Williams, Burney, Caver, Dangelo, Davidson, Feke, Fields, Fleig, Ford, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Gibson, Hudson, Jones, Jupina, Kirkland, Lincoln, McMahon, Miller, Mothes, Reed, Schipper, Talley, Tarka, Togher, Walker-Minor

**Public:** DCI Consultants (virtual), Kendricks, Loh, Mates, Nix, Pinkney-Butts, Rodriquez, Seals, Turner, Walker, Yontz

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. There were nine (9) Board members present.

It was advised that notice of this meeting had been posted more than twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting, that the usual notification had 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 had been complied with.

### Minutes

President Koomar stated that the minutes from the March 19, 2024 Board Meeting and Annual Meeting had been previously distributed and reviewed, and asked whether there were any additions and/or corrections. There were no corrections. It was moved and seconded. The minutes were approved.

### Public Comments – Agenda Items

1. Rev. Pinkney-Butts – Rev. Pinkney congratulated the retirees. She supports the agenda particularly Item A and Item G. She asked about Item B and Item D. She asked when the Port would open back up. She asks that children not be allowed on the seats. For Item H, she asked if Shaker Square could have a Park and Ride service like 2 Birds Shuttle & Detail.
2. Larry Rodriguez – Larry complained about the smell on the trains. An operator refused to turn on the AC until 30 minutes after he complained.
3. Isaac Shimsky-Agosto (webform) - GCRTA still has not fully implemented EZFare. Passengers wishing to board or exit Tower City must show their pass to an RTA employee, and have the employee unlock the faregate for them. I personally had to wait for an employee to let me out when there was not one at the gates. It is long past time for RTA to connect EZFare scanners to the Tower City faregates.

Dr. Caver said the staff is in the process of getting the equipment to activate the gates with EZFare. The plan was to have it last year, but the company could not produce the units due to COVID related backlog and inventory issues.

4. Airric Stewart – Agendas items are not being posted in enough time so that callers can have informed questions. And questions are not addressed during the public comment section. He hasn't received comments from the CAC about the 48A and 15A. RTA has a responsibility to the public.

The agenda was posted Friday, April 5. The link was sent to Airric Stewart during his call. He was also added to the mailing list to receive notification when the agenda is live on the website.

5. Chris Martin – Public comments are shared by the same people. Meetings should be held at a time when the public can attend, like in the evenings.
6. Bryan Haggan – There is smoking and drinking on the train. And the trains are not clean. There needs to be more police on the service. Bus routes #9, #40 and HealthLine needs improved on-time performance.

#### Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

#### Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

There were 17 new hires and 9 promotions. Their names are listed on the PowerPoint presentation.

#### Introduction of Resolutions

- A. 2024-24 - Expressing congratulations to the employees of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority who retired during the first quarter of 2024, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. Mersmann and approved by unanimous vote.  
  
Several retirees were in attendance and expressed their appreciation for employment with RTA.
- B. 2024-25 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-002 with Kennedy Railroad Services, LLC for Project No. 66B – Port of Cleveland Connector Track in an amount not to exceed \$883,443.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Mayor Weiss. A roll call was requested. There were eight (8) ayes and one (1) abstention from Ms. Mersmann. It passed.
- C. 2024-26 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-5 with Freedman Seating Company for the purchase of Railcar Vinyl Seat Upholstery, as specified, in an amount not to exceed \$298,490.72 (RTA Development Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pacetti, seconded by Ms. Mersmann and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2024-27 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-6 with Premier Window Cleaning LLC for Rapid Station Washing and Cleaning Services for a period of three (3) years in an amount not to exceed \$483,120.00 (General Fund, Rail Facilities Maintenance Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Biasiotta, seconded by Ms. Mersmann and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2024-28 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-023 with Northeast Lubricants LTD. for the furnishing of transmission fluid, as specified and as required, for a period of one (1) year in an amount not to exceed \$103,000.00 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department Budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. Pacetti and approved by unanimously vote.

- F. 2024-29 - Approving the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority's 2024-2027 Quadrennial Equal Employment Opportunity Program and Affirmative Action Goals, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. Mersmann and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2024-30 - Amending Chapter 464 Protection Against Internal Losses of Public Assets and Section 460.06 Insurance Fund of the Codified Rules and Regulations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Mersmann, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.

Judy Lincoln, Director of Risk Management and Dawn Tarka, Associate Counsel II provided responses to Code Book questions that were raised at the April 2 Committee of Whole meeting. The amended changes recommended by the committee were outlined in the redline attachments and in a memo addressed to the Board.

- H. 2024-31 - Authorizing a renewal lease agreement with 2 Birds Shuttle and Detail, LLC for property at the Puritas-West 150<sup>th</sup> Street Rapid Transit Station, located at 4200 West 150<sup>th</sup> Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44135, for a term of ten years at \$12,000.00 per year for the first year and incremental annual increases to \$15,240.00 for the tenth year, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Welch, seconded by Ms. Pacetti. A roll call was requested. There were eight (8) ayes and one (1) abstention from Ms. Mersmann. It passed
- I. 2024-32 - License agreement for access and laydown areas to support the West 117<sup>th</sup> Bridge Rehabilitation Project (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Ms. Welch. A roll call was requested. There were eight (8) ayes and one (1) abstention from Ms. Mersmann. It passed.
- J. 2024-33 - Authorizing a lease between the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority and Century Federal Credit Union for office space located at the Hayden District Garage, 1661 Hayden Avenue, East Cleveland, Ohio 44112, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Mersmann, seconded by Ms. Pacetti and approved by unanimous vote.
- K. 2024-34 - Authorizing a salary adjustment for Anthony A. Garofoli, Executive Director of Internal Audit, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Mersmann, seconded by Ms. McPherson and approved by unanimous vote.

Mayor Weiss, chair of the Compensation Committee added that India Birdsong Terry, CEO/GM and Anthony Garofoli, Executive Director of Internal Audit report directly to the Board. The Compensation Committee conducts the review process and compensation recommendations. The committee recommends a 4.3% merit increase to the base pay for Mr. Garofoli. This is consistent with the merit pool that has been budgeted for non-bargaining employees for 2024. For GM/CEO Terry, they performed an evaluation, but there is no recommended change in her compensation. They entered into a new employment agreement with her in 2023. As part of that new contract, there was no adjustment to be made.

#### Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan D. Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer gave the report. Inflation hit a high of 9.1% in June 2022. It had been declining steadily since then. In March, however it increased

to 3.5% from the previous month's of 3.4%. The Federal Reserve has maintained interest rates since September 2023 at 5.5%. They are scheduled to meet at the end of April and early May to determine if any further action on the interest rates needs to be taken.

March 2024 ridership was 10.3% above 2023 levels. Compared to pre-COVID numbers, 2019 ridership was 7.7 million rides. YTD there was 5.8 million rides or 1.9 million rides lower compared to pre COVID numbers or a 24.6% decrease. Passenger fares are relatively flat compared to February 2024. However, they were 16% above budget. Compared to pre-COVID, passenger fares was \$9.4 million in 2019. YTD for 2024 through the end of March it was \$7.9 million, showing a decrease of \$1.5 million or 15.9%.

April sales tax is not in yet. It will be forwarded when it is available. For March 2024, it was 0.7% higher than March 2023 levels. YTD is flat 0.1% lower compared to 2023. YTD comparing 2024 to 2023, 12 of the 24 categories that make up the sales tax base were positive. Online sales were 13.5% higher. Regular and statewide sales were 0.8% lower. Motor vehicles and watercraft were 5.1% lower.

### General Manager/CEO Report

Dr. Floun'say Caver, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy General Manager for Operations, gave the report. RTA received a \$700K FTA grant to study a redevelopment corridor along Lorain Road from W. 25<sup>th</sup> to the Lorain County Line in the Cities of Cleveland, Fairview Park, and North Olmsted. GM/CEO Terry attended the Cleveland Leadership Center's Cleveland Bridge Builders Class of 2024 event, March 21. The topic was Power and Influence. GCRTA employees received a snack bag for Transit Employee Appreciation Day, March 22. Originated by APTA, this annual celebration recognizes contributions of transit workers and raises awareness of the importance of investing in public transportation infrastructure. Dr. Caver thanked his Operations Division.

On March 25, GM/CEO Terry joined Mayor Justin Bibb, County Executive Chris Ronayne and the Group Plan Commission for a press conference announcing the removal of the jersey barriers from Public Square in preparation for upgrades that will be made to the Square. GM/CEO Terry served on a Women's Leadership panel for the Soul of Philanthropy Event held April 2. Topics included leadership, professional development, work-life balance and educational opportunities for emerging African American female leadership in Greater Cleveland. Internal Audit and Information Technology hosted a Cybersecurity Tabletop Drill, April 2. Topics included organizational awareness and cyber preparedness. A Bus Operator Career Fair was held on April 5 at Tri-C Metro Campus Center. Several hundred offers were made to candidates.

Several RTA employees volunteered to assist RTA customers during the Solar Eclipse and Guardians Home Opener, April 8. Staff were stationed at several stations, assisting customers with safe travel and fare payment. RTA also provided solar glasses to all employees for safety. GM/CEO Terry served on a panel for the 2024 CUBE Symposium: Building Cleveland Together where they discussed opportunities for MBE's and WBEs.

Ms. Mersmann shared that RTA was very helpful to the community during the Solar Eclipse. Rev. Lucas thanked the staff for making that day so special. Mayor Koomar said it was great to have a plan in place for that day.

### President's Report

Mayor Koomar worked with GM/CEO Terry on the new committee assignments. He asks for Board members to reach out to him for questions. He will also follow up with the Board on the travel schedule. Training will be required for Board members who are traveling for the first time.

### New Business

Mayor Koomar asked for the Response to Service Proposals presentation which was presented back on April 12, 2022 to the External & Stakeholder Relations & Advocacy Committee be presented again today. The presentation is for new Board members and to address NextGen concerns that the public has mentioned during Board meetings.

The presentation summarized the route recommendations from the NextGen changes related to the #48/#48A/#50 and #15A. It also summarized recommendations made by community advocate Airric Stewart. The two recommendations were compared. It was determined that no additional changes will be made to the original NextGen service plan. Recommendations came from a thorough analysis from the Service Management team which looked at ridership, efficiency, and the responses from the riders during NextGen community meetings and follow up meetings after the plan was implemented.

### Public Comments – public transit related items

1. Rev. Pamela Pinkney Butts – Rev. Pinkney invited Cleveland Division of Police to the meeting to assist with any questions and concerns the Board may have. Rev. Pinkney supports RTA having an Affirmative Action Plan. The meeting agenda should be provided in braille. Homelessness and mass incarceration is a problem. She thanked HR for their hiring efforts. She gathers information from people who need assistance. RTA used to provide passes for these individuals. East Cleveland and Warrensville Heights needs more shuttle service.
2. Loh – RTA real time display information is not accurate.
3. Airric Stewart – Airric believes his NextGen recommendations are being misrepresented. He went over his recommendations again. The public requested weekend service on the 48A. No request was made to the 50. The ridership on the 48A was not provided. Pinecrest did not exist 20 years ago so there are additional riders to consider.

### Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 21, 2024** 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 10:23 a.m.

  
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President

Attest:   
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Secretary-Treasurer