

Minutes

RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

9:04 a.m. July 30, 2024

Board Members: Koomar (Chair), Biasiotta, Elder, Love, Lucas, Pacetti, Sleasman, Weiss

Not present: McPherson, Welch

Staff: Birdsong Terry, Burney, Caver, Dangelo, Davidson, Fields, Flannery, Ford-Marshall, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Jones, Jupina, Kirkland, Meinke, Miller, Rusnov, Schipper, Talley, Togher, Walker-Minor, Young

Public: Gibbons, Loh, Sopko, Taxwell, Thomas

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m. There were eight (8) 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 June 25, 2024 Board 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. Maxine Taswell – She complained about Paratransit reservationist who don't allow you to take the phone survey. The dispatch has one window for scheduling on Saturdays and Sundays. She asks that the operators get a chance to get out of their seats.

Ms. Terry directed her to Mr. Davidson for follow-up and requested her to share any other concerns that she had written down.

2. Airric Stewart – The customer phone survey still does not work. It consistently disconnects you.

Ms. Terry asked for all callers to be respectful when asking questions. The phone survey is random. Mr. Davidson said the survey is working. They are exploring options to offer the survey to every caller with an option to disconnect if they are not interested in completing the survey. Ms. Terry suggested language be added that the survey is random.

3. Dontez Taylor – Paratransit scheduling needs to be updated. He's been dropped off late several times and Paratransit has been a no show.
4. Jenna Thomas – She is a member of Clevelanders for Public Transit. She attended an open house on the MetroHealth BRT. She is disappointed to see the removal of bus lanes from Detroit to Chattum. RTA is undermining its own project. RTA asked the consultant to remove these bus lanes to preserve parking. She requested the bus lanes be added back, to make changes to meet BRT standards and to review the decision-making process. The 25Connects

Plan called for dedicated bus lanes. The Board should set a standard for what it expects the RTA to do on this project and all future projects.

5. Isaac Shimsky-Agosto (webform) - As we approach the end of another annual month-long shutdown of the Blue and Green Lines, does RTA have a plan to get to a point where these shutdowns are no longer necessary? With the signal upgrade being planned, it obviously won't be next year. These annual shutdowns, combined with the various other smaller shutdowns and service incidents, means that these lines are approaching being out of service by 10% of the year. The replacement buses are less frequent, serve fewer stations, deposit people in a less convenient location downtown, and get stuck in traffic. I recently missed a connection because the replacement bus got stuck in traffic around Progressive Field.

Obviously, lines need to be shut down occasionally for work to be done, and it is good that RTA is investing the resources in maintaining these lines. However, being shut down for 10% of the year is a major problem. RTA should get these lines into a state of repair where month long shutdowns are not an annual occurrence, as soon as possible.

Ms. Terry asked the public for patience during shutdowns for construction projects. The summer months are good for construction so that the ride will be better in the winter.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

Ms. Ida Ford Marshall introduced the new employees, interns and promotions. There were 25 new hires which included interns and three promotions.

Introduction of Resolutions

- A. 2024-48 - Expressing congratulations to the employees of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority who retired during the second quarter of 2024, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Ms. Pacetti and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.

There were 10 retirees.

- B. 2024-49 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-023 with PetroChoice LLC for the furnishing of antifreeze, as specified and as required, for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed \$100,272.50 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pacetti, seconded by Mayor Weiss and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.

Janet Burney, General Counsel added that Ms. Elder would be abstaining from each resolution since today is her first meeting. She did not have the opportunity to receive an overview of each item to make an informed decision.

- C. 2024-50 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-059 with the Osborn Engineering Company for Project 66E1 – Engineering Services for the Red Line Station Platform Modifications in an amount not to exceed \$861,676.92 (RTA Development Fund - Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was

moved by Mr. Sleasman, seconded by Mr. Love and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.

- D. 2024-51 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-062 with CRS Metalworx, Inc. for Project No. 19.14 – Main Office Building HVAC Replacement in an amount not to exceed \$1,575,000.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mayor Biasiotta and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.
- E. 2024-52 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-063 with Warren Roofing & Insulating, LLC for Project No. 20.04 – Main Office Building Roof Replacement in an amount not to exceed \$940,000.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Rev. Lucas, seconded by Ms. Pacetti and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.
- F. 2024-53 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-064 with Hatzel and Buehler Inc. for the furnishing of aerial railroad signal cable in an amount not to exceed \$161,820.00 (RTA Development Fund, Power & Way Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mr. Love and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.
- G. 2024-54 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-065 with Richard L. Bowen & Associates, inc. for Project 66D – Design Services for Central Rail Maintenance Facility Modifications for the new railcars in an amount not to exceed \$472,484.95 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Rev. Lucas, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.
- H. 2024-55 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-91 with Apex Construction & Management Co., Inc. for Project 19.82 – Hayden Garage CMU Painting & Rehabilitation in an amount not to exceed \$116,176.00 (RTA Capital Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pacetti, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.
- I. 2024-56 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-097 with Reladyne, LLC for the furnishing of engine oil, as specified and as required, for a period of one year in an amount not to exceed \$207,920.00 (General Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.
- J. 2024-57 - Authorizing Contract No. 2024-103 with Valley Truck Centers for the purchase and delivery of three (3) 2024 Ford F-350 pickup trucks, equipment and accessories, as specified, through the State of Ohio, Department of Administrative Services, Cooperative Purchasing Program for a total price not to exceed \$175,419.00 (RTA Capital Fund, Fleet Management Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pacetti, seconded by Mayor Weiss and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.
- K. 2024-58 - Authorizing an increase to Contract No. 2022-122 with Clark Transportation Consulting & Services, LLC DBA Bison Rail Systems for Project 12D – Trunk Line Signal System in an amount not to exceed \$1,129,068.56 for a total contract amount of

\$5,593,857.76 and reinstating the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer's change order signing authority in its entirety (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department budget), the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Sleasman, seconded by Mr. Love and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.

- L. 2024-59 - Adopting the Tax Budget of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2025 and submitting the same to the Cuyahoga County Fiscal Officer, the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.
- M. 2024-60 - Approving revised list of positions designated to use purchasing cards, the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pacetti, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.
- N. 2024-61 - Authorizing the General Manager, Chief Executive Officer to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District for student fares for the 2024-2025 school year and ratifying the issuance of passes for the first day(s) of school, the adoption of which was moved by Rev. Lucas, seconded by Ms. Pacetti and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.

RTA has had a long-standing relationship with CMSD to provide student fare passes. The passes have a photo on them used for their ID for school entrance. The contract term is based on the number of rides from the previous year. The cost is \$1.65 a ride compared to the normal fare of \$1.75.

- O. 2024-62 - Authorizing the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority to enter into a purchase and sale agreement with Keene Holdings, LTD., an Ohio Limited Liability Company, in the amount of one hundred forty-five thousand dollars (\$145,000.00) for a portion of Cuyahoga County Permanent Parcel Number 647-09-009 located at 23900 Saint Clair Avenue, Euclid, Ohio 44132, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Sleasman, seconded by Mr. Love and approved by majority vote. Ms. Elder abstained. It passed.

Ms. Terry added that we are taking an interest in Transit Oriented Development (TOD) by transforming dormant land use referenced by Resolution 2024-62 on the purchase and sale agreement with Keene Holdings, LTD.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan D. Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer gave the report. The annual inflation rate has decreased from a high of 9.1% that was set in June 2022. It is down to 3% as of June 2024. The interest rates have been steady at 5.5%. The FOMC is meeting today and tomorrow. In June 2024, ridership was 7.8% higher when compared to 2023 levels. Pre-Covid in 2019 ridership was 15.8 million. For the same period in 2024, we had 12.1 million rides which is lower by 3.7 million or 23.4%. YTD ridership is up 10.7%.

June fare revenue was 24.4% below May 2024. This is a normal season dip with student rides declining in June due to summer break. It is largely still a timing issue. We are expecting some payments within the next few months to normalize passenger fares. Sales tax since Covid has been stable. July 2024 receipts were 7.1% higher than July 2023. YTD sales tax was 1.3% higher compared to 2023. YTD, 13 of the 23 categories that make up the sales tax base were positive.

Online sales were 13.2% higher. Regular and statewide sales were 0.3% lower. Motor vehicles and watercraft were 2.6% lower.

Selected Data

Total Long-Term Debt – 12/31/2023	\$30.3 million
Average Investment Yield – YTD	4.47%
Cash and Investments	
Unrestricted (General Fund)	\$28.6 million
Restricted	<u>\$364.1 million</u>
TOTAL CASH AND INVESTMENTS	\$392.7 million

General Manager, CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO gave the report. The FTA awarded RTA a \$10.6 million grant for an electric vehicle pilot program. This grant could provide up to ten vehicles and three charging stations. The Department of Transportation awarded the City of Cleveland a grant that will help enhance RTA's drainage system on the Red Line near the airport. State Senator Jerry C. Cirino visited the Rail District on July 19. His visit included a tour of the rail shop, a presentation of RTA's Railcar Replacement Program and discussion of workforce development and training.

The Waterfront Line service will resume for special events, for Cleveland Browns home games and weekend and holidays, Aug. 3 and 4. The Red Line W. 117th Street Madison Station is shut down until further notice for needed work on the station's platform and track bridges. Replacement bus service will serve customers during the shutdown. The work will continue through the end of the year. It requires single tracking which results in delays. Ms. Pacetti asked if this is a preventative or reactive project. Mr. Schipper said this project is proactive and one that they wanted to complete prior to the delivery of the new railcars. This is the last of the largest projects. Three Red Line platforms will be replaced in anticipation of the rail cars. An RFP will come to the Board this year for the design. Mayor Weiss asked for a timeline for all construction projects. Mr. Schipper said the platform replacements will be in late 2025 or 2026. The disruption will be single tracking with delays. With a total rail outage, they group projects together. They can provide a schedule for service interruptions.

We held a MetroHealth Line BRT Community Open House, June 27. The plan was presented for public feedback. Over 200 people attended. Chief Jones, Chief of Police, Director of Security received the Heart of Phe'be Award for community engagement, July 27 at City Hall. Chief Jones said this was a team effort. Increased community events helped with exposure and recruitment. RTA staff restored a 1965 bus in celebration of RTA's 50th anniversary. It is on display today in front of the Main Office Building.

Ms. Terry and RTA leaders attended the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO) July 9-12 in Houston, TX. Daveda Bencs and Carl Kirkland represented in their leadership roles. The theme was Transportation Equity: Meeting the Moment. RTA has led the local chapter for decades with several dedicated staff members. Dr. Walker attended the U.S. Department of Transportation and Climate Symposium in D.C. July 11-12. Topics included climate action, TOD and promoting smart growth. Board Member Jeff Sleasman attended the APTA Transit Board Members Seminar, July 13-16 in San Jose, CA. Topics included transit advocacy, workforce development and labor relations, and several other topics. Mr. Sleasman said it was a great way to network and share information with board members across the country. Ms. Terry attended the National Urban League Conference, July 24-27 in New Orleans, Louisiana. She will co-chair the 2025 conference being held in Cleveland. Topics included civil rights and urban advocacy.

Welcome to new board member Anastasia A. Elder, Esq. She was appointed by Mayor Justin M. Bibb, City of Cleveland to replace Calley Mersmann. She is an Associate at UB Greensfelder LLP. She will serve a term ending March 2026. Mayor Koomar is happy about the Waterfront Line service operating again for Cleveland Browns games.

President's Report

Mayor Koomar and VP Lauren Welch will be meeting with Ms. Terry to plan the Board's Mini retreat, scheduled for Sept. 19. That will include strategizing, governance and a district tour.

Public Comments – public transit related items

1. Airric Stewart – DEI was reduced when service was cut with NextGen. No response was given to the survey responses. Results from the phone survey should be known.
2. Rev. Pam Pinkney Butts – Rev. Pinkney Butts is concerned about racial profiling on public transportation. No one answers the Board Office phone. Her safety concerns are never addressed. She has been denied opportunities through the RTA media and press processes. She thanked Ms. Terry for her work.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, August 27, 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) by selecting the meeting date. The public is welcome to attend in person.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:19 a.m.



President

Attest: 

Secretary-Treasurer