



RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

June 17, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

Board Members: Mayor Koomar (Chair), Ms. Elder, Mayor Gallo, Mr. Love, Ms. McPherson, Ms. Pacetti, Mr. Sleasman, Mayor Weiss

Not Present: Rev. Lucas, Ms. Welch

Staff/Other: Nick Biggar, India Birdsong Terry, Janet Burney, Floun'say Caver, Jonathan Ciesla, Melinda Dangelo, Drew Dimmick, George Fields, Bob Fleig, Ida Marshall, Joel Freilich, Anthony Garofoli, Rajan Gautam, Fiona Gibbons, Lawrence Jupina, Carl Kirkland, Sheila Miller, Joshua Miranda, Charles Morgan, Holly Mothes, Zane Patterson, Mike Schipper, Michael So, Kay Sutula, Wendy Talley, John Togher, Natoya Walker-Minor, Fawntaine Walls, Hope Williams, Kimberly Wright, Carolyn Young

Public: Allen Allred, Johnny Brewington, Brian Gibbons, Sarah Hall, Lori Ingram, Joe Kubic, Nichole Laird, Loh, Brian Ohl, Joseph Sopko, MD

I. Call to Order

- a. Mayor Koomar, President, called the meeting to order at 9:54 am.

II. Roll Call

- a. There were Eight (8) Board members present, representing a quorum.

III. Certification regarding Notice of Meeting

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

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. The minutes from May 20, 2025, Board Meeting had been previously distributed and reviewed. One correction was noted in the President's Report regarding the spelling of the name Allan C. Krulak. A motion to approve the minutes with the necessary correction was made by Mayor Weiss and seconded by Mayor Gallo and unanimously approved.

Mayor Koomar called Janet Burney, Deputy General Manager for Legal Affairs, to administer the oath of office to Emily Garr Pacetti, who was reappointed by the Cuyahoga County Council to a new three-year term as a trustee of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority Board (GCRTA). Trustee Pacetti took the oath, affirming her support for the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Ohio, and pledged to honestly, faithfully, and impartially perform her duties as a board member.

V. Public Comments – Agenda and Non-Agenda Items

The public comment section has been consolidated to include agenda and non-agenda items.

Members of the public addressed the Board regarding both agenda and non-agenda items.

There were no in-person comments.

1. Airric Stewart – Cleveland, OH (caller) – Addressed the Board of Trustees to express concerns about how his previously submitted online and phone comments had been inaccurately reflected in the meeting records. He stated that his public comments, submitted via the webform, had not been entered correctly and were often altered to reflect what someone interpreted he meant rather than what he actually wrote. He emphasized that public comments should be included verbatim for the public record to preserve their intent and meaning. Mr. Stewart requested that his prior comments be corrected and asked for a clear explanation as to why this practice had occurred. He also criticized the handling of public input as a misuse of public resources. In response, Mayor Koomar, Board President, acknowledged Mr. Stewart's concerns, noted that meeting minutes are typically summarized rather than transcribed verbatim, and committed to following up with management to review the handling of online public comments.
2. Airric Stewart – Cleveland, OH (webform) – Post this verbatim. It has been 4 years since the initial implementation of the NextGen program. The number 50 route is not now and has never been faster than the 48A between the 2 endpoints of E. 177th and South Miles and E. 93rd. The question as to why RTA made the false claim that the 50 is faster has still not been answered. Nor does it give better service to businesses in Lee-Seville. The 48A served more people through Mount Pleasant. RTA has still not explained why they falsely claimed the 50 served more people through Mount Pleasant. The suggested 15A will give better direct service to the 61 businesses in Pinecrest for people in Ward 1. The 440 276-4600 phone number should be active for the entire Board of Trustees meeting. This is whether someone is commenting or not. They should be able to listen. RTA does not require the people in person to leave after their public comments or questions and just go online. Phone callers should be able to listen after their public comments or questions. The City of Cleveland committed \$12 million to the well-being of Shaker Square. The 15A and 48A would give exceptionally good ridership service to Shaker Square. RTA has a responsibility to the socioeconomic well-being of the public through the implementation of public transit. The NextGen system has failed in that pursuit as it applies to the previously mentioned. I've still have not had any communication with the CAC because of the CAC's negligence. 404 869 0655 Airric Todd Stewart

VI. Board Governance Committee Report

- a. No committee report

VII. Operational Planning & Infrastructure Committee Report

- a. No committee report

VIII. Organizational, Services & Performance Monitoring Committee Report

- a. No committee report

IX. Audit, Safety Compliance and Real Estate Committee Report

- a. No committee report

X. External and Stakeholder Relations and Advocacy Committee Report

- a. No committee report

XI. Committee of the Whole

- a. No committee report

XII. Civilian Oversight Committee (COC) Report

- a. No committee report

XIII. Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

- a. Trustee McPherson provided an update on recent activity with the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), noting that recent meetings focused on community projects have been productive. She expressed appreciation for the progress being made, particularly with the CAC subcommittees. It was also noted that three members of the CAC are scheduled to be reappointed at the end of the meeting.

XIV. Ad Hoc Committee Reports

- a. No committee reports.

XV. Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

- a. Ms. Marshall, Senior Manager, Talent Acquisition introduced several new employees and announced recent promotions. New hires included bus and rail operators, transit police officers, laborers in both safety-sensitive and non-safety-sensitive roles, equipment electronic maintainers, and staff for the main office in roles such as workers' compensation examiner and senior adjuster in the legal department. These additions support RTA's mission to connect the community and enhance service delivery across departments.

Ms. Marshall also announced several individuals were recognized for their hard work and leadership with promotions. New roles included a project and performance leader, a manager of customer experience, and a talent acquisition team leader who will support recruitment efforts alongside the existing team. Ms. Marshall concluded by expressing excitement for the growth of the workforce and appreciation for the contributions of both new and promoted team members.

XVI. Introduction of Resolutions

- A. 2025-68 - Authorizing Contract No. 2025-013 with The Adcom Group, Inc. to Provide Integrated Marketing Services for a Period of Three Years in an Amount Not to Exceed \$2,100,000.00 with Two, One-Year Options in an Amount Not to Exceed \$700,000.00 for Each Option Year, Respectively, for a Total Contract Amount Not to Exceed \$3,500,000.00 for a Five-Year Period (General Fund, Administration & External Affairs Department Budget) the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Elder, seconded by Ms. McPherson and approved by majority vote. Mayor Weiss abstained.

Mayor Koomar introduced the Adcom representatives: Mr. Joe Kubic, CEO and Ms. Sarah Hall, Vice President, account lead. Ms. Hall addressed the board, expressing enthusiasm about partnering with RTA. She highlighted her 13 years at Adcom and shared her personal experience as an RTA rider. She emphasized the agency's excitement to bring fresh thinking, creative strategy, and a dedicated team to help advance RTA's mission. Mayor Koomar and Ms. Terry responded with appreciation for Adcom's local presence and collaborative spirit, while

also acknowledging the previous marketing firm's long-standing service. They expressed excitement about the transition to digital media and the future of the partnership.

- B. 2025-69 – Authorizing Contract No. 2025-048 with Standard Contracting & Engineering, Inc. for Hayden Garage Lift Replacement – Phase 1 in an Amount Not to Exceed \$115,000.00 (RTA Development Fund, Engineering & Project Development Department Budget) the adoption of which was moved by Ms. Pacetti, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- C. 2025-70 – Authorizing Contract No. 2025-84 with CBTS, LLC dba CBTS Technology Solutions, LLC to Provide Next Generation Telephone System Services for a Period of One Year Through The Ohio Department of Administrative Services, Cooperative Purchasing Program, in an Amount Not to Exceed \$209,918.16 (General Fund, Information Technology Department Budget) the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Sleasman, seconded by Ms. McPherson and approved by unanimous vote.
- D. 2025-71 – Authorizing Contract No. 2025-082 with 9280-0366 Quebec Inc. DBA Transit, to Provide Transit Application Services in a Total Contract Amount Not to Exceed \$367,119.21 for a Period of Four Years (General Fund, Management Information Services Department Budget) the adoption of which was moved by Mr. Love, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- E. 2025-72 – Authorizing an Increase to 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 the Amount of \$18,384.31, for a New Total Contract Amount of \$590,762.24, 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 Ms. Elder, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- F. 2025-73 - Authorizing An Increase to Contract No. 2024-112 With SONA Construction, LLC for Project 19.60 – Brookpark Maintenance Facility Modifications in the Amount of \$151,015.42 for a New Total Contract in the Amount of \$1,475,927.86, 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 Ms. Pacetti and approved by unanimous vote.
- G. 2025-74 – Authorizing an Increase to Contract No. 2023-155 with The Great Lakes Construction Co. for Project 52N – Tower City East Portal Rehabilitation in the Amount of \$1,194,167.77, for a New Total Contract in the Amount of \$17,917,411.74, 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 Ms. Pacetti, seconded by Mr. Sleasman and approved by unanimous vote.
- H. 2025-75 – Authorizing Contract No. 2025-85 with Wadsworth Solutions for the Purchase of Hardware, Software, Licenses, and Supplies for the Access Control Upgrade Through the Ohio Department of Administrative Services, Cooperative Purchasing Program, in an Amount Not to Exceed \$159,100.00 (RTA Capital Fund, Transit Police Department Budget) the adoption of which was moved by Mayor Weiss, seconded by Ms. Elder and approved by unanimous vote.
- I. 2025-76 – Reappointment of Three Members to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) the adoption of which was moved by Ms. McPherson, seconded by Ms. Elder and approved by unanimous vote.

Trustee McPherson, serving as board liaison for the Community Advisory Committee, announced the reappointment of three members. The reappointed members are Johnny Brewington, Nicole Laird, and Dr. Joseph Sapko. Mr. Brewington, a former Fire Chief for the Village of Woodmere and retired Battalion Chief for the City of Cleveland, is also a member of the 2024 National Fire Heritage Center Hall of Legends and serves on the board of the Western Reserve Fire Museum and Education Center. He is a regular rider of RTA's fixed route and rail services. Ms. Laird is a senior planner with the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission and a trustee for the Ohio chapter of the American Planning Association; she uses fixed route services daily for commuting. Dr. Sapko, a retired physician from St. Vincent Charity Hospital, previously served on the Community Advisory Committee and currently serves as president of The Les Delices and as a Coast Guard Auxiliary Commodore. He also regularly uses RTA services. The newly reappointed members will be sworn in at the conclusion of the meeting.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan D. Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer, presented the Secretary-Treasurer's report. He noted the report would be brief due to some delayed data. Economic conditions were reviewed, with inflation slightly increasing from 2.3% in April to 2.4% in May 2025. Consumer sentiment continued to decline in May, with year-ahead inflation expectations rising from 6.5% to 7.3%. Ridership through May was 0.6% below 2024 levels and 24% below pre-COVID 2019 levels, representing a 3.2 million ride decrease. Passenger fare revenue for May was 15% below the previous year, primarily due to the timing of CMSD and U-Pass receipts, with current year-to-date revenue at \$9.7 million compared to \$12.2 million in 2019—a decline of \$2.5 million or 20.5%. Sales tax figures for June were not yet available at the time of reporting. Long-term debt remained unchanged at \$22.3 million. The year-to-date average investment yield was 4.05%, with unrestricted cash and investments totaling \$34.2 million and restricted funds at \$331.1 million, for a combined total of \$365.3 million. Additionally, the first \$10 million of a planned \$50.5 million transfer from the Revenue Stabilization Fund was completed in May. The report concluded without further updates.

General Manager, CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO provided a broad overview of several key updates and accomplishments with the board. A major highlight was the successful replacement of five HVAC units on the roof of the historic Main Office Building, a complex project requiring extensive coordination among multiple departments. Gratitude was expressed for the team's effort and the board's flexibility during this time. Ms. Terry also celebrated the agency's receipt of its 37th consecutive Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, commending the finance team for their excellence.

A legislative update included testimony at the Ohio Statehouse, where GCRTA staff successfully advocated against a proposed amendment that would have negatively impacted student transfers through major transit hubs. Their efforts led to the removal of the amendment, preserving equitable transit access for students. The agency's active participation in the local chapter of COMTO (Conference of Minority Transportation Officials) was also highlighted, with recent recognition events celebrating local transit pioneers and employees.

Other updates included the successful Bus Rodeo held on May 31, which celebrated operator excellence and safety with various awards and community participation. Ms. Terry acknowledged new promotions in the Customer Experience and Performance Management team, introducing Nick

Bigger, Kim Wright, and Zane Patterson, who will lead internal initiatives like Gemba field observations and an Employee Riders Council to enhance rider feedback and service improvement. Additional updates included GCRTA's participation in the Greater Cleveland Partnership's legislative fly-in to Washington, D.C., which provided opportunities to engage federal agencies and legislators. The agency also celebrated a national award for the "Elevate the East" mural at the Central Bus Maintenance facility, reaffirming its commitment to community partnerships and public art. Participation in the June 11 TOD (Transit-Oriented Development) Summit was noted, reinforcing GCRTA's role in regional planning and development. Lastly, Ms. Terry shared insights from the "Engage Cleveland" event, where she mentored emerging local professionals and identified potential talent for the agency.

President's Report

No President's report at this time.

Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, July 15, 2025** 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.

President Koomar invited the Community Advisory Committee members to gather up front for their official swearing-in.

There being no further business to bring before this Board, a motion to adjourn the meeting by Mayor Koomar and seconded by Ms. Pacetti was approved by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 10:44 am.



President

Attest: 

Secretary-Treasurer