



## RTA Board of Trustees Meeting

December 16, 2025

### MEETING MINUTES

**Board Members:** Mayor Koomar (President) Ms. Pacetti (Vice President), Ms. Elder, Mayor Gallo, Mr. Love, Ms. McPherson, Mr. Sleasman, Mayor Weiss, Ms. Smith Whigham

**Staff/Other:** Shawn Becker, Nick Biggar, India Birdsong Terry, Felicia Brooks-Williams, Janet Burney, Floun'say Caver, Brent Charnigo, Wayne Colonna, Nick Davidson, Wendy Feinn, George Fields, Bob Fleig, Joel Freilich, Catherine Galla, Anthony Garofoli, Rajan Gautam, Sharon Jenkins, Chief Deirdre Jones, Lawrence Jupina, Carl Kirkland, Ida Marshall, Sheila Miller, Charles Morgan, Steve Peganoff, Mike Schipper, Kay Sutula, Wendy Talley, John Togher, Eric Vukmanic, Carolyn Young

**Public:** Kevin Hinkle, Ron Jackson, Loh, Joseph Sopko, Carren Woods

#### I. Call to Order

Mayor Koomar called the meeting to order at 10:50 a.m.

#### II. Roll Call

A quorum was present.

#### III. Certification regarding Notice of Meeting

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

Ms. McPherson moved, and Mr. Sleasman seconded to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2025, Board Meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### V. Executive Session Requested – to discuss details of security arrangements and emergency response protocols

Mr. Sleasman moved, and Ms. McPherson seconded to go into Executive Session. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Board was in Executive Session from 9:02 a.m. to 9:42 a.m.

Mr. Sleasman moved, and Ms. McPherson seconded to resume the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### VI. Public Comments – Agenda and Non-Agenda Items

Members of the public addressed the Board regarding both agenda and non-agenda items. Public comments submitted through the webform will appear in their original form and have not been edited for grammar or content. GCRTA reserves the right not to publish any explicit language, derogatory remarks, or personal attacks against individuals.

##### 1. Ron Jackson, Maple Heights (in-person)

Mr. Jackson stated that he was an avid paratransit writer, and highlighted recurring issues with paratransit pickup times being changed at the last minute, resulting in missed appointments and financial loss. Mr. Jackson expressed frustration over the lack of follow-up after lodging complaints and requested a remedy for his inconvenience.

##### 2. Len (in-person)

The speaker stated that service reductions decrease independence – particularly for people with disabilities. The speaker also raised concerns about the sensory environment of certain vehicles and called for more sensory-friendly practices and vehicle inspections.

##### 3. Teresa Reed (in-person)

Ms. Reed recounted multiple instances of delayed pickups and cancellations, particularly as a diabetic, and urged the Board to ensure timely and reliable paratransit service.

##### 4. Kevin Hinkle (in-person)

Mr. Hinkle described a recent safety incident and urged stricter enforcement of policies to prevent passengers from blocking bus aisles.

##### 5. Paul Meissner (in-person)

Mr. Meissner stated that transit agencies across the country have similar financial challenges as RTA and urged transparency and proactive communication regarding potential fare increases or service cuts.

##### 6. Carren Woods -- Cleveland (in-person)

Ms. Woods thanked GCRTA for their service and stated that she appreciated the kindness paratransit staff showed her.

##### 7. Airric Stewart (phone)

Mr. Stewart stated that he would like to know the answer to the following questions. Once the payment has been fully made on the new railcars, even if there's interest included, what will the full cost have been for putting in these new railcars? Is there going to be an additional cost separate from your regular payments to your employees to adjust the rails for the railcars?

Are you looking to get more buses and if so, at what cost and how many buses are you behind on payment for the current new buses that you have prior to April 15 of this year. Did you already know that you were going to have to make some adjustments because you were running behind in cost on your on your duties to your employees, meaning that you going to have to reduce some employees, reduce some services, and if you did know that, did you know that? It was going to be \$11 million as it was reported in the newspaper recently. And if you didn't know it was \$11 million that, you know, it was going to be any at all.

And if you're going to do some reductions and you already know what they are, could you state them today instead of dropping them on the public at the last minute. You need to raise fares. You need to go ahead and raise them now and get it out the way so the public can make the necessary adjustments for that.

8. Airric Stewart, Cleveland (webform)

Post this verbatim. Do you already know if the 50, 48, 15, 14, 40, and 19 bus routes are going to have reductions in service in the upcoming year? It is best to let the public know about this as soon as possible. There has still not been any questions answered on my last six (6) webforms and public comment phone calls. RTA has a responsibility to the socioeconomic well-being of the public through the implementation of public transit. RTA has failed at this responsibility by refusing to not implement the repeatedly suggested number 48A and 15A routes--timespan suggestions included. The public is owed a fair opportunity to receive the facts on these suggestions and make a thorough examination so that ridership can make a decision if they want these routes. Respect the accurate assessment of the facts. The imagery that is being used by this taxpayer-funded public agency's leadership to mislead the public is foul on multiple levels. Healthy efficiency should be RTA's highest priority in reference to the routes.

9. Benjamin Delfino, Mayfield Village (webform)

Of all of the options that RTA/NOAWCA had for the Health Line you choose the worst. Replace it with a Light Rail Line that begins at Van Aken (Blue Line) and ends at the Terminal Tower. From East 30th Street to Public Square run it underground.

10. Urvish Patel, Cleveland (webform)

My name is Urvish Patel, and I am writing to respectfully request that RTA continue its partnership with Cleveland State University (CSU) and not discontinue the student transit pass program. I am an international student at CSU, and owning a car is not financially possible for me. RTA buses and trains are my only reliable means of transportation, allowing me to commute daily between my home and the university for classes, research, and teaching responsibilities.

Beyond academics, I depend on RTA for essential daily needs, including grocery shopping especially to Indian grocery stores (in Parma), clothing, and other necessities. The Red Line is also my only affordable option to reach the airport. RTA is not just transportation for me; it is essential to my daily life.

The CSU student pass is truly life-changing. Regular fares cost about \$100 per month, while the CSU pass costs around \$60 for four months, saving me approximately \$340 per semester. This

amount covers groceries, phone bills, or a portion of my rent. I sincerely beg you to please continue this service, as it is essential for students like me to continue our education.

In response, CEO India Birdsong Terry clarified that the CSU student pass program remains active, following a reversal of an earlier decision by CSU to discontinue it. No service cuts were planned for 2025, and any potential changes would be communicated well in advance.

**VII. Board Governance Committee Report**

An affidavit signed by Trustee Smith Whigham was read into the record.

**VIII. Operational Planning & Infrastructure Committee Report**

No committee report

**IX. Organizational, Services & Performance Monitoring Committee Report**

No committee report

**X. Audit, Safety Compliance and Real Estate Committee Report**

Mayor Weiss stated that the Committee will have a follow-up meeting in January with the hope of approving the updated Audit Charter in February. He distributed a sheet that provides an opportunity for Board members to suggest topics for the 2026 audit plan.

**XI. External and Stakeholder Relations and Advocacy Committee Report**

No committee report

**XII. Committee of the Whole**

No committee report

**XIII. Civilian Oversight Committee (COC) Report**

No committee report

**XIV. Community Advisory Committee (CAC)**

The CAC Rules Committee will meet Thursday, November 20, at 9:00.

**XV. Ad Hoc Committee Reports**

- a. Ad-Hoc Compensation Committee
- b. Ad-Hoc Nominating Committee

No committee report

XVI. Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

Ms. Marshall, Senior Manager, Talent Acquisition provided an update on new hires and promotions for December. She noted that this month's additions are considered essential and are primarily in operations, including a group of new bus operators. Ms. Marshall welcomed the new employees, emphasizing their role in ensuring safety and reliability for riders.

XVII. Introduction of Resolutions

A. 2025-111 – REAPPOINTMENT OF EIGHT MEMBERS TO THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

Floun'say Caver, Chief Operating Officer, stated that the size of the committee may have a number of individuals between 11 and 15. With the reappointment of eight (8) members, the total of members of the Committee would be 11.

Dr. Caver also noted that the Board has the responsibility to develop a selection process and may add up to four (4) members at its will.

Ms. McPherson moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. Smith Whigham. The motion was approved unanimously.

B. 2025-112 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2025-100 WITH KNOX KERSHAW, INC. FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF A BALLAST REGULATOR IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$566,558.00 (RTA DEVELOPMENT FUND, FLEET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Mr. Sleasman moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mr. Love. The motion was approved unanimously.

C. 2025-113 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2025-128 WITH COOK PAVING & CONSTRUCTION CO., INC. FOR LIGHT RAIL RETAINING WALL REPAIRS – PHASE III IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$1,360,138.00 (RTA DEVELOPMENT FUND, ENGINEERING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Mr. Sleasman moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. McPherson. The motion was approved with one abstention by Mayor Weiss.

D. 2025-114 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2025-132 WITH SLE TECHNOLOGIES, INC. FOR PARATRANSIT VEHICLE LIFT REPLACEMENT – PHASE I IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$612,814.42 (RTA DEVELOPMENT FUND, ENGINEERING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Mr. Sleasman moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. McPherson. The motion was approved unanimously.

E. 2025-115 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2025-156 WITH ORACLE AMERICA, INC. TO PROVIDE ORACLE EBS SOFTWARE LICENSES, MAINTENANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$756,632.95 (GENERAL FUND, MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Mayor Weiss moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. Pacetti. The motion was approved unanimously.

F. 2025-116 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2025-157 WITH TRAPEZE SOFTWARE GROUP, INC. TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL LICENSES FOR ITS TRAPEZE PARATRANSIT SOFTWARE IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$395,500.00 (GENERAL FUND, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Ms. Pacetti moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mr. Sleasman. The motion was approved unanimously.

G. 2025-117 – AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF PROPERTY INSURANCE FROM LIBERTY MUTUAL AND EVANSTON INSURANCE COMPANY, THROUGH AON RISK SERVICES NORTHEAST, INC., FOR A PERIOD OF TWELVE (12) MONTHS FOR A TOTAL CONTRACT AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$1,453,938.00 (GENERAL FUND, RISK MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

Mayor Weiss moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mr. Sleasman. The motion was approved unanimously.

H. 2025-118 – AMENDING ARTICLE VII OF THE BYLAWS AND SECTIONS 220.03 AND 642.01 OF THE CODIFIED RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE GREATER CLEVELAND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY AND REPEALING SECTION 620.04 OF THE CODIFIED RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE GREATER CLEVELAND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Mr. Sleasman moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. McPherson. The motion was approved unanimously.

I. 2025-119 – AMENDING CHAPTERS 460 AND 842 OF THE CODIFIED RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE GREATER CLEVELAND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Rajan Gautam, Deputy General Manager, Finance, reminded the Board that the proposed provisions in Chapter 460 relate to the 15-day floor, the Budget Stabilization Fund and the creation of the TOD Reserve Fund. The changes previously proposed to the operating ratio have not been made and the language remains the same.

Mr. Sleasman moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. Pacetti. The motion was approved unanimously.

J. 2025-120 – AMENDING SECTION 1013.04 AND CHAPTER 1086 OF THE CODIFIED RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE GREATER CLEVELAND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Mayor Gallo moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. Smith Whigham. The motion was approved unanimously.

K. 2025-121 – APPROVAL OF THE AUTHORITY'S 2026 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AGENCY SAFETY PLAN ("PTASP")

CEO Terry noted the work that has gone into the PTASP, which codifies the work that goes into maintaining the safety of the system.

Mayor Koomar moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mayor Gallo. The motion was approved unanimously.

L. 2025-122 – MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES FOR THE GREATER CLEVELAND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY DURING FISCAL YEAR 2026

Mayor Weiss moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mayor Gallo. The motion was approved unanimously.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan Gautam, Deputy General Manager of Finance and Secretary-Treasurer, presented the Secretary-Treasurer's report.

Consumer sentiment has been consistent during recent months. Year-to-date ridership was 1.3% lower than 2024 levels and 23.8% below 2019 pre-COVID levels, with fare revenue reflecting similar trends. Large receipts are 2.9% below 2024 levels and 25% below 2019. November 2025 receipts were 3.4% lower when compared to the previous year. Year to date, we had 3.6% higher when compared to last year. Ridership for 2025 is 22.6 million compared to 22.9 million in 2024, but below 29.6 million in 2019.

Moving to the 2025 budget, Mr. Gautam stated that staff budgeted a transfer of \$50.5 million from the Revenue Stabilization Fund to support operations. To date, \$45 million has been transferred. Staff will monitor whether the entire budgeted amount will be utilized by year end.

Long-term debt remained steady at \$13.9 million and an \$8 million principle payment was made in early December. Investment yields averaged just over 4%. Total cash and investments were \$347.6 million, of which \$316.1 million is in restricted funds. The unrestricted or General Fund cash and investments amount is \$31.5 million. Mr. Gautam noted that long-term debt has decreased dramatically since a high of nearly \$170 million in 2012. If no new debt is issued, GCRTA will be debt-free by the end of 2030.

Mayor Koomar noted that ridership has decreased slightly from 2024 to 2025. Mr. Gautam stated that ridership has been relatively stable, but increased year-to-year following the pandemic. Staff will continue monitoring that to determine whether this is a trend to be concerned about.

**XVIII. General Manager, CEO Report**

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager and CEO, began the report by acknowledging recent fatalities on the transit system, emphasizing the agency's commitment to safety and the swift response of transit police. Staff worked with local authorities to ensure that both perpetrators were captured and apprehended within an hour or less of both incidents. She assured that staff does everything it can to monitor the system and be there when needed.

Moving to the next subject of the report, CEO Terry stated that GCRTA was awarded over \$4 million through the Ohio Department of Transportation in a partnership that focuses on low or no-emission vehicles and training. Discussions are ongoing regarding efforts to modernize the vehicle fleet with CNG, diesel, and hybrid vehicles.

CEO Terry stated that she represented the Authority during a "Fireside Chat" at In Council With Women, the Plexus Young Professionals Dinner, the American Public Transit Association and the Ohio Public Transportation Association, which is an advocacy organization that recognized GCRTA for its 50th anniversary.

The importance of the Employee Assistance Program was highlighted, which is provided by Moore Counseling, in supporting staff through personal and professional challenges.

CEO Terry is in the midst of conducting holiday district visits with a mini state of the agency for employees.

CEO Terry welcomed new Board member Ms. Smith Whigham and congratulated Mayor Weiss for his re-election to the Board.

A moment was taken to honor the late Gizella Gregoire, former legal secretary and office manager, for her decades of dedicated service to RTA.

**XIX. President's Report**

Mayor Koomar reiterated the importance of timely feedback for the 2026 risk-based internal audit plan and encouraged board members to submit their suggestions promptly.

**XX. Old Business**

No items.

**XXI. New Business**

No items.

**XXII. Upcoming Meetings**

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 20, 2026.

XXIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mayor Koomar and seconded by Ms. Pacetti; the motion was approved by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

Attest: Rajin D. Pantam  
Secretary-Treasurer

Paul Koomar  
President