



## GCRTA Board of Trustees Meeting

February 17, 2026

### 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:** Tom Allen, Shawn Becker, India Birdsong Terry, Nick Biggar, Janet Burney, Floun'say Caver, Brent Charnigo, Sharon Cottrell, Nick Davidson, Dan Dietrich, George Fields, Bob Fleig, Joel Freilich, Catherine Galla, Anthony Garofoli, Rajan Gautam, Fiona Gibbons, Sharon Jenkins, Lawrence Jupina, Carl Kirkland, Ida Marshall, Sheila Miller, Charles Morgan, Jim Rusnov, Kay Sutula, Wendy Talley, Brian Temming, John Togher, Kimberly Wright, Carolyn Young

**Public:** Mark Aesch, Brian Gibbons, Kevin Hinkle, Bianca Robinson, Tanya Stowers, David, Tettey, Carren Woods

#### I. Call to Order

Mayor Koomar called the meeting to order at 10:11 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. Pacetti moved, and Ms. Elder seconded to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2026, Board Meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

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

Mr. Hinkle thanked the bus drivers for their helpfulness during the winter weather.

2. Carren Woods (in-person)

Ms. Woods expressed appreciation for the paratransit operators during the recent harsh winter conditions. She also emphasized the importance of kindness.

3. Airric Stewart (phone)

Mr. Stewart wished to know the contractor that received a payout mentioned during the Internal Audit Report. He wanted to know whether the money spent with a particular contractor was consistent with what was expected.

Mr. Stewart also questioned how GCRTA arrives at its on-time performance and customer satisfaction data.

Responding to Mr. Stewart's question regarding Internal Audit, Mr. Garofoli stated that the total value of the Siemens mobility contract in change orders remains \$344,389,850. Total payments for the contractor as of January 30 are \$125,339,525, representing 36% of the total contract amount. This is a contract amount that includes the change order in its total.

4. Airric Stewart, Cleveland (webform)

What are the detailed reasons as to why there are 4 15 route buses traveling every hour over a 16-hour period, 5 days a week up and down Harvard to Tri-C East? You irrationally refused to let a 15A run once an hour, each direction, to Pinecrest shopping center which is less than 800 meters due east of Tri-C, 7 days a week. How far in advance of the news report did you know you were at least \$11 million over budget? In July, I sent an email to the BOT and CAC displaying a detailed description of how the 15A and 48A would work well within the current budget. Neither that email nor any of my webforms over the last 10 webforms have been responded to with factual explanations. There is no clarity that most of them have been read. My webforms should be read out loud during the BOT meetings. Do not assume that people would get them later. Address Joel Frelich and Natoya Minor's behavior at the July 1, 2021, Ward 1 neighborhood council meeting. Frelich said he would study the possibility of the 15A route. In September of that same year, he stated at the CAC meeting he was not going to study anything.

RTA has a responsibility to the socioeconomic well-being of the public through the implementation of public transit. Respect the accurate assessment of the facts.

5. Adam Rossi (webform)

I am a regular public transit user; I regularly use the 9, 35, 40, 3, and red line, and I want to thank GCRTA for their service to the people of the Cleveland area. I will say that I am deeply troubled by the recent service cuts, and I fear more service cuts on the horizon. GCRTA, along with the local governments and other authorities with which it works, needs to figure out a way to come up with a funding plan so that service is not cut. People are facing so many challenges today, as the cost of living just keeps going up and finding a good-paying job is more and more

difficult. Making it harder for us to get around is another challenge on top of that. This is not a time for service cuts. It's time to be creative and find a way to give us freedom to move about Cleveland. Thank you.

VI. Board Governance Committee Report

No committee report.

VII. Operational Planning & Infrastructure Committee Report

No committee report

VIII. Organizational, Services & Performance Monitoring Committee Report

No committee report.

IX. Audit, Safety Compliance and Real Estate Committee Report

No committee report.

X. External and Stakeholder Relations and Advocacy Committee Report

No committee report.

XI. Committee of the Whole

No committee report.

XII. Civilian Oversight Committee (COC) Report

No committee report.

XIII. Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Mayor Gallo stated that a CAC Committee member will resign due to personal reasons. Applications for a replacement are being accepted through February 27 and qualifications must include being a retired police officer with the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy experience.

XIV. Ad-Hoc Committee Reports  
a. Ad-Hoc Compensation Committee

Mayor Weiss stated that the Committee is working through year-end performance reviews for direct reports to the Board and will have a report shortly.

b. Ad-Hoc Nominating Committee

Mr. Love stated that the Committee is accepting nominations for Board President and Vice President through March 1. Nominations will be announced during the next meeting on March 3 and elections will take place during the March 24 Annual Meeting.

XV. Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

Ida Marshall, Senior Manager of Talent Acquisition, provided an update on new hires and promotions, emphasizing the essential nature of these additions, particularly in operations.

XVI. Introduction of Resolutions

- A. 2026-13 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2025-142 WITH FUTURE AGE, INC. DBA PROVIDE A RIDE TO PROVIDE CONTRACTED PARATRANSIT SERVICES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$52,300,000 FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS, AND IN AMOUNTS NOT TO EXCEED \$20,900,000 AND \$22,800,000 FOR TWO ONE-YEAR OPTIONS, RESPECTIVELY, FOR A TOTAL CONTRACT AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$96,000,000 FOR A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD (GENERAL FUND, PARATRANSIT DEPARTMENT BUDGET)

CEO Terry stated that paratransit interaction is valuable due to the opportunity closer relationship between operator and customer.

Nick Davidson, Paratransit District Director, stated that staff went back out to the market to reduce the overall cost of purchase transportation. Provide A Ride has been a consistent partner over the years, and their performance, reliability and responsiveness have been top notch.

Alan Groedel, President, Provide A Ride, stated that he was appreciative of the long-term relationship with GCRTA. Provide A Ride has grown steadily and continued to improve.

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

- B. 2026-14 – AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 2026-2 TO REMOVE THE VENDOR NAME “EXPERT OF CANTON DBA COMPLETE PEST SOLUTIONS” AND REPLACE IT WITH “BIG BOOTS PEST CONTROL, LLC DBA COMPLETE PEST SOLUTIONS OF CLEVELAND”

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

- C. 2026-15 – APPROVING THE 2026 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

Mayor Weiss moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. Elder. 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 increased marginally by 1.6%. Year-to-date ridership was 9.9% lower than 2025 levels and 36.7% below 2019 pre-COVID levels, with fare revenue reflecting similar trends – possible due to weather conditions.

Sales tax receipts remained strong, with February collections up 17.4% compared to 2025. Year-to-date, receipts are 12% higher than 2025 receipts. Eighteen (18) out of twenty-one (21) categories were positive in January.

Long-term debt remained steady at \$13.9 million. Investment yields on a year-to-date basis averaged 3.62%. Total cash and investments were \$340.3 million, of which \$309.1 million is in restricted funds. The unrestricted or General Fund cash and investments amount is \$31.2 million, which exceeds the one (1) month reserve policy.

Ms. Whigham questioned whether staff would continue to use pre-COVID data as a baseline. CEO Terry stated that the true baseline is the prior year, however, pre-COVID data is provided to keep in mind what has transpired during that time.

#### XVII. General Manager, CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager and CEO, began the report by stating that some GCRTA staff are in Columbus for Ohio Loves Transit meeting with Ohio legislators to provide updates on projects.

CEO Terry introduced Quennel Marshall and Aaron Hale, who participated in a reconstituted Toastmasters pilot program to improve internal communication and public speaking skills.

Moving to the Healthy Business Council of Ohio, CEO Terry stated that GCRTA was recognized through the Healthy Business Council of Ohio as a healthy work site.

George Fields, Deputy General Manager for Human Resources, stated that staff is pleased to continue efforts regarding employee well-being and wellness awareness. He explained that a key driver is to make people aware of preventative care and wellness opportunities that healthcare education becomes prominent across our organization. Healthcare education will be included on the organizational scorecard moving forward.

CEO Terry appreciated Mayor Weiss facilitating an introduction to the Northeast Ohio First Suburbs Consortium, during which she was able to present a mini-State of RTA.

Concluding the report, Sharon Jenkins, Director of Marketing, and Dan Dietrich, Director of Fleet Management & Operations, provided an update on removing aging branding graphics from bus windows at no additional cost to GCRTA and to improve visibility and safety for riders. The branding removal will be completed across the fleet by the end of 2026.

Mr. Sleasman appreciated removing the graphics from windows and believed it will go a long way to improve the customer experience.

#### XVIII. President's Report

Mayor Koomar noted that the Board's tour of GCRTA facilities in Brook Park will take place on Friday, February 27.

XIX. Old Business

No items.

XX. New Business

No items.

XXI. Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 24, 2026.

XXII. 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 10:59 a.m.

Attest:

  
Secretary-Treasurer

  
President