



## MEETING MINUTES

### GCRTA Board of Trustees Meeting

July 21, 2026

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

**Staff/Other:** Tom Allen, Shawn Becker, India Birdsong Terry, Nick Biggar, Casey Blaze, Janet Burney, Floun'say Caver, Brent Charnigo, Nick Davidson, Scott Ferraro, George Fields, Bob Fleig, Joel Freilich, Anthony Garofoli, Rajan Gautam, Sharon Jenkins, Jeff Macko, Carl Kirkland, Ida Marshall, Sheila Miller, Charles Morgan, Ruben Morgan, Mike Schipper, Kay Sutula, Wendy Talley, John Togher, Carolyn Young

**Public:** 10

#### I. Call to Order

Mayor Koomar called the meeting to order at 10:13 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

Mayor Koomar moved, and Ms. Harper seconded to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2026, Board Meeting and the June 23, June 30 and July 7, 2026, Special Board Meetings. The motion carried.

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

Members of the public addressed the Board of Trustees regarding both agenda and non-agenda items. Public comments from phone or in-person will show the highlights of the comments. 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 to not publish any explicit language, derogatory remarks, or personal attacks against individuals.

1. Steven Katanovic (in-person)

Prioritize routes going to Steelyard Commons, including routes #16 and #25, for access to grocery stores. The loudspeakers on some of the buses are too loud and need to be turned down. He identified specific coaches where the speakers are too loud.

2. Kevin Hinkle (in-person)

Suggested that candidates and representatives ride transit, especially in underserved areas. He is concerned about losing service on the St. Clair line

3. Carren Woods (in-person)

Explained how the staff were helpful when boarding at the Shaker Square rapid station and recognized 3 operators and the Paratransit service.

4. Loh (in-person)

Expressed concerns over federal grants that could be taken away. Appreciates the information presented about revenues and expenses at the meetings. Expressed the need to put the levy on the ballot soon. Attended a county meeting where she was reminded by one of the members that there is no countywide election in May 2027 and RTA would have a significant fee to pay and much preparation. Requested that staff reevaluate whether to wait until November 2027.

5. Female Speaker (in-person)

Recommended accommodating the deaf community at the Board meetings. It was difficult to understand. She had to read lips and watch the visual materials to try to understand what was said. She has traveled across the US and overseas, she stated that we used to have one of the best bus and rail systems and are now very far behind. Will be attending the next Board meeting and requests accommodation for the deaf community.

6. Airric Stewart (phone)

Interested in alternative fuel sources for the rail vehicles (electric, gas-powered) and if this has been made an option. In the long-term (20+ years), would it be better if all rail vehicles ran on the heavy rail rather than mixing heavy and light rail. Questioned whether a cost analysis had been completed for this? Requested information about the cost to build a bus shelter and identified 3 shelters as models. Suggested that the #15 would work better as a 30-minute service and what would be the cost of doing this? Suggested the #50 be on a 60-minute schedule and asked why it was not moved over to Marymount. Recommended that engineers and mechanics travel to Sacramento for the new rail cars rather than the CEO and COO. Mayor Koomar answered most of the questions and concerns presented.

7. Airric Stewart (webform)

I would agree to a 1% increase in funding for RTA, which is much better than the 0.5 being requested, First, leadership and the BOT needs to change as a condition. They are casual, disingenuous, and sloppy in their communication of accurate assessment of the facts to the public. There is too much focus on imagery from India Terry, Joel Frelich, Floun'say Cavers, and Paul Koomar. RTA has a responsibility for the socioeconomic wellbeing of the public

through the implementation of public transit. There have been poor responses to give a good analysis of the requested reimplementation of the 48A and 15A. The suggested adjustments to the number 50 and 15 have been poorly studied by RTA as well. Efficiency should matter more than what is reflected by leadership. Leadership refused to convey specific costs of current routes—15 and 50. There have been no responses to requested information about how many people actually respond to the customer service survey at 216 621 9500 annually. The question of why phone service has been reduced for 440 276 4600 at the BOT has never been answered. The surveys that the public pays for rarely ever give exact numbers of people surveyed. How many people are surveyed more than once on the same questions? Of course, RTA funding should increase from 0.5 to 1%. Explain, factually, why India Terry received 3 pay raises in 5 years while RTA was steadily going over budget? Deceive, deny, delay, divert has been very bad policy. Improve truthful follow up.

8. Adam Rossi (webform)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment today. I am deeply troubled by GCRTA's approach over the last several years concerning the upcoming budget shortfall. We the people of Cuyahoga County, are already facing service cuts due in part to RTA's lack of foresight. There is hope that an increase in the 1% sales tax that funds RTA could mean better service for Clevelanders. But what is even more troubling to me than the service cuts has been RTA's lack of planning, execution, or any sort of intention around getting a transit levy passed. When Columbus passed a transit levy, COTA held a year-long campaign involving the city, the county, an advertising firm, and a coalition of partner orgs that were able to communicate the important service that public transit provides to the community. In stark contrast, I'm hearing that RTA hasn't even talked to Cleveland city council about a transit levy, and yet they want to put a levy on November's ballot, just 4 months away. That is frankly laughable, except I'm not laughing because I'm suffering the consequences. I could not be more disappointed in the inadequacy of RTA to approach this budget shortfall situation with any sort of plan that serves Clevelanders. RTA needs to take this situation more seriously. They need to have a plan to pass a transit levy, and they need to put forth the effort required to do so. Clevelanders deserve better than what they have been getting from RTA.

9. Janos Jalics (webform)

My name is Janos Jalics and I am a preschool teacher living in Richmond Heights. I live in the Park Apartments complex. That is both the beginning and end of Route 7, which leaves for the Stokes-Windmere station approximately every hour. I've been a regular GCRTA rider since 2024 and I've noticed that the quality of transit has fallen off since February 2025. I've noticed this decrease the most in the Rapid Transit's Red line. Multiple elevators go without any maintenance at the station. The red line pauses increasingly often between stops and requires its riders to transition between trains in between stops. This makes my commute less convenient, and I can only imagine how difficult it is for RTA's physically disabled customers. I've noticed that other buses from RTA don't show up on schedule as much as they used to and this makes my commute longer.

I would also like to push for a levee to increase RTA's funding. Most of RTA is funded through a sales tax on us locals, but the current sales tax hasn't changed in decades. If things do not change, 10 out of the 41 GCRTA routes will be eliminated and the remainder will experience reduced service. This will make Cleveland harder to live in. We're one of the few areas left in the country with reasonable housing costs and viable public transportation. RTA and Cleveland's residents have an obligation to band together to keep this flame alive.

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

Mayor Weiss reminded the Board that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Audit Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, at 9:00am.

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)

Ms. Pacetti stated that Trustee Elder is not here, but thanked the staff who, took the Community Advisory Council to see the Paratransit facility. I was able to attend and really appreciated the time that the staff took to show us around the facility. Paratransit is an important part of the service that we offer, and it's at the forefront as we talk about budget items. Thanks to the Advisory Council members who let me join them on the tour

No committee report.

XIV. Compensation Committee

No committee report.

XV. Ad-Hoc Nominating Committee

No committee report.

XVI. Introduction of New Employees/Promotions

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

XVII. Introduction of Resolutions

- A. 2026-44 – EXPRESSING CONGRATULATIONS TO THE EMPLOYEES OF THE GREATER CLEVELAND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY WHO RETIRED DURING THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2026. Mayor Koomar moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. Pacetti. The motion carried.
- B. 2026-45 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2026-36 WITH BROWNING-FERRIS INDUSTRIES OF OHIO, INC., DBA REPUBLIC SERVICES TO PROVIDE TRASH COLLECTION AND REMOVAL SERVICES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$223,086.42 FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS WITH TWO ONE-YEAR OPTIONS IN AMOUNTS NOT TO EXCEED \$79,374.77 AND \$82,082.87, RESPECTIVELY, FOR A TOTAL CONTRACT AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$384,544.06 FOR A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD (GENERAL FUND, CENTRAL FACILITIES MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT BUDGET). Mr. Sleasman moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. McPherson. The motion carried.
- C. 2026-46 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2026-071 WITH HARSCO METRO RAIL, LLC FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF A PRODUCTION/SWITCH TAMPER IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$1,950,000 (RTA DEVELOPMENT FUND, FLEET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT BUDGET). Ms. Pacetti moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mr. Sleasman. The motion carried.
- D. 2026-47 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2026-44 WITH GILLIG LLC FOR THE FURNISHING OF REMANUFACTURED BRAKE CALIPER ASSEMBLIES, AS SPECIFIED AND AS REQUIRED, FOR A PERIOD OF TWO (2) YEARS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$458,560 (GENERAL FUND, FLEET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT BUDGET). Mr. Sleasman moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. Whigham. The motion carried.
- E. 2026-48 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2026-011 WITH ETC INSTITUTE TO PROVIDE SURVEY SERVICES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$658,122 FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS AND IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$219,374 FOR EACH OF TWO OPTION YEARS, FOR A TOTAL CONTRACT AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$1,096,870 FOR A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD (GENERAL FUND, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT BUDGET). Mr. Love moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Ms. Pacetti. The motion carried.
- F. 2026-49 – AUTHORIZING CONTRACT NO. 2026-062 WITH K&J SAFETY AND SECURITY CONSULTING SERVICES, INC. FOR PROJECT 20.65 – CONSULTING SERVICES FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY CERTIFICATION FOR GCRTA RAIL TRANSIT PROJECTS IV IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$650,000 FOR A PERIOD OF THIRTY-SIX MONTHS (RTA CAPITAL AND/OR DEVELOPMENT FUND, ENGINEERING & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT BUDGET). Ms. Harper moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mr. Sleasman. The motion carried.
- G. 2026-50 – AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO ENTER INTO AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR STUDENT FARES FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR. Mayor Weiss moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mayor Gallo. The motion carried.

- H. 2026-51 – ADOPTING THE TAX BUDGET OF THE GREATER CLEVELAND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2027, AND SUBMITTING THE SAME TO THE CUYAHOGA COUNTY FISCAL OFFICER. Mayor Koomar moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mr. Sleasman. The motion carried.

XVIII. Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Rajan Gautam, Deputy General Manager – Finance and Secretary-Treasurer, presented the report. Highlights included interest and inflation rates, which ended the month at 3.75% and 3.5%, respectively. Customer sentiment shows solid increases year-over-year. Ridership was 5.9% higher in June 2026 compared to June 2025. Passenger Fares in June 2026 were 2.2% lower than June 2025 and are 4.2% below 2025 levels, year-to-date. Sales and Use Tax receipts were 8.9% higher in July 2026 compared to July 2025 and year-to-date are 4.9% higher than 2025 levels. Total outstanding debt at the end of 2025 was \$13.9 million. Average investment yield is 3.65%. Total cash and investments at the end of June were \$340.7 million, of which the unrestricted balance was \$33.1 million, exceeding the 1-month operating reserve requirement. The first transfer from the Revenue Stabilization Fund was for \$4 million and reminded the Board that the budget is \$44 million for 2026. The bond issuance was completed and the sale resulted in premiums of approximately \$3.4 million

XIX. General Manager, CEO Report

India L. Birdsong Terry, General Manager, CEO, presented the report. Highlights included an award from the Ohio Department of Transportation of \$10 million for State Fiscal Year 2027 for Light Rail track rehabilitation. Reminded of the importance of investing in public transit, used to get people to work, school, medical appointments, etc. Paratransit is one line of service that has continually increased. Paratransit service is an unfunded mandate; we cannot refuse a ride unless it is outside of our service area or ineligibility of service. The first podcast will be aired on July 27, 2026, with host Ron Allen. Recognized Michael Schipper, who has led the Engineering team for 25 years. Mike will be retiring at the end of August 2026.

XX. President's Report

Reminded the Board of the Audit Committee Meeting coming up and recognized Anthony Garofoli and his team for providing information that is very informative

XXI. Old Business

No items.

XXII. New Business

No items.

XXIII. Executive Session

Mayor Koomar moved and Ms. Pacetti seconded to go into Executive Session to review the negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment and to consider the employment, evaluation and compensation of a public employee or official. The motion carried.

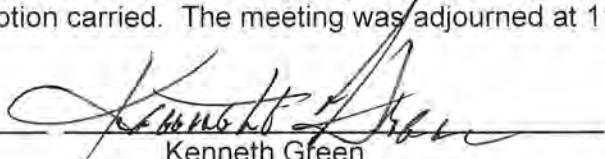
The Board was in Executive Session from 11:22 a.m. to 11:58 a.m.

XXIV. Upcoming Meetings

The next regular Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 18, 2026.

XXV. Adjournment

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mayor Koomar and seconded by Mr. Sleasman; the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

  
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John J. Togher  
Interim Secretary/Treasurer  
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Kenneth Green  
Interim Board Administrator