

BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SOUTHWEST OHIO REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF: Regular Meeting of the SORTA Board of Trustees

DATE: Tuesday, May 20, 2014, 9:00 a.m.  
SORTA/Metro Mt. Adams Board Room  
602 Main Street  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

**BOARD MEMBERS**

PRESENT: Frank Bowen, Suzanne Burke, Todd Cooper, Jason Dunn, Brennan Grayson, Ken Reed, Karl Schultz, Brandi Stewart, Brad Thomas

**BOARD MEMBERS**

ABSENT: Gregg Hothem, Gwen Robinson, Wael Safi, Lamont Taylor

STAFF MEMBERS: Terry Garcia Crews, Donna Adkins, Bill Desmond, Inez Evans, Mary Moning, Sallie Hilvers, Wright Parkes, Mike Restle, Frank Spataro, Terri Stevens

OTHERS: Don Mills, Ohio River Way; John Harmon, Legislative Director for Chris Seelbach; Nick Sunyak, City of Cincinnati; Phillip Jacobs; Joe Curry, Everybody Rides Metro

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Dunn, SORTA Board Chair, called the meeting to order, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**APPROVAL OF APRIL 15, 2014, MINUTES**

Mr. Thomas made a motion that the minutes of the April 15, 2014, regular meeting be approved as previously mailed, and Mr. Bowen seconded the motion. By voice vote, the Board approved the minutes.

**HEARINGS FROM CITIZENS**

Mr. Harmon, Legislative Director for Councilman Chris Seelbach, addressed the Board on behalf of Councilman Seelbach to encourage passage of the resolution being presented to the Board for approval today extending Health and Dental Insurance Benefits to Domestic Partners.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Planning & Operations**

Mr. Thomas reported on the Planning and Operations Committee meeting held on Tuesday, May 13, 2014, during which Mr. Grether provided a rail update and advised that Metro has released the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Streetcar branding.

Mr. Thomas then proposed the following resolutions for board approval:

**Proposed Resolution No. 2014-11:** Extension to Operators' and Supervisors' Uniforms Contract

Mr. Schultz moved for adoption and Mr. Bowen seconded the motion. This resolution approves an extension to the agreement with Roy Tailors, Inc., who currently supplies uniforms (shirts, pants, skirts and hats) for drivers and supervisors. The contract includes alterations but does not include cleaning. This resolution is to extend the current contract to December 31, 2014, at the cost of \$140,000 to allow time for new specifications to be issued and for bids to be received.

By roll call vote, the Board unanimously approved Resolution No. 2014-11.

**Proposed Resolution No. 2014-12:** Approval of Fourth Amendment to Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Cincinnati

Mr. Schultz moved for adoption and Mr. Grayson seconded the motion. This resolution approves an amendment to the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) Agreement to allow \$268,278 from a 1996 grant to be utilized for the Streetcar project. There are no local funds required, and these funds can only be used for ongoing rail projects. Per the Federal Transit Administration, it was recommended these funds be used for streetcar or they would be de-obligated and lost to another community.

Mr. Dunn reiterated to the Board that Metro could not do anything else with the money; there is no co-mingling of funds, and that bus money is not being used for streetcar purposes.

By roll call vote, the Board unanimously approved Resolution No. 2014-12.

**Finance Committee**

Ms. Stewart reported on the Finance Committee meeting held on Thursday, May 15, 2014. Ms. Stewart shared information about the Accounts Payable Internal Audit Report, stating that while there were issues reported, all are being addressed and corrected. Ms. Stewart then proposed the following resolution for board approval:

**Proposed Resolution No. 2014-13:** Approval to Extend Health and Dental Insurance Benefits to Same-Sex Married Couples, and Same-Sex and Different-Sex Partners of Domestic Partner Relationships

Ms. Stewart moved for adoption and Mr. Thomas seconded the motion. This resolution approves extending health insurance benefits to same-sex married couples, and same-sex and different-sex domestic partners for health and dental insurance commencing in plan year 2015.

Questions arose and discussion ensued. Mr. Spataro stated that in response to a request from the Committee, he had contacted Hamilton County. They do not, nor do they currently intend, to extend this benefit to Hamilton County employees.

Mr. Grayson stated that that the Policies and Procedures Committee also discussed this resolution. He made a motion that the resolution be amended to remove "City of Cincinnati Registry" and replace it with "an approved governmental registry". Mr. Thomas seconded the motion and by voice vote the amendment was approved by the Board.

By roll call vote, the Board approved Resolution No. 2014-13, as amended.

### **ERM (Everybody Rides Metro) Update**

Mr. Dunn asked Mr. Curry to provide an update on the Everybody Rides Metro Foundation (ERM). Mr. Curry stated that as previously reported, Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) funding will be gone by the end of 2015, and therefore, they have been working diligently on a solution. Mr. Curry stated that he and Mr. Neil Tallow of Talbert House are in the process of trying to meet with Hamilton County Commissioner, Todd Portune to discuss future funding issues. Talbert House utilizing 113,000 of the 300,000 ERM annual rides provided.

Mr. Curry stated that there is a symposium about JARC funding being held in Minneapolis, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014. He will have the general consensus of that meeting shortly thereafter, and will report back to the Board at the June 26<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

Mr. Dunn asked Mr. Curry how the Board can help ERM. Mr. Curry declared that ERM has provided 1.7 million bus rides thus far, and that the program is not a failure, but that sustainability is the problem. Ms. Garcia Crews interjected that ERM was set-up in 2006, operational in 2008, and that ERM is looked at as a national model. Mr. Dunn stated that he will work with CEO and Executive Committee to see if they can help.

### **Personnel and Policies**

Mr. Grayson reported on the Personnel and Policies Committee Meeting held on Thursday, May 15, 2014. Mr. Grayson stated that the Committee reviewed several items including, but not limited to a succession plan, a Board job description, a wage study, and Metro's hiring process.

Mr. Grayson specifically addressed a mandatory Seatbelt Policy. The Safety Committee had expressed some concerns (i.e., assaults on drivers and the ability to protect themselves). Ms. Garcia Crews stated that those concerns are being discussed, and management is working with the union on this policy.

### **APRIL FINANCIAL AND RIDERSHIP REPORTS**

Reports were provided; the quarterly verbal reports will be given in July.

**CEO'S REPORT**

Ms. Garcia-Crews gave updates on: 2015 budget and meeting dates; APTA Awards; Ohio House Bill 355; Streetcar branding RFP (which, at last count, Metro had received 80 requests); Uptown Transit District; community engagement; and organizational advancement.

Ms. Garcia Crews also reviewed the presentation that she made to the Hamilton County Transportation Improvement District about Metro's efforts to work cooperatively on regional transit issues. There was also a stakeholders meeting regarding the on-going "rails with trails" venture in the Oasis Corridor. There are still many concerns and questions that need to be addressed before next steps can be taken. The Ohio River Way will be meeting with the railroad within the next few weeks. It was stated that all partners had to agree on all aspects of this project before moving forward.

**NEW BUSINESS**

No new business to report.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Thomas made a motion that the Board go into Executive Session as provided in Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 (G) (1), "the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee . . .". Mr. Grayson seconded the motion. By roll call vote, the Board unanimously approved the motion and went into Executive Session at 10:00 a.m.

It was properly moved and seconded that the Board return to regular session. The Board approved the motion and returned to regular session at 11:00 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING**


The next regular meeting of the SORTA Board of Trustees is scheduled for Tuesday, June 17, 2014, at 9:00 a.m., the SORTA/Metro Board Room, 602 Main Street, Suite 1200, Cincinnati, Ohio

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

APPROVED:

Jason Dunn  
Chair, SORTA Board

ATTESTED:

  
Terry Garcia Crews  
CEO & General Manager