

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SOUTHWEST OHIO REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF: Regular Meeting of the SORTA Board of Trustees

DATE: Tuesday, April 25, 2017, 6:00 PM
Hamilton County Community Action Agency
1740 Langdon Farm Road, Cincinnati, OH 45237

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Jason Dunn, Ken Reed, Heidi Black, Maurice Brown, Brendon Cull, Gary Greenberg, Kreg Keesee, Gwen Robinson, Karl Schultz, Daniel St. Charles

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Mary Miller

STAFF MEMBERS: Dwight Ferrell, Donna Adkins, Matt Conover, Alison DeFisher, Dave Etienne, Paul Grether, Darryl Haley, Sallie Hilvers, Maria Jones, Mary Huller, Brandy Jones, Carla McHale, Ted Meyer, Demarcus Peters, John Ravasio, David Riposo, Judy Ross, Ronnie Salerno, Shannel Satterfield, Monai Smith,

OTHERS: Kimberly Schaefer (Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP), Nick Vehr & Darcy Schwass (Vehr Communicationis), Larry Shields (St. Vincent de Paul), Kevin Marsh (Clifton Town Meeting), Gina Marsh (Human Services Chamber), Andy Shank (Better Bus Coalition), Daniel Trujillo (Lighthouse Youth Services), Troy Jackson (AMOS), Michelle Dillingham (City Council Candidate), Andrew Kappes (UC Student), Tamie Sullivan (City Council Candidate), Craig Rozen (Cincy Equitable Eng. Corp.), Manuel Foggie (City Council Candidate), Isaac Smith (Better Bus Coalition), Cameron Hardy (Better Bus Coalition), Troy Miller (ATU Local 627), Sherry Coolidge (Enquirer), Zach Cuni (Better Bus Coalition), Maria Palmieri (Fifth Third Bank), Amanda Page (Citizen), James Bonsall (Norwood City Council), Florence Parker (OKI Regional Council Govts), Pete Metz (Chamber), Alena O'Donnell (Dress for Success Cincinnati), JB Arnold (Team JBA), Holly Arnold (Team JBA), Elena Teran (Thrive Impact Sourcing), Derrell Bauman (All Aboard Ohio), Chris Morem (LUV), Ash Roper (Citizen), Tim Stein (Citizen), Frank Harper (ATU Local 627), Lesley Jones (Truth & Destiny CDC), Iris Roley (AMOS), Alexander Shelton (Citizen), Lea Robertson (Richardson for Mayor), Rob Richardson (Richardson for Mayor), Erin Hinson (Citizen), Jeff Pastor (Jeff Pastor for City Council), Jaasiel Chapman (Jeff Pastor for City Council), Nick Cheney (City of Cincinnati), Jameir Burns (NAACP), Tonya Dumas (NAACP), Lucy Cruze (United Way), Jeremy Moses (Citizen), Tenela Oliver (Citizen), Mark Samaan (Citizen), Matt Deilinger (Citizen), Duane Pohcman (Citizen), Todd Portune (Hamilton County Commissioner), Lary Swelds (Citizen), Justin Jeffre (Citizen), Tim Sullivan (Citizen)

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Dunn, SORTA Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 21, 2017 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Reed made a motion that the minutes of the March 21, 2017 meeting be approved as previously mailed and Ms. Black seconded the motion.

By voice vote, the Board approved the minutes.

BRIEFING ITEMS

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Keesee reported on the Finance committee meeting that was held on April 11, 2017.

PLANNING & OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. Cull reported on the Planning & Operations Committee meeting that was held on April 11, 2017.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Mr. Dunn reported on the Committee of the Whole meeting that was held on April 6, 2017.

Financial Presentation

Mr. Riposo presented an overview of the current and projected financial condition of the Authority. The 2017 Operating Budget was balanced through one-time opportunities; this cannot be duplicated to balance the projected 2018 deficit. Expenses are rising faster than revenue; 1.8% rate of annual increase is higher than annual revenue growth of 0.6%. The current funding source allows no flexibility in service; cannot add frequency or new service without eliminating another area's service. And the 2017 Capital Budget is unfunded by \$8.5 million.

System Presentation

Mr. Meyer and Mr. Conover presented a Metro service overview.

Overview of AECOM

Mr. Conover presented an overview of AECOM Report.

The Process

Mr. Dunn presented an update on Reinventing Metro.

HEARINGS FROM CITIZENS

Mr. Dunn asked if there were any citizens present who would like to address the Board.

Gina Marsh, Human Services Agency, addressed the Board and thanked them for the proposal to City Council. She stated that reducing service would be catastrophic. She stated that transit is crucial to reducing poverty. She also addressed the statistics of who rides transit.

Larry Shields, St. Vincent de Paul, addressed the Board. He stated that the majority of reasons they provide bus passes is for individuals to get to jobs. Reducing and/or eliminating service would be crippling to communities that rely on transit.

Lucy Cruze, United Way, addressed the Board. She stated that over the last 10 years the top issue is transportation to get to jobs because individuals do not have driver's licenses.

Jeremy Moses, Better Bus Coalition, addressed the Board. He is a resident of Springdale and spoke regarding how fare increases and cutting routes would affect those with disabilities. He stated that something needs to be done now, can no longer kick the can down the road.

Andy Shank, Better Bus Coalition, addressed the Board. He spoke about the limitations in Cincinnati for individuals that do not own vehicles and want to have an active lifestyle. Stated the transit system should be viewed as an asset to the region and encourage the Board to continue to look into bringing businesses into the discussion.

Daniel Trujillo, Lighthouse Youth Services, addressed the Board. He stated that transit is a lifeline to those trying to access services, for those that are in need and for those that want to use transit. He also stated that customer service is poor; operators are not friendly. He also spoke about the hours of service, marketing, and the experience.

Troy Miller, ATU President, addressed the Board and stated the Board needs to make a decision. It is an important issue. And should be done sooner rather than later.

Cam Hardy addressed the Board and thanked the Board for having the evening meeting. He stated his concern and that something needed to be done now; asked the Board to vote today. He stated that he takes the bus every day and it is a 50 minute ride, there is no express service for his trip.

Isaac Smith, UC Student, addressed the Board. He spoke to the unfriendliness of the system; difficult to find where and when to catch the bus. Stated there needs to be better signage.

Andrew Kappes, UC Student, addressed the Board. Stated he is from Pennsylvania and how different the transit system is for Cincinnati. He stated that he did not like the transfer processes and the lack of a fare card. He indicated that 50% of funding for transit in Pennsylvania came from the state.

Mark Samaan, UC Student, addressed the Board. He provided data for transit riders; 20% job related and 75% shopping, church and to get around. He suggested that weekend service needed to be improved. He also stated that the area transit model needed to be re-evaluated; need a multi-hub model.

Maria Palmieri addressed the Board and stated that she is a bus rider by choice since November 2015. She asked if No Smoking signs could be placed at bus stops, especially at Government Square. She also spoke about bus drivers and the need for training.

Amanda Page, NKU Faculty, addressed the Board. She stated that she has never owned a vehicle; she chooses not to drive although she can. She stated that her move to Cincinnati was strategic because of SORTA; people choose Cincinnati because of transit. She stated that she is glad to pay tax levy if it means better transit. She also stated that there needs to be better collaboration between TANK & SORTA; schedules do not line up for commuters. She stated her concerns of safety at some bus stops. She also stated that drivers should be more knowledgeable.

Zachary Kooner, UC Student, addressed the Board. He stated that he chooses to take the bus; he can stretch out the value of his car and it is cheaper than parking. He also stated that crosstown routes should be extended.

Matt Deilinger addressed the Board and stated that he is a bus rider by choice since 2013. He spoke about careful analysis of a fare increase and a multi-county, multi-state sales tax.

Pastor Lesley Jones addressed the Board and stated how those that participate in their summer program utilize Metro for field trips in order to help keep costs down; urban trekking. She stated that young people should be targeted as riders so that they become long term bus riders.

Todd Portune, Hamilton County Commissioner, addressed the Board. He stated that he is in favor of public transit. He stated that the County Board is friendly towards public transportation. He spoke of the 2007 effort to renegotiate the charter. He stated that Hamilton County will step up direct aid support to SORTA; step in to provide assistance. He proposed steps in order to not raise fares or cut services. He stated that by June 30th he would act on amending budget to provide funding. He also reiterated his support of a regional integrated multimodal transportation system by 2020.

Troy Mettser addressed the Board. He stated that we need to work together and that he was concerned about eliminating the earnings tax. He stated that it is the lowest in the region and should be repurposed instead of eliminated.

Iris addressed the Board and encouraged them to have more evening meetings. She stated that we cannot wait 2-1/2 years for a solution and that we are part of the problem. She also stated that other areas need to kick in.

Justin Jeffrey addressed the Board and stated that we are not addressing the white elephant in the room; racism and classism. He stated that we need a levy now. He also asked if any of the Board members were bus riders.

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed Motion: SORTA Board Ballot Issue

Mr. Cull moved for adoption and Mr. Reed seconded the motion. This motion requested that the SORTA Board take whatever steps are necessary to make a decision by Tuesday, June 20, 2017 whether or not to place an issue on the ballot asking voters of Hamilton County to approve a countywide sales tax adequate to fund future operations of Metro.

By voice vote, the Board approved the motion.

Proposed Motion: Earnings Tax

Mr. Reed moved for adoption and Mr. Greenberg seconded the motion. This motion requested that the SORTA Board empower staff and/or the Board Chair to have discussions with the City of Cincinnati on the earnings tax.

By voice vote, the Board approved the motion.

Ms. Robinson moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Keese seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:41 PM.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the SORTA Board of Trustees is scheduled for Tuesday, May 16, 2017 at 9:00 AM, the SORTA/Metro Board Room, 602 Main Street, Suite 1200, Cincinnati, Ohio.

APPROVED:

ATTESTED:



Jason Dunn
Chair, SORTA Board



David A. Riposo
CFO/Secretary Treasurer