

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Of the Lima/Allen County Regional Transit Authority Board of Trustees  
Held at the RTA Administration Building  
200 East High St., Lima, Ohio  
November 14, 2017 @ 12:00 Noon**

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**Present were Richard Schroeder, Board Chairman; Alberta Lee, Board Vice-President; Brad Taylor, Dick Accountius, Michael Hayden, Holly Rex and Joan Davis, Board Members; Shelia Haney, Executive Director; Patricia Stein, Finance Director/Secretary of the Board; Thom Mazur, LACRPC; Joe Patton, Ohio Means Jobs; Scott McKenzie, US Plastics; WLIO TV; and Teresa Brown, Administrative Assistant.**

**First Item of Business – Roll Call: Roll Call was taken and noted for the minutes. All members were present.**

**Second Order of Business – Approval of Previous Minutes: Mr. Accountius made a motion to approve the previous minutes and Ms. Davis seconded the motion. All members voted in favor thereof.**

**Third Item of Business – Operations Report – September: The fuel bid is out and bids will be opened in a couple of weeks. The local non-profits, city and county also buy off of the fuel consortium contract. We had a great rate last year, but based on what the street price is right now we might not get as good of a rate.**

**As far as Community report, all future projects and plans are on hold right now due to the levy not passing. We are in the process of making the service cuts as proposed at the Public Hearings. We were still seeing an increase every month in ridership and revenue, which will start to change next month once the cuts are implemented.**

**The current capital grants that are paid at 100% and those projects that were already pending will continue until completion. The new electronic fareboxes that were paid 100% with a capital grant are on order, they will be sending one for us to use for training purposes. Our ridership counts will be more accurate with these as it will count every passenger, instead of relying on the drivers to mark them manually. Was projecting a Revenue increase due to accuracy but with the service reductions my projections is no longer an increase in revenue just accuracy. Passengers will no longer be able to put in foreign coins, Chuck E. Cheese tokens and dollar bills torn in half.**

**We have been reduced to only two operating grants this year paid at 50%. The balance of \$500,000 left in the 5307 grant and only \$129,000 in the 5310 grant in which we have been told a possibility of no funding from the state 5310 for 2018 might occur. We lost the 5317 grants in 2016 which were the JARC and New Freedom that provided the evening and Saturday service in 2011 and this is also the service we are planning to cut along with the low ridership routes in the attempt to make up for the 30% funding we continue to lose each year in operating funding.**

We used a 5339 grant to purchase and tear down the property across the street from the garage. We got this done just in time, as the owner of the property that we were leasing for employee parking has just raised the rates the first of November so we will discontinue parking lease payments effective December 1<sup>st</sup> and the employees can park on the gravel parking lot across from the garage. If we can find another capital grant that will pay 100%, we will look into paving this lot in the future for employees and the Uplift vans.

We had a mechanic position open but have taken that off the table now that we are reducing services and staff.

The State Audit is still ongoing but we hope to wrap it up soon with just a few more items. The official results from the Triennial Audit are in and we are working on rewriting some of our policies for that. We had our Passport audit with AAA3 and they had some findings that were upsetting. They have suspended us and sent a letter on the 23<sup>rd</sup> stating we had to create new policies and train drivers by the 27<sup>th</sup>, which was not doable. We are not sure what will happen going forward with it. We received this notice the same day we received the letter from their attorney regarding the building damages invoice and now litigating that, so we will need to hire an attorney to proceed in collecting our costs for damages.

We had no accidents in September but did have one on October 1<sup>st</sup> that resulted in a fatality. Our driver was going 51 mph on St. Rt. 81 when a car on Thayer pulled out in front of her and she hit them. There were four people in the car, with the driver side rear passenger taking the brunt of the impact. That person was pronounced dead at the scene and they performed CPR the whole time on the other back seat passenger. All of the people in the car were taken to the hospital. We had five passengers at the time from Marimor on board the bus; luckily none of them were hurt. We were able to give the police the video from the accident showing seven different angles.

Our driver was not cited and was completely not at fault. They also found drugs in the other vehicle. Shelia and Brian went out to the scene to protect the Marimor clients and after watching the tape they didn't even move out of their seats. Our driver is fine physically but suffering mentally. She has not returned back to work and we do not anticipate her doing so. We recommended counseling for the passengers since they witnessed such a horrific accident. This proves our reasoning for the large buses, as if they would have been in a smaller vehicle our passengers would have gotten hurt. We had minor damage to the bumper and bike rack on the bus but that was it.

As far as policies and procedures, Shelia has been very busy and will have some available at the next meeting.

We showed the video of the accident as a training tool at our safety meetings. Our driver is getting counseling through the Employee Assistance Program and is on Worker's Comp.

Ms. Davis made a motion to accept the Operations Report. Ms. Rex seconded the motion and all members voted in favor thereof.

**Fourth Item of Business – Financial Report – September:** For the Profit & Loss Year Comparison from January this year to September RTA shows a loss of \$254,571.24 compared to 2016 loss of \$336,729.12. There is \$115,000 in revenue that was a reimbursement from an accident that was purchased with capital grant money and will need to be used to replace the van that was totaled. This has not been done due to not able to find a replacement for that small of an amount.

Mr. Taylor said he had looked over the Financials and everything looked good. Mr. Taylor made a motion to accept the Finance Report as presented and Ms. Davis seconded the motion. All members voted in favor thereof.

**Fifth Item of Business – Board Discussion – Annual Meeting and Nominations:** At the December 5th meeting the Board will vote on the recommended slate of candidates for President and Vice-President. Mr. Accountius nominated Mr. Taylor for Board President. Ms. Davis nominated Mr. Hayden for Board President. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Hayden accepted their nominations. Mr. Accountius nominated Ms. Rex for Vice-President. Ms. Rex nominated Ms. Davis as Vice-President. Ms. Davis accepted her nomination as did Ms. Rex.

**Sixth Item of Business - Board Discussion – AAA3 lease building damages status:** We received a response from the legal counsel from AAA3. There were extensive damages left when they moved out. We sent them a bill and pictures of all of the damage since they did not respond to emails. They are challenging the charges. They turned it over to their attorney and we have turned it over the OTRP for our attorney to review. In our contract with them it states we can charge them for attorney fees.

They claim they cleaned the carpets but they looked awful. We rented a carpet cleaning machine and still were not able to get them clean so we had to hire a professional to clean them. They say they turned the missing projector in when the Interim Director was here after Rose left. Shelia saw the projector after she started here and it was still in our inventory every year as it was purchased with federal funds. Also, we have emails when they requested a new bulb for the projector. AAA3 took an air conditioner off of the wall in the server room. They had put up the wall which cut off two of the three vents from the room, which necessitated the air conditioner with all of the computer equipment in there. They cut the lines to the air conditioner and left live lines when they moved out. The air conditioner was a fixture and should have been left. They also unplugged our server and phone lines, leaving us without service for that Friday evening and Saturday.

We had costs from hiring someone to cap off the live wires left dangling, in addition to service costs from our IT people to find out everything was unplugged. It cost us a day and half of service and we did not charge them for that. We also lost rental income. We had planned on renting out the second floor on July 1<sup>st</sup> but had to hold off until September 1<sup>st</sup> to repair all the damages, and we did not charge them for the lost income. We will just let the attorneys hash it out at this point. The bill was for \$6800. The charges were over \$10,000 but we deducted their deposit.

**Seventh Item of Business – Board Discussion and Motion – Coordination Plan:** Thom Mazur passed out copies of the Coordination Plan. It was requested by AAA3, WOCAP, RTA and other social service agencies that were receiving 5310 funds. RPC needs to ensure that agencies that were already receiving funds would remain eligible. ODOT decided instead of having multiple plans out there should be one that is uniform. That is almost impossible since there are 125 agencies that draw down these 5310 funds and 36 Transit Authorities. There used to be JARC, New Freedom and 5310 and they collapsed them all into 5310. Every time we apply for 5310 funds we have to attach this. There were over 50 pages of guidance on what had to be in the plan.

It covers 1700 sq. miles and over 3 dozen transportations providers. There was no money given to draw up the plan and very little time. The plan was taken to the CAAC. It helped identify who really needed the services, including elderly, frail, and poverty-stricken. They had to identify unmet needs. Some agencies only serve certain segments of the population. The Transit Authority is the only one that doesn't care why you need the services. They identified the gaps in service as

far as geographic coverage and time of day. The first four years of a Capital Improvement Program that amounted to \$13 million is in there. RPC recommended a Mobility Manager. Erica Petrie was doing it at AAA3 and now Becca Shidler from Goodwill has moved over there to fill the position.

At the December 5<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting, the Board will need to approve the Coordination Plan. Table 7-1 had some last minute revisions. There was an ODOT meeting last week where they told everyone there is no 5310 funding in FY2018. No one from the RTA was invited to the meeting. There will be absolutely no Capital money, if there is any money it will be for Operating and Mobility Management, with no Capitalized Maintenance. They won't know until March if there are any funds available. We just got 5310 money to replace the JARC and New Freedom funds, and it wasn't nearly as much as we received previously. This goes to show how you never know about grants and why we need a funding source. Grants are always getting cut and you can't plan ahead.

Mr. Accountius made a motion to accept the Coordination Plan from RPC. Ms. Davis seconded the motion and all members voted in favor thereof.

Eighth Item of Business – Levy Plan of Action: The levy did not pass on November 7<sup>th</sup>. It was very devastating to the staff as they worked very hard on this and it will have a terrible effect and hardship on the community. It is a very difficult time for the drivers, they are the ones that will get beat up and we need help with the employee morale. We are losing drivers every week due to them finding a better paying or a job with benefits. We are so short-staffed we have the two supervisors driving almost every day.

We only had \$4200 in campaign funds and no volunteers except the staff, some drivers, and Joan Davis and Dick Accountius from the Board that was very much appreciated. A third of the donations came from our vendors; there were none from the businesses along our routes and the rest of the donations came from our Board Members and our staff. We had been advised to have a \$60,000 budget to properly run the campaign and we had \$4000. If we would have had more money we could have educated more people and gave a better explanation of the purposed budget for the full levy. It seems after the Lima News article that had so many false statements, we lost support and could not recover in time.

We are now doing presentations on what we are losing as far as service and community transportation support. I Heart Radio is letting us do radio commercials as in-kind trade for the bus wrap advertisement. We have notices up in the buses and in the lobby on the up-coming cuts. We had three public hearings before the vote and let everyone know then what the cuts would be if the levy didn't pass. We already said at Board Meetings what we would cut and Shelia has a Press Release she is sending out today. The County Commissioners suggested since we were losing the JARC and New Freedom funding which was the largest, we should start by cutting what was created with those funds so in taking their suggestion that is our plan of action first to cut the Saturday service and night services; December 2<sup>nd</sup> we cut all bus service and uplift services for elderly and disabled on Saturdays. We will also shut down the lobby on Saturday and Sunday so there will access to the lobby for Greyhound passengers. This also means no vending sales, no lottery sales and no Greyhound ticket sales. Then on January 1<sup>st</sup> is when we will shut down the Evening Services and go back to 5:45 pm instead of the 10:15 pm. This is almost the same service RTA provided in 2010 by just looking at those maps.

Before we had the JARC and New Freedom grants, RTA used to shut down at 4:45 p.m. With the grants, they extended service until 10:15 p.m. We are cutting back to 5:45 p.m., so we can at least still service people getting off work at 5 since we have worked so hard to assist with folks getting to jobs. In 2010 RTA also did not start service until 6:45am but we are going to continue to start at 5:45am for as long as we can.

All discounted fares we offered to help the community are also going to be discontinued. This includes the \$10 Student monthly pass, \$17 E&D unlimited ride monthly pass, and \$20 Youth unlimited monthly passes and the adult unlimited passes for \$34. We will still continue the 50 cents for Elderly & Disabled when they board the bus; Youth will still be 75 cents and children under 6 will still be free and adult will still be \$1. The only unlimited ride monthly pass that will be available for anyone will be \$40, this will be a value if anyone rides everyday more than twice. We will no longer be able to provide community events at a low cost or provide any nonprofit organizations free service, this will include daycare trips, churches, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Changing Seasons, Girl and Boy Scouts events, Lima Locos, Lima Warriors, parades, etc. We just can't continue providing community transportation when our funding continues to decline each year. Also, any bus tickets that were sold to non-profits for 80 cents will now be the full price of \$1.00 going forward.

This gives us until January 1<sup>st</sup> to do route planning and schedules for the drivers. We won't have maps then and will have to do it all in house. The last three routes we have added to get people to jobs, 7, 8, & 9; will be cut at the first of the year. They are the newest routes and had the lowest ridership. Route #7 covered Nickles Bakery, Ford, Lima Pallet, US Plastics, Marimor, and P&G. We won't be able to get people to those places after January 1st. That route averaged 700 people a month. The #8 route went to Husky, Occupational Health, Heart Institute, OIO, PTC, and the Bob Evans factory. It averaged 1200 riders a month. The #9 route averaged 400 riders a month. It went to Bradfield Center, Red Cross, Potash, Apollo Career Center, Ft. Shawnee Industrial Park, Central Point Business Park, and Shawnee Manor. We are looking at switching South Main to an hour route to match up with the rest of the routes and deviating South Main to provide services to JFS the same route in the past.

We will be laying off 6 – 9 employees, although if they keep leaving us it won't be necessary. All of the employees will have reduced hours, from 40 down to 35 hours a week. With the union contract, they were not getting any raises and they will still not get a raise for the full three year term of the contract. They will also continue to not to receive any health benefits. This made retaining employees very difficult in the past and will continue to be a challenge in the future.

We will regroup and take a look at services every 3 – 6 months to see if further cuts need to be made. This will be a domino effect. Our 5307 grant, which is our largest operating grant, is formulated from ridership and mileage. As we cut back our miles and routes and lose ridership, our funding will also continue to decrease. So we will need to continue to cut additional services as the operating grant continues to decline.

Joe Patton from JFS requested to speak and after approval from Mr. Schroeder Mr. Patton then said they pay for the route going to JFS and have a contract with RTA and want to know how they can shut down that route. Shelia said that they do not actually pay for the route; they pay a subsidy to assist with the route and the plans are to deviate the South Main route to cover JFS as it was in the past before they added the S. Metcalf route. Mr. Patton said RTA set the fee so they pay what we asked for and he assumed that meant they paid for the route. Due to Charter regulations RTA cannot ask for the full cost but did asked for a higher amount for the route with the added number of trips and JFS said they only had a certain amount to spend on transportation so that is what they

could pay which is what the contract reflects. Mr. Patton said he was attending the Board Meeting also on the behalf of OMJ (Ohio Means Jobs) after talking to area businesses who had heard about the route cuts. Scott McKenzie was there from US Plastics. Mr. Patton also said he heard on the radio that Shelia made the comment that the economic development for the community would collapse if RTA shuts down and I have never had any company interested in the Lima location to withdraw due to the lack of transportation. Mr. Patton also said that Tracy Sanchez from Lima Pallet said no one had contacted them at Lima Pallet about that route being in trouble. Shelia had sent letters to a majority of the business that would be affected and went out to meet with P&G, also has an email with correspondence about the routes with Lima Pallet that she will forward to the Board. Mr. Patton said people at the businesses will be willing to come to the table to see if they can find a better solution.

Shelia responded that these routes were the newest with the least ridership so they were the biggest cost. We talked about these routes getting cut at every presentation and at the public hearings. Mr. Patton said he didn't hear about our public hearings until he saw something on Facebook on the day of the last one. The TV news came and did a segment on the public hearings we were holding and we sent the information to the newspaper, we had notices up on the buses and in the lobby so I am not sure how else we are supposed to get the information out to everyone in the community when you have no funding for Advertising and Marketing.

Mr. Accountius said we had called people before the levy trying to get the word out and get funds. Shelia said we were at Chamber of Commerce, Legislative Meetings, and did numerous presentations to community organizations and surrounding villages trying to communicate with the community the best we could. Mr. Patton said that Tracy Sanchez is President of Rotary and she didn't know about it. Tracy is willing to talk and Scott is here at the meeting. Mr. Schroeder asked if Jeff Sprague and the Visionaries could be brought to the table to have a perspective and they could facilitate the conversation. Mr. Patton said this is above the Visionaries as they do high-level economic development that this will not affect. As I said before, companies coming in to Lima ask how the labor pool is and are not concerned with how the employees get there or even ask about transportation.

Shelia responded that she would be willing to meet with any company that would carry the conversation of suggestions of resolutions to prevent RTA from needing to shut down any service. Just to give you an idea, our actual cost to run Saturday service for five routes for ten hours is approximately \$250,000 a year and we only received around \$13,000 in fares. I just received a request from Lima Pallet last month asking us to start service an hour earlier as their employees were getting to work late. Mr. Patton said those businesses only need us to go by there two times a day. When we planned that route, we had to run five hours in the am and five hours in the pm to cover all the businesses schedules including P&G on that route. I don't think only two hours will be enough coverage for everyone and our Union contract will only allow us to work the drivers a minimum of three hours per shift. We will not be able to shuttle for only a list of certain business due to "Charter Regulations" and whatever route we provide, it has to be open to the public. Thom from RPC, said it used to cost \$100/hour to run the buses; we would have to look at the Certificate of Data to see the current actual cost if you want that presented to those businesses. Many E&D clients will move from fixed route to Uplift service which is a more expensive service for us. With shrinking back the areas we go to, our Uplift Service area will also shrink. The South Main will switch from a 30 minute route to a 60 minute route and will pick up at JFS with the longer route. It has been suggested that we only use smaller vans instead of the 30 – 35 foot Gillig buses, but what folks don't understand they are a better overall value as they have a much longer useful life, they are heavy duty vehicles that can run all day long. Other transit profit agencies that provide transportation do not have all the Federal and State reporting requirements

we do, all of the training that is required and reporting. This of course will increase our allocated cost for service.

We are proceeding with the cuts we outlined in the public meetings. We would like to meet with the businesses concerned to see what kind of assistance they may offer. Shelia mailed out 460 letters to the businesses and all of the elected officials knew what the course of action would be. It had been talked about at all the transportation meetings. We talked about what we would do with the money if it passed and what cuts there would be if it didn't. Every piece of documents that was public mentioned the 30% funding cuts that is occurring each year and a list of what the sales tax would be used for the community not just RTA, which included sidewalks, bike lanes, along with additional service.

RTA also has the challenges of competing with for profit business, for example Black & White Cab. Most of JFS transportation goes through Black & White Cab as I present the maps to show for one month of June how much transportation JFS contracted with Black and White verses RTA. Mr. Patton said a single mom who drops her kids off at a day care can't ride the bus as it will not wait on her to drop off her kids. But RTA does provide transportation for other people door-to-door where they have to make more than one stop. They might have to go to the bank and then to the doctor so what is the difference if it's the daycare? Mr. Patton said we were the third or fourth most expensive when they went out to bid. Shelia responded by mentioning that RTA's fees are public knowledge and anyone can underbid us but then charge more for various fees. How is RTA supposed to compete with that?

In response to the business that Mr. Patton is here to represent, Shelia said she will put together the allocated cost of each route and would be happy to attend any meeting to see if any suggestions can assist or stop the reductions in RTA service.

Ninth Item of Business – Board Discussion – 2018 Board Meeting Dates: The tentative Board Meeting dates for 2018 had been presented to the Board for approval. The January 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting was moved to January 9<sup>th</sup>.

Tenth Item of Business – RPC Update: Mr. Mazur had already provided their information.

Eleventh Item of Business – Executive Session: Mr. Accountius made a motion to go to Executive Session for a confidential personnel matter and Ms. Davis seconded the motion.

Roll call: Holly – yes, Alberta – yes, Richard S. – yes, Joan – yes, Dick A. – yes, Michael – yes, Brad – yes.

Mr. Accountius made a motion to return from Executive Session and Ms. Davis seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Holly – yes, Alberta – yes, Richard S. – yes, Joan – yes, Dick A. – yes, Michael – yes, Brad – yes.

Twelfth Item of Business – Adjourn: Mr. Accountius made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Taylor seconded the motion. All members voted in favor thereof.

**The next Board Meeting will be held December 5th, 2017 at 12:00 p.m.**

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**Richard Schroeder, Board President,**

**Or**

**Alberta Lee, Board Vice President**

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**Patricia Stein, Board Secretary/Treasurer**