

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
July 10th, 2018 @ 12:00 Noon

Present were Brad Taylor, President; Richard Schroeder, Holly Rex, Joan Davis, and Josh Parker, Board Members; Shelia Haney, Executive Director; Patricia Stein, Finance Director/Board Secretary, Brian Wildermuth, Operations Supervisor; Steve Kowalik, AFSCME Local 8; Lori McGuire, Uplift Coordinator; and Teresa Brown, Administrative Assistant.

First Item of Business – Roll Call: Roll Call was taken and noted for the minutes. Mr. Hayden and Mr. Cockerell were not present.

Second Item of Business – Guest Open to Floor: Mr. Kowalik chose to defer his comments to allow Mr. Taylor time to get to the meeting.

Third Item of Business – Approval of Previous Minutes: Ms. Davis made a motion to approve the previous minutes and Ms. Rex seconded the motion. All members voted in favor thereof.

Fourth Item of Business – Approval of Study Session Minutes: Ms. Davis made a motion to approve the Study Session minutes and Mr. Parker seconded the motion. All members voted in favor thereof.

(Agenda conducted out of order)

Seventh Item of Business – Financial Report – May: The income for May was \$250,599 while the expenses were \$284,074. After backing out depreciation, we had a net income of \$14,664. Shelia added that with the Year-to-Date we are showing a negative of under just \$30,000. Some of that was due to the 2017 operating grants being exhausted and neither ODOT nor FTA had opened up the 2018 operating grants yet. We were actually beginning talks with FTA on how shut down service for a couple of weeks as we did not have enough money in our bank account to make payroll. The Federal grant is now open and we drew down funds in July. The State operating grant is still not open. We can only draw down 50% of our expenses from the operating grant and require match money for the other 50% which is always the challenge.

Ms. Davis made a motion to accept the Financial Report and Mr. Parker seconded the motion. All members voted in favor thereof.

Sixth Item of Business – Operations Report – May: The App software project is on hold for now. We are still doing discussions and research on it but we need the startup costs.

Our fixed route ridership was down almost 13,000 for May. The ADA door-to-door Uplift service has gone up along with the expense. The ADA customers that we had riding the bus for 50 cents

have gone to using the van door to door service since we reduced routes and service hours. Wheelchairs have gone down by 753 and bikes have gone down by 92, which indicate many of those passengers were riding nights and weekends since that is the only service that was cut.

One of the Board Members had suggested us getting smaller vehicles. The smaller vans are considered light duty and do not hold up as well to continuous starting and stopping in traffic and need repaired more often. Shelia is looking for a smaller, heavy duty transit vehicles. She found a contract and they are going to be included and she is still researching to see if these vehicles would hold up and what the safety is in an accident. We had no accidents in May

Under policies and procedures, we will be working on the Union Contract soon.

Mr. Parker noticed looking at the one report that many people go to Biolife. Mr. Parker was wondering if we could use one of our smaller vans as an Express route to take people to the hot spots in town.

Mr. Schroeder made a motion to accept the Operations Report and Ms. Rex seconded it. All members voted in favor thereof.

Second Item of Business – Guest open to Floor: Mr. Kowalik from AFSCME Local 8 said he would like to talk about the levy. The Union gave a small contribution last time but helped out with the technology to reach more voters. We only lost the levy by 4%. Mr. Kowalik has served on the Board for TARTA and they depend on their levy for their existence. It is always hard to ask for money but without it, it is hard to survive. You need the money if you are going to complete your mission to the community. He understands it is a tough decision but he feels we are in a better place than last year. Some folks that may have been against us last year may help us this year. Mr. Kowalik urged the Board to really consider the option.

Fifth Item of Business – Board President's Comments: Mr. Taylor said he appreciated all the Board Members that came to the Study Session two weeks prior. There was a lot of thought and consideration given to the levy issue and he appreciated everyone being willing to continue to think through the idea.

Eighth Item of Business – Board Discussion - Tax Levy Plan of Action: Mr. Taylor said they discussed the levy at the Study Session. He asked if anyone had any thoughts/comments or wanted to reopen the floor due to Steve's comments. Ms. Davis said she would still like to move forward in November as she believed if we didn't get it passed soon we wouldn't have a bus system and that would be bad for the people.

This would have been the month the Board would have had to make a motion to proceed with a levy on the ballot to give us time to start campaigning. At the Study Session the Board did not want to be in a position to have to vote on it today. Shelia was advised to have it on the record that the Board decided NOT to go forward with the levy in November since we have been talking about it all this time. We should have the Board make a motion they were not ready to pursue a levy without trying other ways to raise money. Shelia said "We have tried other ways to raise money since at least 2010. There has been a very stressful balance all this time. Just a few weeks ago we were looking to FTA for guidance on how to shut down service since we didn't have enough to

make payroll. It will make it even harder to retain employees when they realize how close to the edge we run. It has always been a challenge to keep staff, especially since they haven't had a raise for three years and have no benefits. We lost the Marimor pass-through in 2015, and then we did a lot of work to get the Medicaid certificate. We lost the JARC and New Freedom in 2016, and have to compete with other agencies for the same grants. We got the school contracts which saved us this year. We don't have the 50% match to draw down all of the grant money we are awarded. It is a constant struggle year after year and one of the reasons we can't keep staff." RTA is the only Transit Authority in the state of Ohio with no designated funding. The Commissioners have no extra money in their budget to help us out and doesn't look like that will change anytime soon. Additional Door-to-door service is not the answer. We are trying to help people get to jobs and the Fixed Routes are the most affordable and efficient option. Additional Door-to-door service is not going to save RTA. It will generate more money for grant match but it will also generate more expenses. A levy is a difficult thing to ask the community but RTA has already exhausted all other options year after year.

At the Study Session, a Board member said we don't have any allies in the community but that is false information. Businesses are starting to feel the effects of the route cuts with their higher transportation costs. Shelia is going to continue to work on building allies. The service is not just for the poor people, it is about economic development. Eventually RTA will have to go for a levy because they will not have any grant money available after continued cuts. We broke even for the first quarter and now are starting to go in the deficient again mid-year.

Shelia said she hoped today the Board would take it serious of their obligation as a Member of the Board of the RTA and do what is best for the RTA and the community, She agreed that maybe this November might not be the best time to go out for a levy because there are a lot of things that we need to do to be ready. At the same time, we can't go out and campaign for money until the Board approves us putting it on the ballot. RTA will just have to continue to educate the community and try to gain more support but that will be difficult when we continue to cut services. She said she hopes that if the Board does not run for the levy this November they will consider putting it on in the spring as she doesn't believe RTA can hold out until next November.

Mr. Taylor said he didn't disagree with anything Shelia said. He said he believed there was a need for the money, there is just a disconnect with the county leadership and what the needs are. They also want to make sure we have gone through all the avenues we can.

Mr. Schroeder said the biggest disconnect is the one with the corporate leaders who are now starting to see the effects. He doesn't believe there is a groundswell of desire for a transit levy. There is a great need but most people don't hurt because of the transit reductions. If we are hearing from St. Rita's and others businesses, it shows we need to take the next several months to build the consensus and work toward a levy hopefully in the spring. Then places like St. Rita's can say they want us to do it, instead of just saying they will support us. They can take the lead. They can put articles in their newsletters saying they want and need transit services in the community. Many people would take the lead of other organizations in the community.

Mr. Schroeder made a motion to table the question of the levy until October with the purpose of taking action on it. They would then make the decision whether to move forward in the spring then

based on what they could learn and identify in the next two months. That would give us two months to find allies and be in a good position in the spring. We would also have time to see if the app was going anywhere, and explore some of Mr. Parker's ideas of additional shuttles and smaller buses. If the Board makes the decision in October that we can move forward in the spring we will have plenty of time to campaign. Mr. Parker brought up that we had previously talked about partnering with County and City engineers and asked if we would still be doing that. Shelia said yes we can earmark money for streets and bridges as long as it is related to transit and through RTA.

Mr. Parker seconded the motion on the table until October's meeting and all members voted in favor thereof.

Ninth Item of Business – Board discussion – Service Reductions: Current Finances are \$30,000 in the negative. If it continues this much we will have to look at a reduction in more services. If we pull the fixed routes inside city limits, we don't have as wide of a range to have to do the door-to-door service which is a larger expense. If the finances continue to show negative, this will be our only alternative.

Tenth Item of Business – Board Discussion/Motion-Grant 5339 – Fueling Station: There is some funds available for Bus Facilities that has a deadline next month for the application. Since Fuel sales is our current largest source of revenue, this grant will give us an opportunity to extend the facilities for not only alternative propane sales but larger tanks for fuel sales. The current fueling station has the concrete issues; the hoses need repaired, small underground tanks, etc. Even if we apply for it we might not get it. It would probably be a year, possibly 2-5 years before we were able to make the project happen.

Mr. Schroeder made a motion for Shelia to move forward with applying for the 5339 grant for the Fuel and Bus Facility. Ms. Rex seconded the motion and all members voted in favor thereof.

Eleventh Item of Business – Board Discussion/Motion – Communications Manager: We have been contracting with Elliot Rankin, who has a marketing background, for our social media work. He has also done some videos for us. He will have other responsibilities to do that will bring in revenue such as the advertising on the buses. One of the Board Members had mentioned we could sell more space on the buses as it was lost revenue. We would bring him on part-time until we see how much revenue he could bring in to balance making it a full time position Ms. Davis made a motion to hire Elliot Rankin as the Communications Coordinator and Mr. Parker seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of the motion.

Twelfth Item of Business – RPC Update: RPC had no update at this time.

Thirteenth Item of Business – Executive Session: There was no need for an Executive Session at this time.

Fourteenth Item of Business – Adjourn: Mr. Schroeder made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Parker seconded the motion. All members voted Aye.

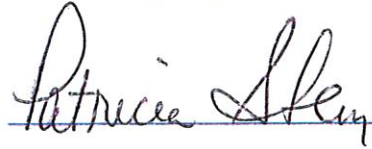
The next Board Meeting will be held August 7th, 2018 at 12:00 p.m.



Brad Taylor, Board President,

Or

Michael Hayden, Board Vice President



Patricia Stein, Finance Director/Board Secretary

