

Minutes of the Special 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 26, 2019 @ 12:30 PM

Present were Joan Davis, Acting President; Joshua Parker, Holly Rex, Richard Schroeder, and Scott Cockerell, Board Members; Karen Garland, Operations Director; Brian Wildermuth, Superintendent; CJ Fultz, Clemans-Nelson; and Teresa Brown, Board Secretary/Treasurer. Visitors: Leslie Rigali; Marlene Shumaker, RPC.

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

Second Item of Business – Discussion on Driver Issues: Mr. Schroeder said there was a combination of looking forward to restoring services after the first of the year when we receive the levy money, and being told we were losing drivers and having a hard time hiring new drivers that made him think we needed to have a discussion before the first of the year. Brian said we lost a driver last week, but we had known she was leaving for something else for some time. We have one driver retiring at the end of the year. We have been getting applicants, it is just hard to find ones that have their CDL with passenger endorsement. It takes a decent amount of time to get them trained and up to Findlay to take the test so they can drive our vehicles. We do have two non-CDL vans and two MV1s, but the MV1s are only good for one to three people at a time. We have two more non-CDL vans on order, but they can take up to six months to come in.

Brian said he believes one of the issues with getting drivers is we don't have a real clear pay scale. He tells them he can get them to the \$15 an hour, and then it is a work in progress. The other problem is insurance. Most people need insurance. Mr. Parker asked if the pay was comparable and Teresa said Shelia had checked other RTAs and our pay was very comparable. Ms. Rex asked what the time line was for training, if it was a month, 60 days, 90 days. Karen said it was probably closer to 90 days and Brian added it depended on the person. Some have knocked it out in a month and some it takes 3 or 4 months. Mr. Parker asked if we covered costs associated with obtaining their CDL and we do. Mr. Schroeder asked how many vacancies we have, and Brian replied that to bring back nights, weekends, etc. we probably need 8 -10. Mr. Schroeder asked if we have sufficient staff at the moment to cover everything we are doing. Brian said we mostly do. If people call off, we can be scrambling.

Ms. Rex asked if we had another recruitment meeting scheduled but we do not currently. Karen had Elliot change the ad looking for applicants to say CDL drivers. We still get quite a few without a CDL applying. We will still interview them, but then tell them to go the BMV and take the temp test to get their temporary CDL permit to see if they are serious. Some of them we never hear from again, some have their permit the next day. Mr. Cockerell asked what the time frame and cost for a new driver would be. Brian said it is \$23.50 for the permit, the test receipt is \$53.50, and then they take it to the BMV and it is \$40 for the new license. They bring in the receipts all together and get reimbursed for them. For the time frame, it just depends on how bad they want it. Once you get your permit it is at least a week before you can test.

When we say non-CDL, they might have their CDL license. Anyone that is a trucker or went to Apollo have their CDL, but they don't have their passenger endorsement. We have to spend the time training them and they must go take the test all over again as if they did not have a CDL at all. We have two guys right now they have had their CDL for years, but they must take the test. It has been a couple months working with them as things are different than when they originally got their CDL.

Ms. Rex asked when we do the drug & alcohol testing. Brian replied we do that at hire date. We send them for their DOT physical, drug test and background check upon hiring. Mr. Cockerell asked if we had looked at part-time drivers. We have quite a few of those. We have retire/rehires, school bus drivers that work in between the school hours. Once we get Saturdays and evenings back, they may want to pick up some of those hours. Mr. Cockerell asked how much they make driving school bus compared to here. Karen said it is at least \$3 - \$5 more an hour. Brian added the school bus driver we just hired is making \$20 an hour at her other job. He talked to a driver at Lima City Schools who has only been there a year and is making \$17/hour. Places like Clymer's that do the door-to-door service, their drivers make between \$8.55 - \$10 an hour.

Ms. Rex if we had a plan. Brian said we just keep trying to hire but we need something to entice them. Shelia has worked on a pay scale. Right now, they all start at \$14, then go to \$15 when they have their CDL, then they stay there until they get a ten-cent longevity per hour after five years. The pay is not bad except it needs adjusted for longevity, we just lack in benefits. Mr. Parker asked how many active drivers we have currently, we have 24 but one is retiring the end of December. One is taking their CDL test next Friday. We only need 8 - 10 drivers to bring back nights and weekends back, we just need a couple more drivers at the moment. Karen added that we have one of our garage staff driving the NorthEast route we just brought back in the morning and another garage staff driving it in the evening.

Mr. Parker said for the staff to just continue the communication on how hiring is going. He said if we weren't adding something more, he wasn't sure if we would be able to get different results.

Mr. Schroeder made a motion that obtaining sufficient numbers of drivers for operations be a priority and that based on continuing staff input the Board address in a very timely manner changes in the employment package that might be able to be undertaken. Ms. Rex seconded the motion and all members voted in favor thereof.

Second Item of Business – Discussion on School Contracts: Mr. Parker said they had received some very interesting letters from people who were upset with some changes. He was not sure if they had all the information when it was brought to their attentions and some work was already being done on our obligations with the contracts. Ms. Rex said she had talked with Shelia about the Lima City Schools kids, as they were most of the behavioral issues were, before she left on leave. Karen had given her a list of incidents from the buses and it is a safety issue, but she didn't think the Board fully understood what the ramifications of cancelling the contracts would be. Ms. Rex wanted to sit down with Shelia and Jill Ackerman and any other Board Members to look at things on both sides. It was Ms. Rex's understanding that Shelia was going to send an email to Jill Ackerman letting her know that the contract would not end on December 31st, that we would continue to provide service. Realistically with the holidays and people being gone they would probably not be able to sit down to talk until January.

Karen said Brian communicated with Elida and Bath after getting permission from Shelia and Ms. Rex. He let them know we would continue with the contracts until the end of the school year. We will then look at the contracts prior to next school year to see what our actual cost is. Elida did ask

for a letter stating we would continue with the contracts. Ms. Rex added she thought the letter would need sent to all three schools letting them know we would continue service. Mr. Parker asked that meant we were continuing with the contracts with no change and Ms. Rex replied yes. She said when she received the letter from the schools, she called Shelia and said what's the deal here, this is not good. Shelia said well we got their attention. Ms. Rex said there are different ways of getting their attention and this was not a good way as now we have to go back and do clean up and build something we should have had in place already. We created an issue that didn't need to be there. Karen said her and Lori had met with the staff at Lima City Schools and gave them the letter and were sympathetic with the staff. When Shelia emailed Jill to let her know why it was happening, Jill replied and said she was not happy with the way RTA treated her staff.

Ms. Rex said there should have been a meeting with the schools beforehand and Shelia should have been the one to talk to them and give them the letters. She knows Shelia is looking into Rhodes State College to see if some of the students that need to do internship would be able to assist on the bus, but it takes time to pull something like that together. We need to develop something so the driver is not left out there on their own when some of the children start to act up. Mr. Parker said we need to have the right people have the conversations. He didn't think it was the right thing to do to send Lori and Karen to meet with the school.

Mr. Schroeder said we need to be better prepared as far as the facts. The contract is explicit that there must be mutual consent for any modifications and that should have been understood before the Board was asked to authorize a letter. He was also concerned with the frequency of the issues on the bus. The list provided for the write-ups only indicated three a month. Karen said we are concerned with the magnitude of the offenses. These incidents do require a supervisor going to the bus. Mr. Schroeder said there is still only five students causing most of the three offenses a month. RTA has policies in place to take the children off transportation if they have issues with them and have implemented in the case of at least one child. Yet they were told we are losing drivers because of this issue. He is very concerned they were not properly informed as to the magnitude of the issue, the number of instances, the extent of the issue, and the actual results as in the drivers leaving. It appears the drivers are leaving for other opportunities as opposed as a direct result of this as they were told. He hopes that as we go forward with these conversations that everybody on the Board is properly informed with the facts, so they don't again embarrass the agency by making statements that are unsupported.

Mr. Parker asked if any drivers have quit because of these contracts. Karen replied not directly, but it added to them seeking other employment. We had one young man and the girl that is now expelled was terrorizing him every day. She would bite him, get out of her seat and kick him, etc. She was suspended for three days the first time, the first day back she did it again and got suspended again, this time for five days. She came back and did it again so then she was expelled for the remainder of the school year. The mom calls us occasionally and threatens to get her lawyer on us and we just say okay. We transport the girl's twin sister and she is not a behavioral issue. Mr. Parker asked if the schools had been notified along the way of the incidents and they had. We have had discussions with the school about getting an aide particularly for this girl and they said they were going to supply one but never did.

Ms. Rex made a motion that a meeting with Jill Ackerman, Shelia, herself and any other Board Members who were would like to be present happen as soon as possible to get the issues with the schools resolved. Mr. Parker seconded the motion. Mr. Schroeder asked if they were limiting talks to Lima City Schools, as he thought we had issues with Elida Schools also. Brian said the issue we had with Elida that child is off the bus also. Mr. Schroeder thought we needed to meet with all three schools Superintendents individually. Ms. Rex agreed as we told them we were discontinuing

service, then we say we aren't. Brian said we only transport one child from Bath, and he rides with the Elida children. Mr. Schroeder said he thought they deserved the courtesy of a meeting also. Brian said he had talked with Joel, the Superintendent at Elida and he told them if there were to be changes for next school year, he would have it to them before the end of this school year so they had time to make any changes they might need to do. All members voted in favor of the motion.

Third Item of Business – Discussion on Resumption of Services 2020: Mr. Parker asked if there had been any updates. Brian said we are still planning on starting Saturday service back on January 11th. He had been working on the run pick for the last month and will have it out to the drivers early next week. It has the Saturdays incorporated into it. We have combined the 8 & 9 Routes and plan to start them in late December. We will run them like we do the #7 Route, running four hours in the AM and four hours in the PM. This Route tore apart 8 & 9 and put them back together so we can hit all the areas in one hour. It will be relatively easy to cover the new route and Saturdays. The first quarter we will see some overtime every week. We used to do the run picks every four months to keep the Marimor clients with the same drivers longer as they don't like change. The new run picks this year will be done quarterly instead, so we can add service back quarterly. We probably won't add anything back second quarter but hope to add the evening service back during the third or fourth quarter. Adding evenings back is where we will need the bulk of the new 8 – 10 drivers.

Brian passed out the new run pick to the Board Members. The current run pick covers all the fixed routes including Routs 7 & 8 and Saturday service. Some of the Routes have 40.5, 40.75, 42 hours scheduled every week. We have two drivers taking the CDL test next week. If one passes that will be good, and if they both pass that will be great. The last two weeks of the year we don't have any school services, Marimor or much Nelsons so we can start Route 8 then with no problems. We normally do a lot of training or give drivers time off if they want it since there is not much to do during that time period. If we start the evenings later in the year that gives us more training time since the summer is typically slow also.

Mr. Schroeder said since we are currently using some of the garage staff to run basic operations, he would suggest we have a certain number of drivers, whatever the staff thinks is appropriate, before we start new services. We also need to do some better public relations, so they are not expecting us to bring back all services on January 1. We don't need Supervisors leaving their regular jobs to go drive. He said while it was okay for people to get some overtime, we don't want to run so thin that people can't take a day off when they get tired or sick or whatever. He felt it would be a mistake to roll out expanded services if we couldn't run what we are doing now. We need to be realistic about it.

Mr. Cockerell said we need to look at from the other direction also, what would happen if we lost 2 – 4 drivers? People tend to look for new jobs at the end of the year as they think new year, fresh start and they have time off to go interview around the holidays. Brian said if we lost four drivers we would be in trouble. If we lost two, we would just be really tight. We are using the garage guys because we found another mechanic. We didn't really need him yet, but we will when we start nights and weekends. In order to keep the garage budget down, Brian put it to Shelia and Stan that we should hire him now in order to make sure we got him, and then use two of the mechanics part time at the garage and part time as drivers. The new mechanic has all his certifications, but he is still going to school at UNOH so he can only work part-time anyways. He can also have the mechanics ride along with a new driver, so they have a licensed CDL driver with them while they are doing training.

Ms. Rex said we were talking about retention. At the last Board Meeting they had voted on giving the drivers and some of the staff checks for longevity. Teresa replied that we were paying out the quarterly bonus checks that week. We paid them out earlier than normal so people would have them for holiday shopping. The raises were going into effect December 1st so the drivers would see that soon. Mr. Parker asked who should coordinate the conversation about the insurance and raises, if that should be something in one of the committees, if they were looking at the overall cost before they made a decision. Ms. Rex said it may need to be in every committee meeting. Mr. Parker asked if there had been any investigation into what options were available for health insurance. Teresa said when her and Lori had gone to Columbus for a conference, they talked to a company that offers insurance to lots of small companies as a kind of an insurance pool. She was going to look into it further. Shelia has talked to most of the local providers already and they all offer about the same thing. Brian added some of the employees need insurance for dependents also. He said we had talked about doing some kind of monthly stipend to help pay for family insurance.

Ms. Davis asked if we were going to do a motion to resume Saturday services. Mr. Schroeder asked if the Saturday service was the one the limited feedback inferred was the preferred service to return and Brian said yes it was. Mr. Schroeder made a motion to resume Saturday services when the Board is satisfied there is sufficient staff to operate it. Mr. Cockerell seconded the motion. Brian said he would need that as soon as he could get it as Saturday service is built into the run pick he passed out. He is getting ready to put it out for the drivers to look at and they will do their picks in the next few weeks. If we aren't starting Saturday service on the 11th, he has to redo the run pick completely and then redo it when we start the service.

Mr. Schroeder said he thought the motion was still appropriate even if we have to delay the run pick. Mr. Parker asked how many people were in the till pending. Brian said there are two close to getting their CDL, they are scheduled to test on Friday December 6th. He has another guy starting the next day and would then have three starting training that have been driving the non-CDL vans. We are losing one at the end of the year who is retiring, but we can call her in a pinch. Ms. Rex said she felt the bottom line was they needed to take the staff's input and if they think we can start the service January 11th then we need to just go with it. They know what we need and what will happen if we don't have it. Brian seems confident that we can do this. Mr. Schroeder said his concern was we were arbitrarily picking a date. Ms. Rex said we would start Saturday service on January 11th and Brian added we were adding the Route 8 back on December 20th or thereabouts. That would give them time to run the route and work out the bugs while we had extra drivers due to schools being out for break.

Ms. Rex said things never align perfectly. There would always be too many variables with people and making changes. Brian said we moved up Northeast route from the original plan, where it would have started in the second or third quarter of next year. The route we are starting in late December/early January is the combined 8 & 9 Routes. Then we start Saturdays in January. These were the easiest things to add back. Saturdays was easiest, the routes were a little tougher as we needed more actual bodies to drive. Nights will be the hardest as it takes more drivers and people don't like working evenings.

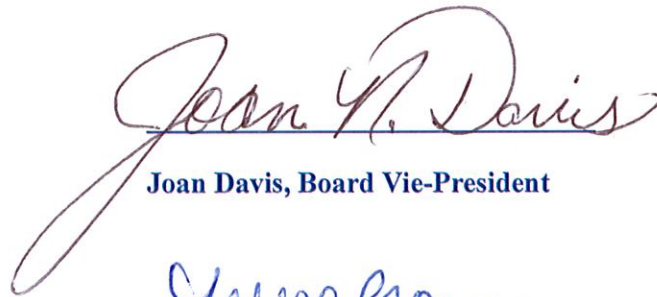
Mr. Schroeder withdrew his original motion with permission from Mr. Cockerell as the Second. Ms. Rex made a motion to begin Saturday service on January 11th as proposed by RTA staff. Mr. Schroeder seconded the motion. All members voted in favor thereof.

Marlene said RPC is working on the Transportation Development Plan (TDP) for RTA. RTA needs it for our Triennial. She is working with the RTA staff and the current accountant to get all the information for routes, structures, etc. and she would be bringing it back to the Board hopefully

in January. One of the things we should have is a five-year budget and a Capital Plan. She has talked to Bob about it. RPC has put together a list of parcels of land that RTA currently owns and there is nothing in the current TDP backing up what we might want to do with some of the parcels. The fueling station was there but under another PID. The parking lot was also in with some other things. They need to be separated out under their own PID so it is very clear what we are planning on doing with the property we own.

Fifth Item of Business – Adjourn: Mr. Schroeder made a motion to adjourn and Ms. Rex seconded the motion. All members voted in favor thereof.

The next monthly Board Meeting is scheduled for January 14th, 2020. (No meeting scheduled for December 2019.)

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Joan N. Davis", written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and elegant.

Joan Davis, Board Vice-President

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Teresa Brown", written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and somewhat compact.

Teresa Brown, Board Secretary/Treasurer