

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Of the Allen County Regional Transit Authority Board of Trustees
Held at the RTA Administration Building
200 East High St., Lima, Ohio
February 2, 2021 @ 11:30 PM

Present were Holly Rex, Board President; Joshua Parker, Board Vice-President; Joan Davis, Rob Moening, and Scott Cockerell, Board Members; Karen Garland, Admin. & Capital Director; Brian Wildermuth, Operations Director; Lori McGuire, Transportation Manager; Teresa Brown, Board Secretary/Treasurer; Carla Lakatos, Consultant; Becca Shidler, AAA3 Mobility Manager. Attending via GoTo Meeting were Richard Schroeder and Doug Olsson, Board Members; Shane Coleman, LACRPC; J. Swygart from the Lima News (signed in as David Trinko from The Lima News).

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

Second Item of Business – Approval of Previous Minutes: Mr. Olsson made a motion to approve the previous minutes. Ms. Davis seconded the motion and all members voted in favor thereof.

Third Item of Business – Finance Report: Mr. Parker said the Finances seemed in order. Mr. Parker made a motion to approve the previous minutes and Ms. Davis seconded the motion. All members voted in favor thereof. Mr. Ruzinsky added that the year-end numbers will not be finalized for a month or two as the sales tax is on a three-month lag and we are finishing up year-end adjustments. We had a great year, but it can all be traced to additional funding we don't normally have. We drew down 1.2 million in 100% CARES Act funding; this would have been 50% under regular funding so that was a \$600,000 gain and we received the \$200,000 in operating funds from ODOT last year. Had it been a normal year we would have been fine and had a small gain.

Fourth Item of Business – Operations Report: Karen gave a synopsis of the meetings attended from the previous month. Lori and Karen had attended the All-Provider meeting. ACBDD had needed some assistance in transporting clients to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, and we were able to help them out with that. Karen had attended the TAC and TCC meetings at RPC and gave reports at both regarding our ridership numbers and expansion efforts. Mitch Kingsley from Bluffton attended one of the meetings and was very excited to hear about the expansion into Bluffton.

Karen attended the Activate Allen County meeting, and we will continue to try to reach the goal of a 5% increase in ridership. At the FACTS Coalition, Mercer County brought up they may need help with transportation and Karen gave them contact information for RTA in case they need our help. They are having issues getting some of their elderly population to vaccination sites. On February 16th, Lori and Karen will be doing a Zoom video with the ACBDD to present our services and training program to assist individuals riding.

On the ridership, under Job Access we did a special trip for Nelsons where we transported 121 of their employees from Nelson Packaging to the Howard Johnson. Our ridership is still slightly down

from last year's numbers. The fuel sales have gone up, with the new contract starting the Allen County Sheriff's Department has started buying fuel from us again.

We are sitting in pretty good shape for drivers right now. All the drivers have their CDL and Lori has gotten hers as well. We have just started another transportation contract with Lima City Schools. We have one current contract with them where we transport kids who are in transition with housing. The new one is with the Transportation Department and will be small to start off with. Next year when more students are back to in-school learning it will probably pick up. We just got the maps in for the proposed routes for Bluffton and Delphos. We will have everything ready to present to the Board next month. They have gone around and talked to officials in both places. The Mayors of both Delphos and Bluffton have sent letters thanking us for looking into offering this service. We have talked to many companies that are interested. We won't be able to meet all their shift start/stop times, but they have also talked about running shuttles if necessary to do so. We have talked about starting either the end of March or the beginning of June since those will line up with our run picks.

Mr. Cockerell made a motion to accept the Operations Report and Mr. Olsson seconded the motion. All members voted in favor thereof.

Fifth Item of Business – Approval of Board Policy B-07: The changes had been made to the Real Estate Policy at Mr. Schroeder's suggestion. Mr. Schroeder made a motion to approve the Policy. Mr. Moening seconded the motion and all members voted in favor thereof.

Sixth Item of Business – RPC Updates: Shane said they had been busy updating their documents. They had had worked on their Title VI, an LEP Plan, and the Fatal Crash Summary Report for 2020. The Coroner is going to have a Press Release for that on Friday. They have worked on their Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). It is their work plan for the next fiscal year starting July 1. It has the historical background of the Regional Planning Commission, the committees, and the members of those committees. It also covers their work program, mass transportation, and FAST Act. The work program starts on page 105.

Holly, Teresa, and Karen had been sent the draft document to look over. It has been out to all the RPC Committees. Mr. Coleman is looking for approval of the Draft document. It is in its 21-day review process and is on their website. It represents a budget for RPC of just over \$830,000, 66% of that is funded by ODOT.

Ms. Rex said she had not looked at it in any detail, Karen replied it has been looked over at all the RPC committees that she serves on. Mr. Schroeder made a motion to approve the draft UPWP. Mr. Cockerell seconded the motion and all members voted in favor thereof.

Eighth Item of Business – Executive Session: M. Parker made a motion to move to Executive Session for the purpose of a potential sale of property. Ms. Davis seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Scott – yes, Josh – yes, Joan – yes, Holly – yes, Rob – yes, Dick – yes, Doug – yes.

Motion to return from Executive Session was made by Mr. Olsson and seconded by Mr. Schroeder.

Roll Call: Scott – yes, Josh – yes, Joan – yes, Holly – yes, Rob – yes, Dick – yes, Doug – yes.

No action is being taken.

Seventh Item of Business – Strategic Planning: Carla Lakatos started off the Strategic Planning Session by saying there was no set agenda to the meeting, we would start by going over the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Survey results. Objective 3 centered around positioning the organization to sustain local support. We have identified the challenges and action items. Some of the surveys talked about how the Board is doing, their work, structures, processes, and policies.

The public owns RTA, the Board gives voice to the owners. We need to position RTA as a value-added service to the community. The most important asset here is the people.

Mr. Olsson brought up the Mission Statement as a good starting point. It probably could use a review for relevancy and make sure it shows the totality of the mission. Carla said you would usually look at the Mission Statement first, but we have already had a lot of good input from the Board. The visions are our outcomes – we have great people, operational excellence, service development, and community appreciation and advocacy.

Carla said Transit agencies usually have boring mission statements, saying they provide safe, convenient, affordable transportation. RTA's is very similar to that. One that stands out better is saying we provide a Transportation Solution. That is a little broader and communicates there is a problem in our community we are trying to solve. We will look at the Mission Statement and make sure it is something that inspires.

The input Carla received had a lot of comments on leadership, on leadership development, Board development, employee development. The people are key to success. We should have succession planning, which consists of making sure we know the skill sets we want in positions and having very strong job descriptions in the event there is a loss. We have a strong management team and don't want to lose them. You must look at where we are and see where you might have a weak spot, such as technology and maybe develop that area.

You need a clear governance/management linkage, and that can involve Board training as well as leadership training. What is the role of the Board vs. Management? You don't want to step on toes, but you don't want to be rubber stamping everything.

You want to focus on operational excellence otherwise you can lose your reputation. Your policies, design, internal control, financial health, and grants management.

You then move to Service Development. Comments were made in the survey on the fixed route stops, should we be county-wide, should we bring people in from outside the county, etc. You can have customer-based performance metrics. These can include rides per hour, the cost per hour, supporting the local community, the economic value we bring, etc. If someone calls and says they need a bus stop or route in their area, we know what makes it be something valuable.

We will need access to resources. We will get that through strategic partnerships with our state, federal and local funding. If you have plans first, then if funding comes through you are ready to go. We need to be integrated in our community and viewed as a community asset. Consistent and trustworthy messaging were mentioned a lot in the survey. Financial management and appropriate expenditures should be kept in mind.

Typically, the Executive Director would develop an action plan for the next six months to two years based on the survey results. The Board could also vote on what they think are the most important things in the strategic outcomes to work on. Mr. Olsson added he thought the first path is better, letting the Executive Directors come up with the plan to present to the Board. He felt it is the Board's role to guide the process. Carla said while that is happening, we could take a step back and look at the Mission and the Vision. Under Service Development, we could look at what assets we had and where we need to be.

Carla said we need to have specific measurables to make sure our objectives are being accomplished. Mr. Schroeder brought up the sequencing of the Operational Excellence vs. the Service Development in the Strategic Outcomes. He thought the SD might follow People before the OE. Carla said we are already providing service, but do we have our house in order? Is our procurement policy high quality? We want our operations to be looked at as excellent before we look to grow. Dick answered our service has been internally designed rather than input from stakeholders and he feels we need external input to improve service and structure ourselves.

Mr. Olsson said we need to define five or six key goals for the RTA following the fulfillment of our mission defined by the Board. This would help them narrow down the data points and roll them into a manageable document. Carla suggested the Board Members put stickers on the chart where their two most important issues were. We need to narrow down our opportunities to what the Board sees is key. Mr. Olsson said he believes Organizational Excellence and Connecting with the Agency Stakeholders would be his two goals.

We have Strategic Partnerships with our funding agencies and with our community advocates. Mr. Schroeder said his two goals would be meeting and gathering input from stakeholders and the strategic partnership development with the funding agencies. Carla said maybe we do need to take a step back to look at the Mission Statement. Mr. Schroeder said our existence has evolved over time. Initially it was to replace a city run fixed route service. It grew but has primarily been about the city. In recent years it has added workforce support and providing service in other communities. Mr. Olsson said he thought the Mission Statement should be the starting point as this Board did not create it and it should be reviewed to see if it was still applicable. It's 2021 and we are more than just a bus company. Mr. Parker found the Mission Statement on the ACRTA website and read it to the Board.

Carla said some guidelines for a Mission Statement are it should be concise and to the point. It should be realistic, operational, reflect your values and what you want to accomplish. It should be inspirational, motivational, even emotional. Informative, clear statements of purpose, why the agency exists. Forward thinking, positive, describe success, created with stakeholder input, and adopted by the Board.

Carla asked if the Board wanted to revisit the Mission Statement and narrow the list down to five or six key goals. Mr. Schroeder asked if they wanted to critique the current Mission Statement in terms of language. Carla said she didn't know if there was any stakeholder input in the current Statement. She asked if there was a local university that might do surveys inexpensively. This would get stakeholder input. We have also used RPC in the past to do surveys on the buses. We would need to know what we wanted their input on. Riders would probably have operational input vs. strategic things, and riders can be sometimes reluctant to say anything for fear of losing services.

Ms. Rex said it looks like we need to narrow down five or six goals and revisit the mission statement. Teresa will send the current Mission Statement(s) out to the Board for review. Mr. Olsson said they need to develop a method to move to the strategic planning process from dozens of data points to a handful of manageable goals. Under each goal will be tactical items and the staff will perform day-to-day duties to build towards the goals.

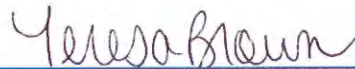
Ms. Rex said we have an idea of where we are going and need to determine the next steps and asked when the Board should meet again to go over this. Mr. Parker said they could take it as homework, and they could decide after some conversations. Mr. Cockerell added they could set a deadline of when they should have their five or six points determined. It was a lot of information. Mr. Olsson thanked Carla for all the work she has put into the Strategic Planning.

Ninth Item of Business – Adjourn: Mr. Cockerell made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Parker seconded the motion. All members voted in favor thereof.

The next monthly Board Meeting is scheduled for March 2nd, 2021.



Holly Rex, Board President



Teresa Brown, Board Secretary/Treasurer