

**METRO RTA  
BOARD MINUTES  
ROBERT K. PFAFF TRANSIT CENTER BOARD ROOM  
VIRTUAL MEETING  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2021  
9:00 A.M.**

**Trustees Present:** (all via teleconference) Robert DeJournett, Nick Fernandez, Gary Spring, Mark Derrig, Heather Heslop Licata, Renee Greene, Vincent Rubino, Donald Christian, David Prentice, Chuck Rector

**METRO Team Members Present:** Dawn Distler, Angela Neeley, Bambi Miller, Valerie Shea, Jarrod Hampshire, DeHavilland McCall, Shawn Metcalf, Jay Hunter

**Guests Present:** Dr. Daniel Van Epps, T. Commager, Doug Livingston, Kevin Lovington, Helen Carroll, Ron Brubaker

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. DeJournett called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

In keeping with Governor DeWine's order of social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, audience participation is suspended for this meeting. No comments had been conveyed to the CEO by the Friday prior to this meeting.

**RECOGNITION**

None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. DeJournett asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2021 meeting. Mr. Rector made a motion for approval, second by Mr. Fernandez. The minutes were unanimously approved.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS & RESOLUTIONS**

**CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE & SERVICE PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Chair: Mark Derrig

Mr. Derrig reported the Committee met on February 17. A construction report on North Barn and Independence Transit Center was provided, KPIs were reviewed, and two new buses are out on test runs with a member of the Maintenance team.

Mr. Hampshire gave an overview of the Resolution that was presented to the Board for approval.

**Resolution 2021-04:** A resolution authorizing the award of a contract for the purchase of two (2) Chargepoint CPE250 Electric Bus Charging Stations and associated Training and Support. Mr. Derrig made a motion for approval, second by Mr. Rubino. All those present voted 'yes.' were Mr. DeJournett, Mr. Spring, Mr. Derrig, Ms. Licata, Ms. Greene, Mr. Rubino, Mr. Christian, Mr. Prentice, and Mr.

Rector. Mr. Fernandez abstained.

## **ASSET PROTECTION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

Chair: Chuck Rector

Mr. Rector reported the Committee met on February 17. KPIs were reviewed. Diversity Training was completed by all team members and a few Board members.

Mr. DeJournett commended Mr. Hunter and Ms. Lori Stokes for providing a good training to the team.

## **PLANNING / MARKETING / RAIL COMMITTEE REPORT**

Chair: Donald Christian

Mr. Christian reported the Committee met. Ms. Shea and Ms. Claire Merrick provided an extensive summary of both areas. There was no report on rail. Ms. Shea provided an overview of the Resolutions that were presented to the Board for approval.

**Resolution 2021-05:** Approving the Service Equity Analysis for major service changes made as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Christian made a motion for approval, second by Ms. Licata. All those present voted 'yes.'

**Resolution 2021-06:** Authorizing the award of a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Feasibility Study services contract. Mr. Christian made a motion for approval, second by Ms. Greene. All those present voted 'yes.'

**Resolution 2021-07:** Authorizing an amendment to NEORide Regional Council of Governments' Bylaws. Mr. Christian made a motion for approval, second by Ms. Greene. All those present voted 'yes.'

## **FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT**

Chair: Nicholas Fernandez

Mr. Fernandez reported the Committee met. All financials and the dashboard are "green." Mr. Fernandez commended the Finance Department and the whole team for making things work under difficult circumstances.

## **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Chair: Gary Spring

No report.

## **CHAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Chair: Mark Derrig

No report.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Prentice requested to make a motion to have the Board review the Fact Finder Report vote that was taken after the discussion portion of the December 17, 2020 Special Meeting. Mr. DeJournett advised Mr. Prentice that because he submitted a dissenting vote and the issue was closed by the Board, only a Board member who submitted an affirmative vote could make the motion to revisit the Report vote. Ms. Carroll confirmed the rule.

## **OFFICERS' REPORT**

**President:** Mr. DeJournett notified the Board that Ms. Gissendaner resigned from her position. The appointing authority [Summit County] has been notified and will notify METRO of another appointment once finalized. The City of Akron is also consulting with an appointee to fill the unexpired term left by Mr. Jack Hefner. Pending approval by [Akron] City Council, Rupa Guara, a first generation immigrant from North Hill, will be appointed to the Board in September. Mr. DeJournett informed the Board about the Akron RubberDucks ticket promotion supporting frontline workers, which included METRO RTA. Board Committee Chairs and Members are due for assignment in March. Board members should contact Mr. DeJournett if they are interested in chairing a committee or wish to join additional committee(s).

**Chief Executive Officer:** Ms. Distler thanked the three Board Members for participating in the Diversity Training. Nine new buses, identifiable by a new paint scheme, are on the road and in service. Training was conducted by Operations with onboard assistance from members of Maintenance to make sure everything is working properly. The buses have new features including an automatic mobility securement system, USB ports on every seat, air filtration system, and more. The team continues their efforts to make the passenger experience as best as possible. Ms. Distler echoed Mr. DeJournett to thank Ms. Gissendaner for her support and her time on the Board. Ms. Gissendaner did a great job and was an amazing asset and representative for Summit County and the community. Ms. Distler addressed two statewide efforts, one being lobbying efforts surrounding the Governor's proposed state budget that cuts public transportation funding by 90%. Last year, with support from several state representatives, the state increased funding for public transportation and METRO used that funding to leverage federal dollars and some capital projects. Ms. Distler expressed her concerns surrounding the proposal. Another area of focus is the availability of COVID-19 vaccine for public transit workers statewide, as the group is not outlined in the state's current distribution plan. These individuals are going to work every day and have been on the frontline through the pandemic for almost a year now, and Ms. Distler is uncertain why public transit workers are not considered frontline workers. METRO has done a lot to keep the team as safe as possible. More students will be onboard in March as Akron Public Schools returns to in-person learning and teachers have been vaccinated, yet public transit workers are not considered a priority. Ms. Distler has met with Leader Emilia Sykes, Representative Bill Roemer, and Representative Casey Weinstein to ask for their support in both areas. Ms. Distler said Leader Sykes and Representative Weinstein gave their full support. Ms. Distler reminded the Board of the template letter that can be used to send to the Governor's office and contact their Representative.

Mr. Christian asked if other statewide systems are in support of both issues. Ms. Distler said the state association – Ohio Public Transit Association – has been working to keep rural and urban, large and small systems informed. Some transit leaders testified in front of Finance Committee last week. Mr. Christian questioned what the issue is to propose such a drastic cut, and Ms. Distler expressed her opinion. Ms. Distler noted she talked to the Governor's office and they thanked her for her letter and her concern and keep under consideration. Some bargaining units have weighed in at the state level, too.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. DeJournett asked for a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of reviewing negotiations of bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment. Motion by Mr. Spring, second by Mr. Christian. Roll call was conducted, and Mr. DeJournett invited Ms. Distler and Attorney Helen Carroll to join the session.

The Board went into Executive Session at 9:33 a.m.

Mr. DeJournett asked for a motion to exit Executive Session. Motion by Mr. Rector, second by Ms. Greene. Roll call was conducted. The Board exited Executive Session at 10:58 a.m.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business to come before the Board, Mr. Christian made a motion to adjourn, second by Mr. Fernandez. The motion to adjourn was unanimously approved, and the meeting adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

## **CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE**

Pursuant to Section III, Article 3.2 of the Rules & Regulations of the METRO Regional Transit Authority, METRO has complied with the Notice and Notification to the public and news media.

**DATE APPROVED:** February 23, 2021

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**ROBERT E. DEJOURNETT,  
PRESIDENT**

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**DAWN S. DISTLER,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER/  
SECRETARY-TREASURER**