

**METRO RTA  
PLANNING / MARKETING / RAIL  
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
ROBERT K. PFAFF TRANSIT CENTER BOARDROOM  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2021  
10:30 A.M.**

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER**

Attendees: Donald Christian, Renee Greene, Gary Spring, Vincent Rubino, David Prentice, Mark Derrig, Robert DeJournett, Dawn Distler, Valerie Shea, Tim Smith, Molly Becker, Angela Neeley, Jarrod Hampshire, DeHavilland McCall, Bambi Miller, Shawn Metcalf, Jay Hunter

Guests Present (virtual): Dr. Daniel Van Epps, Ron Brubaker

Mr. Donald Christian called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

**ITEM 2: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JULY MEETING**

Motion to approve minutes by Mr. Gary Spring. Second by Mr. Vincent Rubino.

**ITEM 3: SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Planning Report | Valerie Shea**

- Reviewed KPIs and Performance Report

Mr. Spring asked how METRO's ridership compares to the national trend. Ms. Valerie Shea said ridership is holding steady around 50%, which is in line with other transit systems. METRO may see an uptick in ridership when school goes back into session, as Akron Public Schools accounts for about 10-11% of ridership and an additional 5% from the University of Akron.

- The Fall Sign-Up will go into effect Sunday, August 22. There are no major service changes. The DASH will resume pre-pandemic levels [on Monday, August 23]. On Labor Day, fixed-route buses will follow their respective Saturday schedule and there will be limited demand response service [on Monday, September 6].
- METRO was awarded a little over \$1 million through the Ohio Department of Transportation's Ohio Transit Partnership (ODOT OTP) program for three different projects, including the local match (about 20% of the project cost) for the engineering and design of the Maintenance and Operations Facility. Ms. Shea said METRO's

submission to receive federal funding (80% of project cost) through Senator [Sherrod] Brown's office is still outstanding. The ODOT OTP funding also covers a bus rapid transit (BRT) feasibility study, the next step in the Strategic Plan. This study will take the final results of the Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) and do a deep dive of the high frequency corridors in METRO's network to determine the feasibility of major infrastructure investment in bus lanes, etc. The BRT feasibility study will kick off early next year at the tail end of the COA. The grant also covers additional funding to further support IT equipment for the network servers and switch refresh project.

METRO also received about \$200,000 through the Federal Transit Administration's 5310 grant that fulfills the federal share of the purchase of three demand response vehicles.

One outstanding grant application through CMAQ program to cover the cost of two additional electric buses.

Mr. Spring asked about the status of the Maintenance and Operations Facility project. Ms. Shea deferred the question to Mr. Hampshire, who stated design plans from Bowen Engineering will be reviewed within the next two months with groundbreaking scheduled for early 2022. Construction would take three years to complete.

Mr. Christian asked if the IT funding could be used to expand control (Dispatch) center. Ms. Distler said there is no room to expand and/or enhance the Dispatch offices with the existing building and any physical expansion, including hardware, would come with the new Maintenance and Operations Facility. However, Ms. Distler said METRO continues to look for ways to stay up-to-date on technology software.

Mr. Hampshire further discussed Bowen's process of evaluating METRO's existing building conditions and applying METRO's needs to the new design plans.

### **Marketing Report | Molly Becker**

- Reviewed KPIs
- Ms. Molly Becker showed the Committee the new design of the electric buses. Ms. Becker explained that part of the grant [used to purchase the electric buses] is to disable the engine of a diesel bus, which could turn into a public and/or private event as an introduction of the electric buses to METRO's fleet.

Mr. Hampshire invited the Committee to view METRO's new demand response and Gillig buses that are parked outside the Robert K. Pfaff (RKP) Transit Center following the meeting.

## **Rail Report | Valerie Shea**

- None

### **ITEM 4: RESOLUTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Resolution 2021-14:** Authorizing the award of a contract for the construction of concrete shelter pads and sidewalks and installation of shelters. (Page 10)

Mr. Tim Smith gave a brief presentation on the shelter project. Ms. Shea noted this project began in 2020 and this resolution marks phase two of the project to ensure all shelter locations comply with ADA guidelines.

Mr. Robert DeJournett inquired about the status of the lawsuit brought against METRO alleging that METRO bus stops/shelters are not ADA compliant. Ms. Distler explained that bus stops are not required to be ADA compliant, however bus shelters are. METRO was successful in conquering the lawsuit by agreeing to bring existing bus shelters and concrete pads around the shelters up-to-date and ADA compliant.

Mr. Smith stated that 40 existing bus shelter sites will be brought up to ADA standards through the two project phases, and explained METRO's processes to ensure existing and future bus shelters meet ADA standards.

Mr. DeJournett requested that Resolution 2021-14 include the number of bus shelters/sites covered under the pending contract.

### **ITEM 5: OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Shea provided an update on the COA/Transit Development Plan and requested permission from the Committee and Mr. Christian to give a brief presentation on the COA Existing Conditions Report at the August Board Meeting. Mr. Christian and the Committee agreed that a presentation would be beneficial. Ms. Shea said the team is gearing up to start public outreach on September 20. Next month, Ms. Shea will present the first draft of network redesign and discuss the proposed changes.

Ms. Becker added that METRO is, once again, partnering with Summit County Public Health (SCPH) to host a pop-up COVID-19 vaccination clinic at the RKP Transit Center on Thursday, August 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. METRO will offer a 31-Day bus pass to those who get vaccinated at the event, and SCPH will give a \$100 gift card for eligible Medicaid/MyCare patients.

### **ITEM 6: CALL FOR ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourned at 10:55 a.m.