

PARTA
PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

PARTA ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
2000 SUMMIT ROAD
KENT, OHIO 44240

March 28, 2019

Board Members Present:

Dominic Bellino, Vice President	Richard Brockett	Virginia Harris (arrived after roll call)
Rick Bissler, President	Jeff Childers	Timothy Lissan
Marge Bjerregaard	Dave Gynn, TPO	

Board Members Not Present:

Brian Gray (2nd excused absence)	Frank Vitale (2nd excused absence)
Pete Kenworthy (5th excused absence)	Karen Wise (3rd excused absence)
Jeremy Moldvay (5th excused absence)	

Staff Present:

Claudia Amrhein	William Nome, Legal Counsel	Rebecca Schrader
Marcia Fletcher	Clayton Popik	Brian Trautman

Guests Present:

None.

CALL TO ORDER

President Rick Bissler thanked everyone for attending and called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. An oral roll call followed, and **a quorum was present.**

Moving on, Mr. Bissler said the meeting minutes for the February 28, 2019 Board meeting were distributed, and he entertained a motion to accept. Ms. Marge Bjerregaard made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Dave Gynn seconded the motion. **Motion to approve the minutes, as presented, passed unanimously.**

GUEST COMMUNICATIONS

None.

GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT

Mr. Bissler said the General Manager’s report was distributed, and he asked if there was anything Ms. Claudia Amrhein would like to expound upon.

Ms. Amrhein said the resolution will be discussed later and noted that she prepared a presentation building off last month’s discussion about committees if the Board was interested. If not, she can do it another time.

Mr. Dominic Bellino said every now and then the Board is provided ridership numbers. He doesn't know if the Board has ever seen a four (4) or five (5) year graph as to where those numbers are going. He asked if it was hard to get something that shows the trend line for ridership.

Mr. Clayton Popik said he can provide a document that shows yearly totals by type and source.

Mr. Brian Trautman said looking at a five (5) year look out right now would be misleading because of the Summit Street corridor project and how much that affected ridership.

Mr. Bissler suggested making a note on any generated report indicating anything that might have affected the reporting.

Mr. Gynn said conversations are taking place with legislators about the gas tax and state transportation budget. He asked if there was anything that Board members can do to support Ms. Amrhein.

Ms. Amrhein said she didn't think so at this point. The transportation budget has been hotly debated lately. She noted that she has been on the phone with Representative Randi Clites three (3) different times today. It is literally being batted around by the hour now. There was a big push from the House to fund transit at a much higher level. The Senate has stripped that. The gasoline tax has also been kicked back and forth and reduced. It was talked about at AMATS last week quite a bit. The way the legislators are approaching it is to take money that would otherwise be used for highway construction and flexing it over to transit which isn't a long-term solution. Right now, she doesn't know if there will be any increase in the transportation budget. She thinks it'll be kicked into the general revenue budget and debated for the next three (3) months until July 1st when it must be approved. That's the last that she's heard. The biggest push ever made was through the Ohio Public Transit Association (OPTA) this year, which got a great deal of support from members of both parties but there seems to be an overwhelming reluctance to increase taxes for any purpose even if it's to fix roads and bridges that everybody uses. Including transit in the general fund budget means that transit will be competing against other worthy causes such as public education, health care, and funding for people in need. It's unfortunate that the General Assembly couldn't come to some agreement in the transportation budget. At least it appears that way today.

Mr. Bissler thanked Ms. Amrhein for working with Representative Clites and keeping those lines of communication open.

Ms. Amrhein said she and Mr. Trautman went to Columbus in mid-February and met with Senator John Eklund, Representative Clites, and Representative Sarah LaTourette and all were very supportive but political realities are very complicated. Calls have been made since then also. Everyone across the state is doing their part to try to turn the minds.

Mr. Bissler agreed that it's hard when looking at a general budget and there's only so much to work with under all these great programs.

Ms. Amrhein said that's why she has been focused in recent months on filling a need that she thinks exists and to spread the message about why PARTA and public transit services, in general, are so essential to healthy communities and making that case to people who don't rely on PARTA's services now. She wants PARTA to be here in 15 years; and if funding continues to erode and if community support erodes, that's not necessarily a given. When people do need transit, they want to be able to call and speak to someone on the other end of the phone. That

means making difficult decisions today to fund operations and for the state to step up and do what it said it should do in its own study in 2015, which is to fund at least 10% of transit operating costs. The state published the study knowing that transit is funded literally \$185M below the 10% that was promised.

Mr. Gynn asked what percentage the state funds.

Ms. Amrhein said roughly 2-3% on average, which means that all sales tax, which should be able to be applied for local match, is also being applied to all operating expenses. With the state cutting the Medicaid managed care sales tax portion of the sales tax base, that's about a 6.3% decrease this year.

Mr. Bissler said on top of that, the saddest part is if somebody goes to buy an appliance and rather than buying it in Portage County, they run over to Chapel Hill and buy it, PARTA loses.

Ms. Amrhein said Metro has a ½% sales tax as opposed to PARTA's ¼% and brings in roughly nine (9) times more sales tax revenue annually.

Mr. Trautman said the changes made operationally were basically made around this problem. PARTA wants to make sure that it puts transportation in place that's sustainable for the people who truly do need it the most and continue to put that service out there while funding is going in different directions.

Mr. Bissler asked if there was anything else regarding Ms. Amrhein's report. Hearing nothing further, he moved on to the committee reports.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Bissler said the Administration Committee did not meet but he thanked Ms. Marcia Fletcher for reminding him that it is time to challenge the Administration Committee, which oversees what the Nominating Committee used to oversee, to start thinking about officers. He suggested Board members get in touch with Mr. Jeremy Moldvay or Ms. Karen Wise, who are the two (2) appointed members of the Administration Committee at this point, with suggestions for officers.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Bissler said the Finance Committee met on March 26 and he asked Mr. Dominic Bellino to provide a report.

Mr. Bellino said the Finance Committee went over basically January and February reports. It is difficult the first part of the year to put a number on things because it's only two (2) months. Variances are off because some things were prepaid for the year, which throws off the expenses, or there is grant funding that was received last year but is being booked this year, which throws off the revenue side. No surprises and numbers are tracking nicely. There are nine (9) pages of minutes that go through the details. The list of capital projects in the pipeline was discussed. He noted that about \$1.1M is set aside in restricted funds for a matching piece of those projects. The committee also talked about raising the threshold for Board approvals on expenditures higher than \$50,000. What it really boiled down to wasn't so much the dollar amount that was the issue, it was having Board members attend meetings to have a quorum so when these things come up, resolutions can be passed without having a special meeting or trying to find some other flexible way to give Ms. Amrhein the authority to sign a contract. The resolution tonight needs to be passed because there is a deadline at the end of the month to sign a contract. Not having a quorum poses a problem, which occurred a couple times last year. The Board shouldn't be giving Ms. Amrhein the responsibility of signing something that hasn't received approval yet with a

resolution. That's not fair. Board members should do their job and be at the meetings so there is a quorum to pass these resolutions. He said he has asked Ms. Rebecca Schrader to bring some more information to the next Finance Committee meeting about purchases between \$50,000 and \$100,000. He would like to have a joint meeting with the Administration Committee to not only talk about the dollar figure, but also talk about giving more flexibility to the General Manager to sign contracts without a resolution if there isn't a quorum. However, some regulations don't allow signing of contracts without a resolution. Again, tonight is a perfect example. If there wasn't a quorum, Ms. Amrhein would have had to sign the contract without a resolution, which is not the right way to do it. It's just not good control.

Mr. Bissler said it is like what occurred with Kent State University (KSU) where all the negotiation is done in good faith and both sides agree. It's ready to go but this Board must tell Ms. Amrhein she can sign it. If that authority is not given to her, then there's lack of credibility with the contractors. Five (5) years from now when the same contractors are dealt with again, the respect is gone. He concluded by asking Mr. Bellino if the Finance Committee recommended the approval of the resolution.

Mr. Bellino said the Finance Committee talked about the resolution, but it went to the Operations Committee for recommendation to the Board.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Bissler said the Operations Committee met this evening and he asked Mr. Jeff Childers to provide a report.

Mr. Childers said the Operations Committee met and discussed the Trapeze software resolution that will be discussed later this evening. The committee recommended that the Board adopt the resolution.

Mr. Bissler asked if there were any questions for Mr. Childers.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

Hearing none, Mr. Bissler said the Personnel Committee did not meet.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Bissler said there is no Old Business that he is aware of that needs to be addressed.

Ms. Amrhein said this is where she was going to do her presentation, but it sounds a lot like what Mr. Bellino said.

Mr. Bellino recommended postponing the presentation.

Ms. Amrhein said she can update it to reflect what was talked about tonight and put in some recommendations that will be brought forward next month. If the whole Board is present, it might make more sense to talk about it then.

Mr. Bissler said he would hate to see almost half the Board not get that information.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Bissler asked if there was any New Business that needed to be addressed.

Mr. Lassar asked if there has been any discussion or understanding as to how the reconstruction of the KSU front campus may affect PARTA for route scheduling.

Ms. Amrhein said between her, Mr. Clayton Popik, and Mr. Trautman, they are attending meetings on a regular basis. Mr. Popik most recently was at the meeting that is being sponsored jointly by the City of Kent and KSU. PARTA is involved in discussions about the effect on its transit service, the loss of the C-Midway hub, and the need to create a westbound safe boarding and alighting area when C-Midway is gone. She asked Mr. Popik or Mr. Trautman if they would like to comment.

Mr. Popik said the reconstruction is in developmental stages. When C-Midway goes away, that hub for on campus and off campus is lost. The City hasn't yet submitted their needs statement to the design firm and consultant they hired. This is a joint venture between the City and KSU. The City decided that they may have an opportunity to address the needs that East Main Street itself has for the north side of the street with street striping and safety issues. PARTA is in the loop and has also had discussions with the Citizens Advisory Council at meetings that are held quarterly.

Resolution

Hearing no further discussion, Mr. Bissler moved on to the resolution.

#2019-03-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO CONTRACT WITH TRAPEZE SOFTWARE GROUP dba TRIPSPARK (TRAPEZE) FOR THE UPGRADE AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE EXISTING TRANSIT AUTOMATED VEHICLE LOCATION (AVL) SYSTEM.

Mr. Bissler then entertained a motion to adopt the resolution.

Motion: Dominic Bellino

Second: Marge Bjerregaard

Ms. Amrhein said this resolution requests authority to upgrade the current system of Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs), which are computers loaded onto every bus that support virtually every transit service that PARTA has. It supports the Spot PARTA AVL system, which is on the fixed routes, and the scheduled demand response service where drivers have a schedule and are in constant contact with dispatch in real time making adjustments to keep everybody on time when rides are cancelled or late or conditions need to be taken into consideration. The current MDTs, also called Rangers, operate on the 3G cellular network, which is going away. Officially, it will not be supported by any network beginning January 1, 2020, which means that the 3G units will need to be replaced with 4G units so they will operate beginning in 2020. This has been known for a while. Grant funds were secured by jointly applying with three (3) other transit authorities, which are members of NEORide, for funding to support the upgrade of these units so that Northeast Ohio would not experience interruption in transit service. All four (4) agencies were successfully awarded the entire amount requested. Not all four (4) agencies use the same vendor, which means that each agency can contract individually with its own service provider for the units that are needed. In this case, Mr. Trautman has worked diligently with Trapeze to negotiate the terms for purchasing around 70 Rangers and to purchase five (5) years of extended warranty for all these units. They need to be ordered tomorrow because this is a nationwide issue and the order needs to get in the queue for production of these units so they can be delivered and installed in time for this drop-dead date of the end of the year. The funding that was secured covers 80% of the cost. The Ohio Transit Preservation Partnership Program (OTPPP) awarded \$212,050 and the local match has been secured to fund the other 20%. The final project budget should be around \$265,000, but \$275,000 was built into the resolution for unforeseen contingency items. The intent is to keep it as low as possible, as always, and not have to come back to the Board.

Mr. Bissler asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, he thanked Ms. Amrhein for putting all the information in the Board packet, which helped to read up on before tonight's meeting. He said the nice part is everyone got what they asked for. He asked if there were any other questions. Hearing none, a roll call was taken.

Roll Call:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Jeff Childers	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	Richard Brockett	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>
Frank Vitale	<u>EXCUSED</u>	<u> </u>	Brian Gray	<u>EXCUSED</u>	<u> </u>
Karen Wise	<u>EXCUSED</u>	<u> </u>	Dominic Bellino	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>
Timothy Lassar	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	David Gynn	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>
Jeremy Moldvay	<u>EXCUSED</u>	<u> </u>	Marge Bjerregaard	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>
Virginia Harris	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	Rick Bissler	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>
Pete Kenworthy	<u>EXCUSED</u>	<u> </u>			

Mr. Bissler asked if anyone was filling in for Mr. Frank Hairston tonight.

Mr. Trautman said he knows Mr. Hairston would want to mention the golf outing coming up on May 17.

Mr. Bissler asked if there was anything else.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing nothing further, Mr. Bissler concluded by entertaining a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Marge Bjerregaard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Timothy Lassar seconded the motion. **Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Fletcher
Executive Assistant