

PARTA
PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

PARTA ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
2000 SUMMIT ROAD
KENT, OHIO 44240

April 25, 2019

Board Members Present:

Dominic Bellino, Vice President	Debbie Davison	Timothy Lissan
Marge Bjerregaard	Brian Gray	Jeremy Moldvay
Richard Brockett	Dave Gynn, TPO	Frank Vitale
Jeff Childers	Virginia Harris (arrived after roll call)	

Board Members Not Present:

Rick Bissler (2nd excused absence) Karen Wise (4th excused absence)
Pete Kenworthy (6th excused absence)

Staff Present:

Claudia Amrhein	Frank Hairston	Clayton Popik
Denise Baba	Kelly Jurisch	Rebecca Schrader
Marcia Fletcher	William Nome, Legal Counsel	

Guests Present:

None.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Dominic Bellino thanked everyone for attending and called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. An oral roll call followed, and **a quorum was present.**

Mr. Bellino welcomed the newest Board member, Debbie Davison. He said Ms. Davison will finish out the term of Christina West, who had to vacate her position, and will be representing the City of Ravenna. He said he has known Ms. Davison for a long time, and she brings a lot of experience serving on boards. She is an established realtor and he looks forward to her participation.

Moving on, Mr. Bellino said the meeting minutes for the March 28, 2019 Board meeting were included in the Board packet. He entertained a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Marge Bjerregaard made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Timothy Lissan seconded the motion. **Motion to approve the minutes, as presented, passed unanimously.**

GUEST COMMUNICATIONS

None.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Bellino said the next item on the agenda is the General Manager's report, which was included in the Board packet. He deferred to Ms. Claudia Amrhein to answer any questions or go over some of the details.

Ms. Amrhein thanked Mr. Bellino and welcomed Ms. Davison. She said Christina West, who had to resign, joined the Citizens Advisory Council (CAC). CAC is a volunteer group that meets quarterly over lunch to go over what PARTA is planning and how things are going. There is great input at those meetings. The quarterly meeting was held today. Ms. West wanted to be involved and jumped at the chance to be a part of CAC. She then introduced Denise Baba who joined PARTA about a month ago as the Community Outreach Liaison. Ms. Baba has been reading, visiting, talking, learning and helping PARTA to craft its story in a different way about why transit is so important in the community. Ms. Amrhein said she is excited that Ms. Baba is here tonight. She then noted that Mr. Frank Hairston is back. She concluded by saying the first resolution included in the Board packet was removed from the agenda tonight. Documentation will be looked at a little bit closer for that project and it is intended to be brought back to the Board next month. She apologized for the change but indicated it's out of an abundance of caution.

Mr. Bellino said he appreciated the fixed route ridership chart that was included in the Board packet. He hopes to see an update every year going forward.

Ms. Amrhein said she has been talking with Mr. Clayton Popik about how to present different aspects of transit to the Board instead of just a summary paragraph of trend or ridership for a month. There are a lot of different areas that could be focused on. Hopefully every month, unless things get backed up, something will be put together.

Mr. Bellino asked if there were any questions for Ms. Amrhein.

Mr. Frank Vitale said the Safety Vision camera contract was well done and showed the competitive analysis. He asked if the resolution was for an upgrade or a replacement.

Ms. Amrhein said it is an upgrade. About 1/3 to 1/2 of the bus surveillance cameras on demand response and fixed route fleets will be replaced. The cameras were not all purchased at the same time and are typically purchased at the time the bus is purchased. They are used until they've outlasted their federal lifetime.

Ms. Kelly Jurisch clarified that there are 21 fixed route buses and 28 demand response buses. The fixed route buses require an eight (8) camera system and the demand response smaller buses require a five (5) camera system inside. She said the bus camera system will provide for more opportunities to view in house.

Ms. Amrhein said the federal funds invested in those pieces of equipment must be exhausted first. An upgrade could be done once a year and still not be in line with technology. Once it's federally funded, it must be properly utilized for the life of the asset.

Mr. Bellino asked if more would be replaced as they expire.

Ms. Jurisch said yes, some of the current systems are antiquated and aren't supported anymore by the manufacturer. Those antiquated systems need to be replaced.

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Mr. Bellino said it is interesting to note in the report that the police rely on those cameras a lot for what they do. The community is also benefiting from the cameras inside and outside of the buses. Unfortunately, it's costly to keep up with technology. He asked if there were any other questions.

Mr. Vitale asked Ms. Amrhein what she thought about the gas tax.

Ms. Amrhein said the General Assembly passed a 10 ½ cent gasoline user fee and a 19-cent diesel user fee, which will become effective July 1. It was a compromise arrived at from what the Governor proposed. Transit does not receive an increase through that, but the General Assembly has pledged to include \$70M in the general fund budget for transit, which will be very helpful. There is a tremendous need for road repairs as evidenced through the meetings with the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS). Those meetings include engineers from all the different cities and townships in Portage and Summit counties.

Mr. Nome said PARTA will not be getting anything from the gas tax, but there's another pot of money in the general fund.

Hearing no further discussion, Mr. Bellino thanked Ms. Amrhein and moved on the committee reports.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Bellino said the Administration Committee did not meet.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Bellino said the Finance Committee met on April 23 and detailed minutes were distributed. He asked that any questions be referred to Ms. Amrhein or Ms. Schrader.

The big topic of discussion, Mr. Bellino said, was raising the level for approving large purchases by the Board. The state's threshold has been at \$100,000 for quite a few years now. PARTA never moved from there and remains at \$50,000. Going forward, the committee's role and the Board's role will be to look at long range planning. The Board's job is to make sure the right people are in place. The Finance Committee oversees finances for the organization to ensure that PARTA is a good steward of its money, is budgeting properly, has the right policies and procedures in place, sustains funding, and is doing all the right things. With the many years of perfect audits, nobody can deny that the right people, procedures, and policies are in place. Checks and balances are in place and the monthly meetings of the Finance Committee go through each line item. The detailed reports show that questions are asked by the committee. Any large or small item will be discussed at that meeting. The committee felt the \$100,000 level is not a risk to the organization. Looking back a few years, there were only three (3) resolutions between the \$50,000 and \$100,000 level and one of them was for attorney fees, which is done yearly. The other piece of that is the operation needs to run efficiently. When there are resolutions that need passed, the Board shouldn't dwell on the small things and micromanage. The staff can't wait for a resolution to buy a floor scrubber for \$60,000 because that would hamper PARTA from moving forward on the procurement. The committee recommended the Board approve the resolution raising the level to \$100,000.

Mr. Bellino said the budget reports were in line with what was expected for operations and the budget was good for the month. A full grant was received for the year for state maintenance, which helped a lot. Sales tax revenues and KSU revenues were up. He asked if there were any questions.

Hearing none, Mr. Bellino turned the meeting over to Ms. Amrhein for her presentation.

Ms. Amrhein said the presentation will outline some of the priorities for this year and the coming years.

To give a little bit of a history, Ms. Amrhein said PARTA was founded in 1975 as a Regional Transit Authority, which gave PARTA the ability to operate service as a public transit provider and apply for federal and state funds. In 2002, the voters in the county approved the five (5) year .25% sales tax, which provided the stream of money needed to operate door-to-door and fixed route service. In 2005, voters approved a permanent replacement, which enabled PARTA to budget and plan for the long term. In 2004, PARTA entered into a contract with Kent State University to provide all their campus service and provides a bulk of the ridership. After the sales tax was in place, PARTA focused on developing transit services. In 2010, after the TIGER Grant funding was acquired, PARTA was able to build the Kent Central Gateway and focus on expanding PARTA's footprint in downtown Kent. This is also the time when PARTA applied for the grant funding that would lead to building the compressed natural gas fueling station.

Moving on, Ms. Amrhein said between 2014 and 2016, the focus was on improving transit service. Strategic priorities included improving communication about transit service, enhancing the ease of use for passengers, and developing the parking deck business. The parking deck is open 24/7/365 days a year. Also, there was a lot of hard work in preparing to bring the first CNG fueling station to the county.

The key things completed in that three (3) year cycle, Ms. Amrhein said, included adding new technology with the Spot PARTA mobile bus location app, launching extensive travel training, and redesigning the bus schedules. The goal was to make it simple and understandable. The contract with KSU was also renegotiated. It was in place for several years but needed to be refined and streamlined a little bit. During that time, a full study was done of the system and fixed route changes were made for the first time in many years. The parking business was also developed during that time and different parking passes and uses were created. Parking arrangements were developed with the hotel and there are several living centers downtown for students who use the deck as their garage. Also, retail spaces were developed with Mr. Ron Burbick. Finally, there was a lot of behind the scenes work done on CNG with the A&E design, garage renovations, and developing an RFP for buses. All that happened in that three (3) year period.

Ms. Amrhein said 2017 and 2018 were transition years. Everything was put in place for the CNG station: groundbreaking, construction, and opening. The first four (4) compressed natural gas transit buses were received. In 2017, PARTA took a hard look at its finances. After having 15 years of sales tax revenue under its belt, it was determined that the countywide service wasn't sustainable for the door-to-door service. It was re-evaluated, redesigned, and new contracts were put in place. In 2018, the new DART service model was rolled out.

Moving on, Ms. Amrhein said a couple other things happened in 2018. Brady Lake Village dissolved itself, which reduced the number of Board members from 15 to 14. The Board Bylaws were reviewed during this time. The Bylaws hadn't been looked at for several years. The decision was made to change the committee structure and reduce the number of committees. In 2018, there were three (3) times when there wasn't a quorum of the Board, which had never happened before.

For 2019, Ms. Amrhein said, priorities include reinforcing Board governance duties and using the procurement resolution to keep pace with industry trends. Governance duties include the appointment of a General Manager by the Board, convening public meetings, and transacting business. The Procurement Policy discussion is about balancing those governance duties. She

said as a public body, when *PARTA*'s Board of Trustees convenes, the question in the forefront of the Board members' minds should be does the recommendation that management is making make sense. Is it part of what *PARTA* does? Is it consistent? Has it been discussed? The resolution for buses was talked about for months, it was put in the budget, and it was looked at from a capital standpoint. Those kinds of purchases will always be brought to the Finance Committee. The transaction of business is usually through a resolution or motion. Sometimes the Board needs to authorize management to act, such as when applying for grant funding. Some applications require a resolution. In that case, the Board must convene and adopt the resolution.

In terms of keeping up with industry trends, Ms. Amrhein said ODOT came out with the Transit Needs Study in January 2015. They collected data in 2012 through 2014 to create a level playing field when talking about transit and its funding needs. *PARTA* participated in that process, along with other transit authorities in Ohio. Across Ohio, 115 million trips per year were performed for transit. There are 61 public transit systems. *PARTA* is one (1) of 27 urban transit systems. Out of 88 counties, there are 26 that have no public transit service. Ms. Amrhein then showed a map of how that looked. The next slide was a map which showed, of the counties that do have transit, which counties represented the areas that had fixed route service with countywide demand response. *PARTA* is one (1) of 18 systems in Ohio that has fixed route and demand response service. Out of those transit authorities, only eight (8) in Ohio have a dedicated sales tax funding stream. This was discussed a lot over the last few years when the issue of Medicaid managed care sales tax occurred. In 2016/2017, roughly 6.3% of *PARTA*'s sales tax revenue generated by Medicaid managed care organizations was removed from the sales tax base. That prompted the need to look at the demand response system to make some changes. The bottom line is *PARTA* is still fortunate because it has the .25% sales tax dedicated to support its service. One of the things the study tried to do was set performance guidelines in place. ODOT analyzed the service in Ohio and cost per passenger on a fixed route trip. They established what they considered to be a successful and acceptable cost for that trip. *PARTA* is leading the pack in efficiency and is the only operator of a public parking deck.

Ms. Amrhein said as *PARTA* looks at turning 45 next year, it is important to ensure we are keeping up with industry trends. That leads to the resolution about the Procurement Policy. For many years, *PARTA* maintained a \$50,000 threshold for large purchases, which means the General Manager cannot sign a contract or spend more than \$50,000 with one vendor without prior approval. The state changed that threshold several years back raising it to \$100,000 or more. Last month, it was discovered that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) threshold was recently raised to \$250,000. The idea behind that is to simplify purchasing and streamline government operations. *PARTA* can't raise it to \$250,000 because it needs to be at the most restrictive level. It's not impossible to think that Ohio might consider raising that threshold as well. Because there were some Board meetings without a quorum, it's in *PARTA*'s best interest to change that threshold to \$100,000. The most disruptive time that happened was for the fuel bid when the Board did not convene in November to give authority to sign that contract, which is with other transit authorities. The bid is opened, and the low bid contract must be executed by 3 p.m. that same day. The Board's approval authority was needed for that and *PARTA* didn't have it last year.

Ms. Amrhein said when there isn't a quorum and there is a time sensitive matter, the Bylaws allow for convening a special meeting. If it's time sensitive, it can't be postponed. During many discussions, an idea was brought up about setting a deadline for Board members to advise of their attendance. Sometimes the issue may be that the Board member is planning to attend but doesn't affirmatively inform anyone with a phone call or an email. Thus, no one knows if there will be a quorum until the last minute. Knowing in advance would allow for potentially canceling the meeting the day before and working on convening a special meeting if needed. She asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Vitale said he read through the Procurement Policy and the first paragraph states: "...establishes the ethical standards that participants in the process are expected to maintain; and sets forth the manner in which protests to procurement decisions may be made." He asked if that meant that in any given month the General Manager could make three (3) or four (4) procurements that amount to \$90,000 without approval of the Board.

Ms. Amrhein said if there was a need to do that, yes.

Mr. Vitale said the way he reads that is the Board would not have a way to raise any kind of a protest if the General Manager already signed contracts for three (3) different purchases.

Ms. Amrhein said the protest policy isn't for the Board. The protest policy is for a vendor who is not selected.

Mr. Vitale said he didn't read it that way.

Ms. Amrhein said PARTA follows its own policy as well as complicated complex state and federal regulations for procurements, which don't match. When PARTA puts out an RFP, RFQ, or Invitations for Bids, strict guidelines are followed for how to award those contracts. If a contract is awarded to a vendor and another contractor thinks their bid was lower, they could lodge a protest. That policy would outline the procedure to review that protest. An example would be the floor scrubber at the Kent Central Gateway. It's a parking deck with different levels. Cars pull in and out all day long in all weather conditions and deposit salt, oil, and spills in the deck. That deck is kept very clean because it will extend the life of the asset. The floor scrubber was purchased when the deck was opened. It will be kept running as long as possible but at some point, it will be put in the budget to be replaced. The Board will approve that budget and then it will go out for quotes. Vendors like nothing less than having to give quotes and then have no action taken on them. If it's over \$50,000, this Board policy prohibits the General Manager from executing that contract, which means the deck can't be cleaned. It's in the budget, it's necessary, it's logical, and it's within PARTA's mission as the owner/operator of a public parking deck. Why should the Board have to pass a resolution to give the General Manager permission to replace the floor scrubber? As technology increases and there are video cameras and MDTs on every bus and equipment that is relied on to provide service, \$50,000 is not going to be hard to reach. She cannot recommend staying behind the industry trend and losing contracts because they can't be executed because the Board doesn't meet.

Mr. Nome said if Ms. Amrhein wanted to sign a contract for \$120,000, and there's some exceptions to this, she couldn't break that into three (3) \$40,000 contracts to avoid getting Board approval. Last year there were three (3) contracts that fit in the \$50,000 to \$100,000 range.

Ms. Amrhein said the resolution for Kastner, Westman and Wilkins is a not to exceed amount of \$80,000, which hasn't been reached for 10 years. It's simply a precaution if there is a legal problem that would need to be addressed.

Mr. Bellino said the Board's job isn't to assist in managing the day-to-day operations. It is to govern, ensure that PARTA is still here in 100 years, hire the right General Manager who will hire the right people and put all the policies and procedures in place, and ensure that PARTA is a good steward of its money.

Mr. Vitale said he understands that and reflects on how well PARTA is operating. He's very impressed but he's seen enough government agencies that didn't have the oversight.

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Ms. Amrhein said it's difficult to operate in this industry when other people are pointing at bad examples. That's not who PARTA is.

Mr. Bellino said it has been discussed. If there was a concern, the policy could be changed. Every month the Finance Committee goes through line item by line item. The committee goes through what's been spent and what for and if it's within the budget. He thinks this Board is more on top of these numbers than a lot of other boards.

Mr. Nome said the Board meetings used to be four (4) or five (5) hours long to talk about the purchase of paper clips and vending machine contracts. When that first was raised to \$100,000, it was a conscious decision not to increase PARTA's level, but inflation and other things have changed since then.

Ms. Davison reiterated that the State of Ohio already recommended and passed the \$100,000 amount.

Mr. Bellino said that's the limit but if the Board didn't feel comfortable with that, it could be left at \$50,000. The Board's role should not be overseeing the day-to-day or month-to-month operation. It is more of a 5-year, 10-year, 20-year plan to make sure that PARTA is going in the right direction with the right people in place.

Mr. Nome said there may be a Board resolution for grant funding, even though it may be under the \$100,000, that would still come to the Board because of a different requirement.

Mr. Vitale asked how the Board would know about purchases under \$100,000.

Ms. Amrhein said any Board member can attend the Finance Committee meetings, which are held every month at 11:30 a.m. on the Tuesday before the Board meeting. Work is done in committees. That's where extensive discussions take place about recommendations, which include why they are being made and if it's consistent with PARTA's mission. At the Board meeting, the intention is to make high level governance decisions that are informed by committees that meet and discuss with management and make a recommendation to adopt or not adopt. The idea is not to have the lengthy, detailed conversations at the Board meeting.

Mr. Bellino said the one thing that is missing at the Board meeting is the capital budget report from the Finance Committee meeting. It's in the minutes. It's not part of the operating budget but there's a discussion about each line item, which grant monies were procured, and what the expenditures have been.

Mr. Vitale said he continues to be amazed at the details and reference that he's seen and how it plays out.

Mr. Nome said it's important to ask the questions in this public forum.

Mr. Bellino asked if there were any other comments.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Hearing none, Mr. Bellino said the Operations Committee met this evening and recommended Resolution #2019-04-01 for approval by the Board.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

The Personnel Committee did not meet.

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OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolutions

Hearing no further discussion, Mr. Bellino said Resolution No. 2019-04-02 will be presented first since it was currently being discussed.

#2019-04-02: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (*PARTA*) BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO REVISE THE PROCUREMENT POLICY TO ESTABLISH BOARD POLICY REGARDING DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY.

Motion: Marge Bjerregaard Second: David Gynn

Mr. Bellino asked if there were any other questions or comments. Hearing none, a roll call followed.

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

Mr. Bellino reminded Board members that they are invited to attend the Finance Committee meetings and ask questions there.

Mr. Bellino said the next Resolution is No. 2019-04-01.

#2019-04-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (*PARTA*) BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO ADOPT THE TRANSIT PROPERTY VISITOR POLICY.

Mr. Bellino entertained a motion to approve the resolution.

Motion: Frank Vitale Second: Virginia Harris

Mr. Bellino asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, a roll call was taken.

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

Mr. Bellino asked if there were any questions or anything else for the good of the cause.

Mr. Vitale asked if PARTA was getting money from AMATS.

Ms. Amrhein said AMATS is the metropolitan planning organization that PARTA participates in through the Akron area for funding that flows through AMATS. The information in the Board packet supports the resolution that was withdrawn for the purchase of the bus camera systems. Funding was awarded through the 5310-grant program to acquire the bus camera systems that will be discussed next month. That is simply back up documentation to show the kind of funding that PARTA receives and the background information about how that funding is awarded.

Mr. Vitale asked if the money came from the federal government and was divided among all the agencies.

Ms. Amrhein said it's a certain kind of money for enhanced transportation for elderly and disabled. In addition to transit authorities, private and nonprofit providers are eligible. There's a formula for the funding and PARTA competitively applies for some of that funding.

Mr. Nome said 5310, as well as 5307, refers to a section of the United States Code that authorizes grant funding.

Mr. Lassen noted that AMATS has a meeting every month that Board members could attend.

Mr. Nome said all the committee meetings of the Board are public meetings and are open to Board members to attend. He noted that if a Board member shows up at a committee meeting, they may be drafted in as an alternate.

Mr. Bellino asked if there was anything else for the good of the cause before he called on Mr. Frank Hairston. Hearing nothing further, he asked Mr. Hairston for his comments.

Mr. Hairston said he's blessed to be back, and his surgery went well. He invited everyone to attend the golf outing on May 17. He noted that he will have pizza for Ms. Bjerregaard and Ms. Harris as always. Also, on June 7, PARTA will be hosting the annual AMATS breakfast. Invitations will be sent out soon. He said the state budget is discussed and the County Commissioners and the Mayor also attend.

Ms. Amrhein said for anybody who is not familiar, PARTA hosts a breakfast once a year to bring AMATS partners to Portage County. Most of the people sitting around the AMATS table are interested in the gas tax. That's how they get their money. If anyone wants to learn more about where that's at and how that's going to be rolled out, Mr. Curtis Baker should have a good update by that time.

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Mr. Gynn said government officials also attend.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further discussion, Mr. Bellino concluded by entertaining a motion to adjourn.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Marcia Fletcher
Executive Assistant