

PARTA
PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
MINUTES

January 27, 2022

Board Members Present:

Richard Brockett
Jeff Childers
Debbie Davison
Dave Gynn, President

Mike Lewis, Vice President
R. T. Mansfield
Jack Murphy
Morgan Tipton

Frank Vitale
Karen Wise, TPO
Marvin Woods

Staff Present:

Claudia Amrhein
Denise Baba
Cody Brookover

Marcia Fletcher
Kelly Jurisch

Justin Markey, Roetzel & Andress
Brian Trautman

Board Members Not Present:

Karen Beck (1st excused absence)
Marge Bjerregaard (1st excused absence)

Virginia Harris (3rd excused absence)

CALL TO ORDER

President Dave Gynn welcomed everyone to the January 27, 2022, *PARTA* Board of Trustees meeting. He called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and asked for a roll call. After roll call, it was determined that a **quorum was participating.**

Mr. Gynn then asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 16, 2021, meeting. **Mr. Jack Murphy** made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, which was seconded by **Mr. Mike Lewis.**

Mr. Gynn asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, he asked all those in favor to say aye. He asked any opposed to give the same sign. Hearing no opposition, he said the **motion to approve the minutes, as presented, passed unanimously.**

GUEST COMMUNICATIONS

None.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Moving on, Mr. Gynn asked Ms. Claudia Amrhein if she had anything to add to the General Manager's report that was included in the Board packet.

Ms. Amrhein thanked everyone for coming and said Ms. Morgan Tipton asked her a question today about the resolution that she thought was worth raising and answering for everybody. The question was: Is this a cancellation of a previous order or is it a new order? Ms. Amrhein replied by saying it is a new order for the second set of trolley buses. She said the first set was ordered about a year ago and should arrive sometime in April. Those will replace a set of three buses that have exceeded their useful life. This order

is using funds from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and the Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant Program (DERG) to replace four vehicles that will be outside their useful life in 18 months to two years. This means there will be seven trolleys within the next 1-1/2 to two years, which is part of the replacement schedule.

Mr. Gynn said he wondered if trolleys were being ordered before knowing whether they will be successful but realized they must be ordered now because of the schedule.

Ms. Amrhein said Mr. Brian Trautman can speak to this but because the trolleys are built on a chassis that is an urban bus frame, they should be durable.

Mr. Trautman said this is ensured through the Altoona test, which is a federally mandated 12-year simulated test done in Altoona, Pennsylvania, on all the 12-year buses that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds. The test identifies failures in a simulated 12-year life cycle in a transit environment. Before a penny can be spent on buses, they must pass the Altoona test. That's one way that the FTA ensures that the vehicle that they are putting money into will survive for the time and duration expected.

Mr. Gynn thanked Mr. Trautman and asked Ms. Amrhein if she had anything else to add.

Ms. Amrhein thanked everyone who worked on January 17, 2022, to get service on the road, focusing on dialysis, during the snowstorm.

Mr. R. T. Mansfield asked Mr. Trautman if the trolley buses all had stainless chassis.

Mr. Trautman confirmed that they do.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any other questions on the General Manager's report. Hearing none, he thanked Ms. Amrhein for her report and moved on to the committee reports.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Administration Committee did not meet.

BY-LAWS REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Gynn asked Mr. Jeff Childers for an update on the By-Laws Review Committee meeting on January 12, 2022.

Mr. Childers said the minutes were precise, so he was not going to go through them individually. He asked anybody who had any changes in mind to get them to the committee for consideration at the next meeting on February 2, 2022.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Gynn said the Finance Committee did not meet. They generally do not meet in January to allow time to finish up end of the year activities. He urged Board members to attend the February meeting.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Operations Committee did not meet.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

The Personnel Committee did not meet.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Gynn asked if there was any Old Business. Hearing none, he moved on to New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Gynn asked Ms. Amrhein to give her presentation on the Portage Public Transportation Assistance Foundation, Inc. (PPTAFI).

Ms. Amrhein thanked Mr. Gynn and presented her PowerPoint on PPTAFI, which is attached. After her presentation, she asked if there were any questions.

Hearing none, Mr. Gynn asked Board members to put May 20, 2022, on their calendars for the golf outing and said cash contributions are always welcome.

Ms. Amrhein noted that any checks should be made out to PPTAFI at this time until the formal procedure is completed. She said additional information will be forthcoming.

Mr. Gynn thanked Ms. Amrhein for the presentation and then moved on to the resolution.

Resolution

Mr. Gynn introduced Resolution #2022-01-01.

#2022-01-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (*PARTA*) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, ENTER INTO, AND SIGN A CONTRACT FOR THE PRODUCTION AND PURCHASE OF FOUR (4) CNG TROLLEY BUSES, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SPARE PARTS WITH TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT SALES CORPORATION (TESCO).

Mr. Gynn asked for a motion to approve the resolution.

Motion: Marvin Woods

Second: Debbie Davison

Mr. Gynn said this resolution would normally come before the Finance Committee, but they did not meet. He asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Frank Vitale asked if anyone else made a similar vehicle and if there were competitive bids.

Ms. Amrhein said yes, competitive bids were received in 2021 and the 5-year contract was awarded to the Transportation Equipment Sales Corporation (TESCO) for trolley buses. TESCO is the dealer, and Hometown Trolley is the manufacturer. GILLIG, a different manufacturer, was awarded the contract for urban transit buses and there is no dealer.

Mr. Vitale asked if Hometown Trolley was a big company.

Mr. Trautman said they are not as big as New Flyer, Nova Bus, GILLIG, or some others but they're also more specialty and do a lot more handcrafting, which is why the contract was split. *PARTA* wanted a true streetcar. Hometown Trolley is the oldest streetcar manufacturer in the country. *PARTA* was not looking for a bus manufacturer that also built streetcars on the side. GILLIG won the bid for manufacturing transit buses, which is what they are good at; and Hometown Trolley won the bid for manufacturing trolley buses, which is what they are good at. Both manufacturers can produce hybrids, Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), or clean diesels.

Ms. Karen Wise asked what kind of commitment they can make on the delivery timeline for the set being approved tonight.

Mr. Trautman said delivery has not been set because he has not put the order in yet. PARTA is a reliable customer and can usually carry pretty good weight though. He is hoping for 2023. As a rule, PARTA doesn't like to have delivery in the first quarter of the year because it's usually when the money dips, so delivery at the end of the second or third quarter is preferred, when possible. He tries to manage that to make sure it's when the ebb and flow of money is the best for matching.

Ms. Amrhein asked Mr. Trautman to explain Buy America and the inspection process.

Mr. Trautman said he travels to the manufacturer and conducts a Buy America inspection. In the past, 67% of the bus parts and assembly had to be manufactured in the United States. As of last year, it has been bumped up to 72%. He is given a list of items that meets that percentage and visually verifies and signs off that those are, in fact, the items that they have on site or are available. Once the vehicles are received, he again goes through them, completes paperwork, and signs off. The vehicles go through FMVSS (Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards) testing, which includes full testing on all the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) tie downs. The Altoona test is really the big one. The buses are loaded with sandbags to simulate people and they are put on a test track 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to simulate what 12 years' worth of full buses going over potholes, hills, and railroad tracks will do. They're trying to break frames, crack suspension parts, cause engine failures and transmission connection issues, etc. By the time PARTA sees them, they've been tested and certified through the federal government as meeting the 12-year standard. He makes sure that all the things that they've bid are meeting Buy America standards.

Mr. Jack Murphy asked what percentage of the fleet would be trolley buses after purchasing these additional four.

Mr. Trautman said seven trolleys would be around 12% to 15% of the fleet. The next purchase, after these trolleys, will be transits. Looking to the future, the infrastructure bill that has been passed is pushing all transits across the country into zero emissions. PARTA already has a contract with Hometown Trolley and GILLIG to procure hybrid electric buses. What PARTA can't do on a contract is make a cardinal change, which is a change that could have affected the outcome of the procurement had that change been in the mix during the procurement. He is going to ask the FTA if PARTA can use its procurement and let the manufacturers provide all electric buses. If they say no, he will have to go out to bid for all electric buses. Right now, PARTA is under contract with Richard L. Bowen & Associates, an A&E firm, to do an analysis of this facility and the Kent Central Gateway (KCG) to look at what it will take to put fast chargers in KCG and overnight chargers at PARTA for buses because the money that will be available for transits is going to be for low or no emission buses. PARTA has always been very strategic in staying ahead of that curve. It must be able to position itself to be ready to apply for grants to put in the infrastructure here and at KCG while going out and potentially procuring electric buses, which process started in the last two weeks.

Ms. Amrhein said the Ohio Transit Partnership Program (OTP2) grant applications are due February 11, 2022.

Mr. Trautman said if PARTA gets that grant money, the next step will be to do a design. Once the cost of the design is determined, PARTA will apply for grant money for the infrastructure build out while doing the procurement for electric buses. This would probably come to fruition in 2025.

Ms. Kelly Jurisch said it's going to take a while to get these buses here because they are already programmed out and paid for by different grants.

Mr. Trautman said those are low emissions buses also. In the background, PARTA is also working with Kent State University (KSU) on an analysis of PARTA's full carbon footprint in the county to determine how to decrease it.

Ms. Morgan Tipton expressed her appreciation to Mr. Trautman for laying out that plan. She said that's the only thing that gives her anxiety about bringing on more CNG buses because she knows that this facility and organization have put a lot of work into lowering emissions in that fashion. Everything is changing. She has been curious about any studies that may have been done on electric and how that would be applied at PARTA. It was helpful to hear all this.

Ms. Amrhein said part of what PARTA needs to do as a backdrop for any grant application is have a zero-emission transition plan. That may say PARTA has a CNG station and a pipeline right outside its door, so it isn't practical to convert to electric. She is not completely sold that PARTA will have to convert everything because low emissions do count. In the scoring process, PARTA must make the argument that it is this size agency, it would cost this much, and it's grant dependent. That is something PARTA can then point at when applying for funds and maybe project out 10 years rather than three or four.

Mr. Trautman said the key for this to work in this current climate is to make sure that PARTA is always shovel ready when grant money is available. It doesn't mean PARTA has to apply for it, but it does mean that PARTA has access to that grant funding.

Mr. Vitale asked if electric buses were being tested now.

Mr. Trautman said yes, there are hundreds of electric buses in service today.

Mr. Jack Murphy asked if the source of the generated electricity is considered when purchasing electric buses.

Mr. Trautman said there's only so much PARTA can do as an end user. Coal plants are being transitioned into natural gas running plants. As an end user, PARTA must make sure that it has what is needed. PARTA is currently tapped out and would have to upgrade its generator system and analyze the grid. He has three 500s now and will probably need another three 500s to feed another transformer to build for the future. Battery technology continues to increase, and hydrogen is an option. Canton has hydrogen buses running now. Unfortunately, there is no hydrogen on this planet that hasn't already oxygenated so it must be split somehow, which usually comes from natural gas so there's a balance. PARTA must be able to read the room, be in front of the changes, and be prepared when the grant money comes out.

Mr. Mike Lewis said the target continuously changes when talking about things taking place in 2025 or 2026. A lot of effort and time is being spent on what may or may not happen, but it must be done so PARTA is ready.

Mr. Gynn noted that KCG was funded because PARTA was shovel ready. He thanked Mr. Trautman for his effort and for sharing. He then asked if there were any other questions. Hearing none, he asked Ms. Fletcher to call the roll.

Roll Call:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Marge Bjerregaard	<u>EXCUSED</u>		Jack Murphy	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>
Karen Beck	<u>EXCUSED</u>		Mike Lewis	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>
R. T. Mansfield	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	Virginia Harris	<u>EXCUSED</u>	
Marvin Woods	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	Debbie Davison	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>
Karen Wise	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	Jeff Childers	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>
Frank Vitale	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	Richard Brockett	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>
Morgan Tipton	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>	David Gynn	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>

Mr. Gynn said the motion passed unanimously.

Moving on, Mr. Gynn said there was no reason for an executive session and asked if anybody had anything to add.

Ms. Wise asked for the date and time of the February Finance Committee meeting.

Mr. Gynn said it's always the Tuesday before the Board meeting at 11:30 a.m. and lunch is served.

Hearing nothing further, Mr. Gynn entertained a motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Mike Lewis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Jack Murphy. Mr. Gynn asked all in favor to say aye. He asked any opposed to give the same sign. Hearing no opposition, the **motion to adjourn passed unanimously**.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Marcia Fletcher
Executive Assistant