



2817 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority Board of Commissioners

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

10:00 AM

Virtual

The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority does hereby certify that it is unable to hold a commission meeting under regular quorum requirements due to Covid-19. On authority of the Governor under Section 2 of Proclamation Number 84 JBE 2020, the next Commission meeting will be held via telephone and/or video conference on Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 10:00 am. All efforts will be made to provide for observation and input by members of the public.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Present: Chairman Flozell Daniels, Commissioner Fred Neal, Commissioner Mark Raymond, Commissioner Mostofa Sarwar, Commissioner Laura Bryan, Commissioner Art Walton, and Commissioner Sharon Wegner

Absent: Commissioner Walt Tillery

3. Approval of Minutes

3a. [Board Meeting Minutes - March 23, 2021]

[21-055](#)

Commissioner Raymond moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to approve the minutes of March 23, 2021. The motion was approved unanimously

A motion was made by Commissioner Raymond, seconded by Commissioner Neal and approved. The motion was unanimously.

Absent: Commissioner Tillery

4. Reports

4a. RTA Chairman's Report

No Report.

4b. Jefferson Parish Report

No Report.

4c. RTA General Counsel's Report

Sundiata Haley stated that there was going to be an Executive Session.

4d. RTA Chief Executive Officer's Report

Alex Wiggins reported that the S&P Global Ratings revised its outlook to stable from negative and affirmed its 'A+' long-term rating on New Orleans Regional Transit Authority's (NORTA) outstanding sales tax revenue bonds.

Alex Wiggins was appointed to the Transit Research Board Panel.

Alex Wiggins reported that today the RTA was going to hold a Townhall meeting on COVID-19 Mental Health at 1:00 p.m. with Dr. Corey Hebert and it was going to be streamed live on the RTA's YouTube Channel.

Alex Wiggins reported that at the May meeting staff was going to roll out the pass information.

4e. DBE Report

Keziah Lee reported that the RTA has awarded \$1,836,085 in contracts of that amount \$375,870 was awarded to DBE/SBE Prime Contractors and the total DBE participation was 30%. The RTA has six ongoing projects with DBE participation and there were no new contracts awarded with DBE participation since last month report.

Keziah Lee reported that there was one new project awarded to a SBE for the Repair of the Broken Sewer Line Project with a value of \$238,795.

Keziah Lee reported on Wednesday, April 7, 2021 the DBE Program held a Webinar so that DBE's can learn more about the RTA's DBE Program. The Webinar included four components on how to become certified as a DBE. Adonis Expose discussed the Procurement process from A-Z and two Project Managers spoke on two up and coming projects the New Orleans East Maintenance Building and the Napoleon Building Project.

In response to Chairman Daniels, Keziah Lee stated that the project time-line would be added to the Current DBE Project Table.

Chairman Daniels stated that he was on the Governor's Climate Initiatives Task Force and the Task Force was going to discuss Procurement Practices and minority owned business and the RTA has the experience most agencies don't have and was very successful in this area, so the RTA was asked to advise the task force in this area.

5. Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Commissioner Wegner, seconded by Commissioner Raymond and adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Chairman Daniels, Commissioner Neal, Commissioner Raymond, Commissioner Sarwar, Commissioner Bryan, Commissioner Walton, and Commissioner Wegner

Aye: Chairman Daniels, Commissioner Neal, Commissioner Raymond, Commissioner Sarwar, Commissioner Bryan, Commissioner Walton, and Commissioner Wegner

Absent:

Absent:

5a. New Flyer Proprietary Parts [21-029](#)

Commissioner Wegner moved and Commissioner Raymond seconded to adopt the New Flyer Proprietary Parts. Resolution No. 21-021 was adopted unanimously.

This Resolution was approved.

Enactment No: 21-021

5b. CARES Act Funding [21-032](#)

Commissioner Wegner moved and Commissioner Raymond seconded to adopt the CARES Act Funding. Resolution No. 21-022 was adopted unanimously.

This Resolution was approved.

Enactment No: 21-022

5c. Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire [21-039](#)

Commissioner Wegner moved and Commissioner Raymond seconded to adopt the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire . Resolution No. 21-023 was adopted unanimously.

This Resolution was approved.

Enactment No: 21-023

5d. Resolution to Ratify Purchase of Inventory [21-040](#)

Commissioner Wegner moved and Commissioner Raymond seconded to adopt the Resolution to Ratify Purchase of Inventory. Resolution No. 21-024 was adopted unanimously.

This Resolution was approved.

Enactment No: 21-024

6. Ratifications

A motion was made by Commissioner Walton, seconded by Commissioner Raymond and adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Chairman Daniels, Commissioner Neal, Commissioner Raymond, Commissioner Sarwar, Commissioner Bryan, Commissioner Walton, and Commissioner Wegner

Aye: Chairman Daniels, Commissioner Neal, Commissioner Raymond, Commissioner Sarwar, Commissioner Bryan, Commissioner Walton, and Commissioner Wegner

Absent:

Absent:

6a. 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities: Large Urban Areas-REVISED REPORT

[21-035](#)

Yolanda Rodriguez stated that this agenda item was on the March Board Agenda and on that agenda staff was asking for \$1.5 Million for the 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities Urban Areas and the RTA was actually awarded \$1.3 Million for this particular grant.

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Raymond seconded to ratify the adoption of the 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities Large Urban Areas - Revised Report. Resolution No. 21-022 was ratified unanimously.

In response to Chairman Daniels, Alex Wiggins reported that additional training would be required for our maintenance employees to work on the low or no admission buses.

Chairman Daniels stated that this administration was pushing hard on electrification and other ways of reducing our carbon footprint, increase efficiencies in the long term, increasing our maintenance opportunities and decreasing maintenance costs.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Alex Wiggins stated that staff was going out for a RFP for the vehicles in about 30 days. These vehicles would be the replacement vehicles for the supervisors.

This Resolution was approved.

Enactment No: 21-025

7. Financial Statements

Gizelle Banks reported that she was reporting on the February 28, 2021 Financials.

Gizelle Banks reported that the actual February ridership of 458K underperformed the budget by 12.7% of 142K passengers. Along with 2020 ridership, Pre-COVID ridership from 2019 is also included to illustrate the significant disparity in passengers due to the pandemic.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Operating Cost per Unlinked Passenger Trip 2021 vs. 2019

(Pre-COVID) the disproportionate reductions in ridership and expenses as a result of the pandemic have more than doubled and even tripled pre-COVID costs per passenger trip. The cost per trip for February was \$19 per trip and in January \$13 per trip and pre COVID the cost was \$6 and \$5.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Ferry - Operating Cost per Unlinked Passenger Trip 2021 vs. 2019 (Pre-COVID) - Similarly, ferry operations has experienced significantly higher operating costs per passenger trip since the onset of the pandemic.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Farebox Recovery Rates 2021 vs. 2019 (Pre-COVID) - With dramatically fewer passenger boarding's because of the pandemic, fare revenue is offsetting a significantly lower percentage of operating expenses.

In response to Commissioner Bryan, Gizelle Banks reported that there was a direct correlation between the RTA's operating expenses and the farebox recovery so as the farebox rate increase the farebox recovery rate decrease and as the expenses decreased or revenue increases the farebox recovery rate increases.

Alex Wiggins reported that on the bus side the farebox recovery ratio for the industry was between 20% and 25%.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Operating Revenues (Budget, Actual & Prior Year) - The adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Operating Revenues is quite apparent in the February 2020-to-current year comparisons. Passenger Fares continue to fall short of projections. Actual City of New Orleans Sales Tax collections have been received for January. These proceeds exceeded the budget by \$507K.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Operating Revenues (Actual) - Of the \$5.3 Million in Operating Revenues, 78% or \$4.1 Million is derived from General Use Sales Taxes.

Gizelle Banks reported that Operating Expenses - Labor and Fringe Benefits, the largest expenditure, comprised 79% of this month's actual expenses. The contrast in 2020 and current year results for Labor and Fringe Benefits and Services is directly related to the transition from the O&M contractual arrangement with Transdev to 100% in-house operations.

Gizelle Banks reported that Net Revenue (Before and After Government Assistance) - Net Revenue (After Government Assistance) totaled (\$2.3) Million for the month of February. This is largely because there has been no distribution of CARES ACT Funding for the month as well as for the years.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Capital Expenditures and Debt Service - As result of the bond refinancing in September 2020, Debt Service was dramatically reduced by \$526K from prior year actuals for the month and by \$1.1 Million year-to-date.

Gizelle Banks reported that Operating Reserve - To offset the adverse position of Net Revenue (After Government Assistance), approximately \$2.9 Million from Restricted Operating/Capital was used.

Gizelle Banks reported that Maritime Operations - The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is evident with maritime operations as well. Passenger fare revenue dropped by 50% when compared to February 2020. In contrast, February 2021 operating expenses fared better when compared to the prior year; as the fleet underwent major repairs last year. Also, the new vessels were not in operation until October 2020.

Chairman Daniels wanted to acknowledge the team for the great work done on the Budget.

Chairman Daniels stated that RTA revenue was down by more than 60% and the fare revenue was about 10% of the RTA budget.

Commissioner Neal stated that the RTA need to right size fares for all the local riders.

8. Procurement Items

9. Grants

A motion was made by Commissioner Wegner, seconded by Commissioner Sarwar and adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Chairman Daniels, Commissioner Neal, Commissioner Raymond, Commissioner Sarwar, Commissioner Bryan, Commissioner Walton, and Commissioner Wegner

Absent:

- 9a. FY2021 Department of Homeland Security: Transit Security Grant [21-052](#)

Commissioner Wegner moved and Commissioner Sarwar seconded to adopt the FY 2021 Department of Homeland Security Transit Security Grant. Resolution 21-026 was adopted unanimously.

This Resolution was approved.

Enactment No: 21-026

10. New Business (UNANIMOUS VOTE REQUIRED TO CONSIDER)

None.

11. Audience Questions and Comments

PLEASE NOTE: Persons wishing to submit public comments must either enter their full name in the chat sections of the Zoom meeting to provide comments during the meeting or email your comments to rtaboard@rtaforward.org to have your comments read aloud at the meeting.

No one signed up to speak.

In response to Commissioner Neal, Alex Wiggins reported that staff would like to expand the operations along the river and has had a lot of interest from the City of Gretna and Westwego and a demonstration ride would be setup to from Canal Street to Gretna and Canal Street to

Audubon Park and the goal was to make sure that the RTA can cover the operations cost.

Alex Wiggins reported that he would like to present to the Board a Revised 2021 Budget for consideration and thanked the staff for doing a great job with the Budget.

12. Executive Session (2/3RDS VOTE TO Consider)

The Board went into Executive Session at 11:30 a.m.

This was adopted.

- 12a. Riverwalk Marketplace (New Orleans), LLC v. Regional Transit Authority and New Orleans Building Corporation Civil District Court No. 2021-3382, Division "J" Section-15

13. Adjournment

Commissioner Sarwar moved and Commissioner Wegner seconded to adjourn the Board Meeting of April 27, 2021. The motion was approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Sarwar, seconded by Commissioner Wegner and adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Chairman Daniels, Commissioner Neal, Commissioner Raymond, Commissioner Sarwar, Commissioner Bryan, Commissioner Walton, and Commissioner Wegner

Absent: