



2817 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority Board of Commissioners

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 28, 2023

10:00 AM

RTA Board Room

The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) hereby declares that, in accordance with La. R.S. 42:17.1 (A)(2)(a)-(c), a meeting will be held in person on Tuesday, November 28, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Written comments on any matter included on the agenda will be accepted in the following ways: 1) Submission of a Speaker Card on meeting day; 2) Electronically by email sent to: rtaboard@rtaforward.org prior to the meeting; or 3) By U.S. Mail send to 2817 Canal Street, Attention: Office of Board Affairs, New Orleans, LA 70119.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Commissioner Raymond, Commissioner Walton, Commissioner Coulon, Commissioner DeFrancesch, Commissioner Ewell, Commissioner LeBeouf, Commissioner Neal and Commissioner Sams

3. Consideration of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to approve the meeting minutes of October 31, 2023. The motion was approved unanimously.

approved

[Board Minutes - October 31, 2023]

[23-197](#)

4. Reports

A. RTA Chairman's Report

None.

B. Operations & Administration Committee Chairman's Report

Commissioner Neal stated that at the November RAC Meeting staff did a presentation of the Service Changes that are scheduled to take place in January.

C. Finance Committee Chairman's Report

None.

D. Jefferson Parish Report

Commissioner Coulon stated that Jefferson Parish was having a Toys for Tots Drive with the US Marine Corp.

E. RTA General Counsel's Report

Sundiata Haley stated that his report will be discussed in Executive Session.

F. RTA Chief Executive Officer's Report

Lona Hankins reported that the RTA has launched the Online Store.

The employees of the month were as follows:

Fay Phillips - Operator

Harold Parker - Maintenance

Dwight Norton has been named Chief Planning and Capital Projects Officer

G. Chief of Staff Legislative Update

Katherine Felton reported that Lona Hankins will make a presentation at the City Council Transportation Committee on November 30, 2023.

H. Operations Update

Christopher Clark gave the Operations Update. This report can be found in the Board of Commissioners PowerPoint Report dated November 28, 2023, under the Operations Update.

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Christopher Clark reported that the Service Delivery Managers had been on top of the Operators that are abusing the system and enforcing the RTA's Policy regarding absenteeism

In response to Commissioner Walton, Christopher Clark reported that the lines are being monitored for OTP daily basis and when the dispatchers see that a bus is dragging the Dispatch Control Center will notify the operator. He stated that all buses should pull-out on time.

In response to Commissioner Sams, Lona Hankins reported that when there are issues with a bus on the route, staff will communicate with the public by using the app and the website.

In response to Commissioner DeFrancesch, Lona Hanks reported that staff does not know how long a bus will be out of service so that information can't be communicated to the public and the RTA does not always has the ability to put another bus in service.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Lona Hankins reported that the passengers can call the Rideline to get the necessary information that is needed to find out about the bus service.

I. RTA Chief Financial Officer's Report

Mark Major gave the RTA Chief Financial Officer's Report. This report can be found in the Board of Commissioners PowerPoint Report dated November 28, 2023, under the Financial Officer's Report.

Commissioners DeFrancesch thanked Mark Major for the additional information that was given regarding the Financial Report, the report made more sense.

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Mark Major reported that in September RTA had a total of 839 employees.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Lona Hankins reported that in 2019 a change was made to stop wrapping the new purple buses. Commissioner Coulon stated that the decision to stop wrapping the buses was made by administrative staff and not approved by the Board. Commissioner Raymond stated that this decision was made by the Commissioners in the Advertisement Policy and, wrapping those buses did not reflect the brand integrity of RTA. Commissioner Coulon stated that there are 4 Commissioners that sit on the Board that was not aware of this policy. Commissioner Raymond stated that the Board will continue this discussion further at the Board Retreat.

5. Authorizations

Algiers Ferry Buildings Renovation Project

[23-165](#)

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Lona Hankins reported that the contract was not to exceed \$1.1M.

Commissioner LeBeouf stated that in the document it stated "to exceed" and that should be corrected to state "not to exceed". In response to Commissioner LeBeouf, Dwight Norton reported that all necessary Procurement Rules were followed and this vendor was picked from RTA's On-Call Engineering Pool.

Commissioner Coulon stated that the Professional Service Process is not like the public bid process and once the designs are completed then this project will

go out to competitive bid.

Commissioner Neal stated that real time data will be displayed at the Ferry Building.

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Ewell seconded to adopt the Algiers Ferry Buildings Renovation Project. Resolution No. 23-079 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 23-079

Motorola APX Radios Purchase

[23-171](#)

In response to Commissioner Walton, Ryan Moser reported that the RTA will not receive a rebate from the old radios they can still be used during Hurricane Season. In response to Commissioner DeFrancesch, Ryan Moser reported that some of the parts for the old radios can be recycled.

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to adopt the Motorola APX Radios Purchase. Resolution No. 23-080 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 23-080

Renewal of Excess Workers' Compensation Insurance for RTA Employees [2023-2025]

[23-176](#)

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to the Renewal of Excess Workers' Compensation Insurance for RTA Employees 2023-2025. Resolution No. 23-081 was adopted unanimously.

Enactment No: 23-081

Licensing Agreement with Mignon Faget

[23-179](#)

In response to Commissioner LeBeouf, Sarah Porteous reported that Bayou Brands Merch, LLC was separate and apart from Mignon Faget Licensing Agreement. RTA is working with Bayou Brands Merch on some other items that will be sold on the On-Line Store. Lona Hankins reported that Bayou Brands Merch coordinates and helps the RTA manage the store. Bayou Brands Merch procurement was done separately and did not and to come before the Board due to its dollar amount. Commissioner LeBeouf asked if Bayou Brands Merch is assisting with supporting with the negotiations with Mignon Faget. Lona Hankins reported that Bayou Brands Merch brought to staff attention that the Licensing Agreement with Mignon Faget needed to get approved by the RTA and also they are acting as the store manager so staff will not have to do all the details for all transactions and they will help track the 15% that would be received from Mignon Faget.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Sarah Porteous reported that the RTA was the licensee and Mignon Faget is the licensor. Commissioner Walton stated that he has concerns about the language that Bayou Brands Merch has with Mignon Faget for the streetcars. Lona Hankins stated that Bayou Brands help facilitate the licensing agreement.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Katherine Felton stated that Bayou Brands Merch, LLC has a separate contract and they don't get a percentage of anything, and Bayou Brands Merch works with a lot of entities in the City of New Orleans and get paid for their time and not a commission. Commissioner Ewell stated that the Commissioners are trying to ascertain the cost of operations for Bayou Brands. Katherine Felton reported that the RTA pays \$67,000 for their time and products and this is a pilot program and she is not sure of the contract term.

Commissioner Walton stated that Bayou Brands is a facilitator.

In response to Commissioner LeBeouf, Katherine Felton reported that the 15% is standard in Mignon Faget Licensing Agreement with all the other agencies.

In response to Commissioner Sams, Lona Hankins stated that the RTA has to look at the law regarding vendors using the streetcars. She does not want the RTA to miss out on any opportunity to make money off the images of the streetcars.

Commissioner Neal stated that a lot of vendors were making money off of the streetcars.

Commissioner LeBeouf stated that it was great that the RTA was making money from the streetcars and she has concerns with the language in the Board package.

Commissioner Walton suggested that when the Licensing Agreement was perfected, it needed to come before the Board for approval.

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Coulon seconded to adopt the Licensing Agreement with Mignon Faget.

Commissioner LeBeouf stated that the Resolution does not reflecting what was stated and it gives broad authority of any negotiations and the questions that were raised was not addressed.

Katherine Felton reported that the resolution was written broadly on purpose so that the RTA can reach out to any vendor. Commissioner Walton stated that it has to be written correctly.

Commissioner Ewell stated that this information has to be written specifically

and there is a motion on the floor.

Commissioner Neal stated that he would like to vote to amend this item.

Commissioner Walton stated that the resolution should read that Bayou Brands has the authority to negotiate only on behalf of Mignon Faget and no one else and that language does not exist in the current resolution.

Sundiata Haley told the Board to state how they would like the third paragraph to read, and Commissioner Walton stated that it should read "Bayou Brand Merch, LLC on behalf of the RTA..."

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Lona Hankins reported that Bayou Brand Merch, LLC will be doing other things for the RTA such as the on-line T-Shirts.

Yolanda Rodriguez stated that the motion on the floor was to approve the amended resolution by adding "on behalf of the RTA".

The vote count was as follows:

Commissioner Walton	Yes
Commissioner Neal	Yes
Commissioner Raymond	Yes
Commissioner Coulon	Yes
Commissioner Ewell	Abstain
Commissioner Sams	Abstain
Commissioner DeFrancesch	Abstain
Commissioner LeBeouf	Abstain

The motion failed.

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to defer the Licensing Agreement with Mignon Faget. The motion was approved unanimously.

denied

Service Reliability Restoration Plan

[23-191](#)

Commissioner Neal stated that he supports the Service Reliability Restoration Plan, and this is not something that the RTA will doing on a consistency basis. This plan takes a lot of planning from staff to make these service adjustments.

Commissioner Coulon stated that RTA staff should communicate with other agencies to let the RTA intensions know and state that this is only a temporary solution.

Commissioner Walton stated that the riding public should know that the RTA is currently short on buses and has fewer mechanics fixing buses and some of the public was going to look at this as cutting service instead of optimizing the

service with the access that the RTA have. The RTA will manage the expectations of the public and in 2024 the RTA should be receiving new buses and give the public the best service available.

Commissioner LeBeouf stated that logistics and practicality this plan creates an avenue for RTA to be more reliable and she does not have enough information on how the public will be impacted and she is concerned how this will impact the public negatively.

Dwight Norton stated that staff were currently working on a study to for Title VI to see how this reduction will impact the public and the findings of this study will be brought before the Board.

In response to Commissioner Sams, Dwight Norton reported that the volume of complaints should go down and the buses on the street should be reliable. The service delivery to the public will also be published so the public will be fully aware of the schedule. She stated that the Board would like to hear from the public on how the RTA is doing.

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Ewell seconded to adopt the Service Reliability Restoration Plan. Resolution No. 23-082 was adopted with 7 Yeas and one Abstention.

Enactment No: 23-082

6. New Business (UNANIMOUS VOTE REQUIRED TO CONSIDER)

None

7. Audience Questions and Comments

Brad Ott stated that he rides routes 103, 105 and is a Ferry Rider and he is very concerned about the reduction in service. Currently the buses do not show up for his students to get to class on time and they are always late for school and he hopes that BRT does happen. The RTA needs to have dependable reliable service.

Kory Dupree stated that the service on the streets is bad, and the operators are being abused. Kory Dupree asked why the RTA was not asking other agencies for assistance to lease buses. The RTA is not providing the service for the riders and the operators are getting the wrath from the passengers when the buses are late. The operators have not received their differential pay from a year ago.

Shirani Jayasuriya, Ride was pleased to hear that there was going to be more detailed service data included in Board presentations specifically by line. Ride would like to know the details of RTA's Outreach and Communications Plan for these Service Reductions. The more information would be better for riders.

Millie Tanner stated that last month she spoke to the Board about her concerns and her concerns are being addressed by staff helping to resolve her issues. She stated that she had

an unfortunate incident where a male operator entered and used the female restroom downstairs. The Reservationist are not putting in the reservations for Paratransit riders and people are not being picked-up and missing appointments. The Leonidas buses are back on the route, but the schedules are not correct.

Commissioner Raymond stated that there are issues with the Paratransit that need to be addressed.

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

Commissioner LeBeouf moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to go into Executive Session. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to come out of Executive Session. The motion was approved unanimously.

approved

Personnel Matters

[11.28.23 Board Presentation Report]

[23-203](#)

9. Adjournment

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to adjourn the Board Meeting of November 28, 2023. The motion was adjourned unanimously.

adjourned