



2817 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority Board of Commissioners

Meeting Minutes - Final

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

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, January 23, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. Meetings start at the scheduled time but may be delayed until a quorum of the Commissioners is present. The agency's website will stream the in-person meeting live and wearing masks in the boardroom is optional.

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.

This meeting is accessible to persons with disabilities. To help assure availability, modifications or accommodations linked to a disability must be requested 72 hours before the meeting or hearing. Please direct requests for public meeting accommodations to the Office of Board Affairs, 2817 Canal Street, NOLA 70119, or call 504-827-8341 or by email (rtaboard@rtaforward.org).

1. Call to Order

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

Present: Chairperson Fred Neal, Vice-Chairman Art Walton,
Commissioner Maria DeFrancesch, and Commissioner
Timolyn Sams

Absent:

2. Roll Call

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

Commissioner Coulon moved, and Commissioner Ewell seconded to take Executive Session

out of order on the agenda.

Commissioner Raymond stated that he would like to handle all the business at hand before going into Executive Session.

Commissioner Ewell stated in fairness to the employees time he would not mind handling the Employee Recognitions first before going into Executive Session.

Commissioner Coulon, moved and Commissioner Ewell seconded to go into Executive Session, Commissioner Neal was a Nay and Commissioner Sams Abstained.

3. Consideration of Meeting Minutes

[Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes - December 12, 2023]

[24-007](#)

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner LeBeouf seconded the motion to approve the Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes - December 12, 2023. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Reports

A. RTA Chairman's Report

Commissioner Raymond stated that he went to the Downtown Transit Center and communicated with the riders and operators and watched the buses for On-Time Performance and the Mobility Devices being used on the fixed routes.

B. Operations & Administration Committee Chairman's Report

Commissioner Neal stated that at the January RAC Meeting the Safety Department presented an in-depth Safety Plan.

C. Finance Committee Chairman's Report

No Report.

D. Jefferson Parish Report

No Report.

E. RTA General Counsel's Report

Sundiata Haley referred the Board to No. 11 on the Board Agenda *Introduction of Board Resolution 24-001*.

F. RTA Chief Executive Officer's Report

Lona Hankins reported on January 14, 2024, the RTA launched the Service

Optimization Schedule and stated that staff is not where they would like to be but things are improving and riders are being asked to fill out surveys so staff will know what needs to be improved.

Lona also reported that the Mardi Gras Guides are available in print, online and on LePass. And, that four (4) bus shelter installations have been completed, 3 are under construction and would like the Board's assistance when the shelters are located on/or need residential property.

Employees of the Month:

Elie Randolph - Operator for November

Welton Chestnutt - Maintenance for November

Paul Washington - Operator for December

Derrick Magee - Maintenance for December

Candace Williams Administrative - 4th Quarter

G. Chief of Staff Legislative Update

Katherine Felton reported that the RTA will be focusing on the State Level Funding and the RTA was able to get through FY 24 with money for the Ferry and staff will be working with the State for the Ferry Budget for FY25.

H. Operations Update

Chris Clark reported on the Operations Update. This report can be found in the PowerPoint Presentation dated January 23, 2024, under the Operations Update.

I. RTA Chief Financial Officer's Report

Gizelle Banks reported on the RTA Chief Financial Officer's Report. This report can be found in the PowerPoint Presentation dated January 23, 2024, under the Financial Report.

In response to a question from Commissioner Walton, Gizelle Banks reported that the RTA made its last draw down for the CARES Act money. And after a question from Commissioner Coulon, Gizelle reported that the 5 Year Projection of Revenue was a projection using historical trends and staff has taken into consideration the 5-Year Capital Investment Program.

5. Consent Agenda

Commissioner DeFrancesch moved, and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the Consent Agenda. Resolution No. 24-002 was adopted.

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

Aye: Raymond, Chairperson Neal, LeBeouf, Vice-Chairman Walton, Coulon, Ewell, Commissioner DeFrancesch, and Commissioner Sams

Absent:

Amendment to RTA Work Policy SAF-5 Safety Committee Structure [23-221](#)

In response to a question from Commissioner LeBeouf, Mike Smith reported that changes on the Federal level mandates that the RTA has a 50% Labor-Management Safety Committee.

Commissioner DeFrancesch moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the Amendment to RTA Work Policy SAF-5 Safety Committee Structure. Resolution No. 24-003 was adopted unanimously.

Enactment No: 24-003

6. Authorizations

Non-proprietary Bus Parts [23-180](#)

In response to a question from Commissioner Ewell, Ryan Moser reported that nine (9) people responded to the bid and staff went through the correct bid process. And that the RTA has a history with all the companies that were selected.

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to adopt the Non-proprietary Bus Parts. Resolution No. 24-004 was adopted with 5 yeas, and 2 abstains.

Later in the meeting Commissioner DeFrancesch changed her vote. The vote count was Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to adopt the Non-proprietary Bus Parts. Resolution No. 24-004 was adopted with 5 Yeas, and 3 Abstains.

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

Aye: Raymond, Chairperson Neal, Vice-Chairman Walton, Coulon, Commissioner DeFrancesch, and Commissioner Sams

Absent:

Abstain: LeBeouf, and Ewell
Enactment No: 24-004

Dell Technologies Apex Contract Award [23-214](#)

In response to a question from Commissioner Neal, Dwight Norton reported that

this procurement was for backup storage.

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Sams seconded to adopt the Dell Technologies Apex Contract Award. Resolution No. 24-005 was adopted unanimously.

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

Aye: Raymond, Chairperson Neal, LeBeouf, Vice-Chairman Walton, Coulon, Ewell, Commissioner DeFrancesch, and Commissioner Sams

Absent:

Enactment No: 24-005

RTA NeoGov Contract Renewal

[23-215](#)

In response to a question from Commissioner Ewell, Dwight Norton reported that the total contract was \$139,277.31 and that this was a one-year contract renewal.

In response to a question from Commissioner Coulon, Gizelle Banks reported that the core HR IT functions are now with Oracle and the HR consultant will look at the best practices for HR IT functions.

In response to Commissioner Sams, Gizelle Banks reported that when this original contract was procured in 2020 the RTA only had 78 employees and once the transition was complete there was a total of 812 employees. Staff was working on transferring all HR data into the Oracle System. Commissioner LeBeouf asked for an Executive Summary on the Oracle Transition and where are the gaps in the transition.

Commissioner LeBeouf moved and Commissioner Sams seconded to adopt the RTA NeoGov Contract Renewal. Resolution No. 24-006 was adopted unanimously.

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

Aye: Raymond, Chairperson Neal, LeBeouf, Vice-Chairman Walton, Coulon, Ewell, Commissioner DeFrancesch, and Commissioner Sams

Absent:

5-Year Capital Investment Program 2024-2028

[23-216](#)

Dwight Norton reported on the 5-Year Capital Investment Program 2004-2028. This report can be found in the PowerPoint Presentation dated January 23, 2024, under the Capital Investment Program.

Mark Major commented that one-half of the Sales Tax that RTA collects has been pledged to pay off the Bonds. Dwight Norton stated that the *Proposed Funding* in the report was Grant Funding. Commissioner Coulon stated that this report was a wish list.

Commissioner Neal would like to know the projects that have commitments for Federal and State funding and would like this report presented back to the Board during the Budget Process.

Commissioner Walton asked that this item be referred to the Finance Committee for review.

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner LeBeouf seconded to defer this matter back to the Finance Committee.

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Walton, seconded by Commissioner LeBeouf and referred. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Raymond, Chairperson Neal, LeBeouf, Vice-Chairman Walton, Coulon, Ewell, Commissioner DeFrancesch, and Commissioner Sams

Absent:

FY 2024 All Stations Accessibility Program Grant Application [23-220](#)

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the FY2004 All Stations Accessibility Program Grant Application. Resolution No. 24-008 was adopted unanimously.

Enactment No: 24-008

2024 Agency Safety Plan [23-217](#)

Mike Smith reported that the amendment to the RTA's work policy SAF-5 Safety Committee Structure was implemented into the 2024 Agency Safety Plan because both plans work together. The State has given their approval to this document.

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the 2004 Agency Safety Plan. Resolution No. 24-009 was adopted unanimously.

Enactment No: 24-009

7. New Business (UNANIMOUS VOTE REQUIRED TO CONSIDER)

None

8. Audience Questions and Comments

Alan Drake stated that the RTA was heading for a Fiscal Cliff in 2026. Orleans population

was dropping, and fewer people are riding transit. The RTA need to ask the City for stop light priority and by making the riders stand longer the RTA was forcing people off of the St. Charles Streetcars.

Eneid Frances stated that the RTA was installing a Bus Shelter on the corner of Franklin Avenue and Gentilly Blvd. and she does not want the RTA to install that shelter so close to her property. The shelter will reduce the value of her home and she has major safety concerns. Ms. Frances stated that she was able to stop the construction before it started and doesn't want the shelter at this location. Commissioner LeBeouf stated that the RTA needs to be good neighbors with the people in the community.

Another speaker, Donald Carrere stated that the bus shelter should not be installed at the corner of Franklin Avenue and Gentilly Blvd. He stated that when the riders get off the bus they will be in his driveway and the solar lighting panel that the RTA plan on using will be under an Oak Tree and the community should be involved in these types of projects when it is located on people properties. Commissioner Walton and Sams stated that they would like more community engagement when it comes down to RTA Projects.

Kory Dupree stated that he comes to the Board Meeting every month and speaks on contract violations, safety concerns and grievances. He stated that when something happens to the operators they are held accountable but management is not being held accountable for their actions. The operators have not received the Safety Bonus that was negotiated in their contract and management needs to understand the CBA. At the last Board Meeting the RTA reduced the service and buses are still not pulling out on time. In 2019 the RTA purchase 19 buses with \$7.2M, in 2020 the RTA was awarded \$13.9M for 21 replacement buses and 21 Paratransit Buses and in 2020 the RTA was allocated money for buses (Hurricane Katrina Buses) and in 2023 \$18.6M for 21 buses \$5.3M for 5 more buses and the operators and still suffering every day because the RTA does not have enough service on the street.

Commissioner Raymond stated that the Board recognizes the fleet challenges, and the operators do bear the brunt of the riders and he stated that the RTA has been dealing with supply chain issues. In response to a question from Commissioner LeBeouf, Christopher Clark reported that his department was working on the paperwork regarding the safety bonuses, unfortunately his team dropped the ball and once Gizelle Banks receives the paperwork the Operators will get paid.

Speaker, Timothy Cardner stated that the RTA was still having bus delays after the cut-back on certain routes. He also stated that the Mardi Gras Guide was incorrect, and when will the RTA get permit bus stop signs.

Lona Hankins reported that she just approved the solicitation for the Permit Bus Stop Signs which will take 90 days to procure and that staff have placed temporary signs around the city. The first phase of the bus stop replacement will be to replace all the bus stops signs with vinyl wrap stickers and then the signage will be redesigned based on the stop inventory. Katherine Felton further reported that the bus stop signs were sent to the printer but the printer, did not have the capacity to provide the signs. Commissioner LeBeouf stated that she would like to know when these signs will be printed, and Commissioner Neal would like a timeline for the signage.

Commissioner Raymond acknowledged that some Paratransit Operators were in attendance at the Board Meeting.

Kendra Cooper reported that she was at the meeting today to support the Director of Paratransit and that she was doing everything positive to change Paratransit. She would like to know why management would get rid of a director that was making positive changes and certain staff signed a petition in support of Ms. Brooks.

Sundiata stated that this was a legal issue and is under review.

Samuel Buckley gave the Board copies of the comments made by the riders regarding the system.

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

Sundiata Haley stated that the purposed of the Executive Session was:

New Business

Revised Statue 4217.4

Commissioner Neal Ewell moved and Commissioner seconded to add the New Business to Executive Session:

Revised Statue 4217.4

The motion was passed unanimously.

This Executive Session was not about:

Personnel Matters

BRC Construction Group Contract

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

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner LeBeouf seconded to come out of Executive Session.

Personnel Matters

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to defer the Personnel Matters. The Motion was approved unanimously.

BRC Construction Group Contract

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to defer the BRC Construction Group Contract. The Motion was approved unanimously.

10 Rescission of Board Resolution 23-060

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to defer the

Rescission of Board Resolution 23-060. The Motion was approved unanimously.

[BRC Rescission Resolution]

[23-218](#)

11. Introduction of Board Resolution 24-001

Yolanda Rodriguez read the Resolution into the Record and the Board and the General Counsel instructed to delete from the following line from the resolution:

The Board Rescinded Board Resolution 23-060 at the January 23, 2024, Board Resolution.

Commissioner LeBeouf moved, and Commissioner Walton seconded to adopt Introduction of Board Resolution 24-001. Resolution 24-001 was approved unanimously.

[Board Resolution 24-006]

[24-006](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner LeBeouf, seconded by Vice-Chairman Walton and adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Raymond, Chairperson Neal, LeBeouf, Vice-Chairman Walton, Coulon, Ewell, Commissioner DeFrancesch, and Commissioner Sams

Absent:

Enactment No: 24-001

12. Adjournment

Commissioner LeBeouf moved, and Commissioner Neal seconded to adjourn the Board Meeting of January 23, 2024. The motion was adjourned unanimously.

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

Aye: Raymond, Chairperson Neal, LeBeouf, Vice-Chairman Walton, Coulon, Ewell, Commissioner DeFrancesch, and Commissioner Sams

Absent:

Note