



2817 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority Board of Commissioners

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

10:00 AM

RTA Boardroom, 2nd Floor

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, December 13, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. Please be advised that all meeting participants will be required to wear masks inside the boardroom due to the recent rise of COVID-19 cases in the City of New Orleans and at the RTA.

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 and Commissioner Neal

3. Consideration of Meeting Minutes (November 15, 2022)

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to approve the Board Meeting Minutes of November 5, 2022. The motion was approved unanimously.
approved

[Board Meeting Minutes - November 15, 2022]

[22-182](#)

4. Reports

A. RTA Chairman's Report

Commissioner Raymond reported on the RTA's accomplishments:
New Links

Triennial Review
Completed Union Negotiations
Neogov
Public Record Request Portal
Move Project in New Orleans East
Completion of the Agency Safety Plan
Ferry Service during the Gretna Fest
67% DBE Participation

Commissioner Raymond thanked staff for all their hard work.

Commissioner Raymond gave a list of RTA's 2023 Projects:
Reopening of the Canal Street Ferry Terminal
BRT Project
Apprenticeship Program/Leadership Academy
System-Wide Accessibility Study
Downtown Transfer Shelter
New Shelter Program

Commissioner Raymond thanked Alex Wiggins for his service to the City of New Orleans and the RTA.

Commissioner Raymond stated that the Board accepted Alex Wiggins resignation from the RTA on yesterday. On behalf of the Board, we would like to thank Alex Wiggins for his service to the City of New Orleans. Alex Wiggins joined the RTA at a pivotal time in the agency's history and led the agency through a Delegated Management to a full Public Agency.

Effective immediately, Lona Edwards Hankins will serve as the Interim CEO until the Board permanently fills the role to maintain, continuity and to keep the agency focused on serving our riders, expanding regional connections, and improving transit equity.

I also want to reiterate the Board's emphasis on improving on-time performance, delivering all plans, services and creating a workplace that supports excellence agency-wide.

Thank you to the staff for the tremendous amount of work put in these last three years to bring agency administration and operations in-house while simultaneously introducing the largest system redesign since Hurricane Katrina. These successes required new employees, systems, procedures, and technologies which is a tremendous undertaking of which we all should be proud. I hope this success inspires your commitment to our continued growth and our ability to serve our riders. Change is uncomfortable but inevitable.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to approve adding Lona Hankins as Interim Chief Executive Officer to the Agenda. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to approve appointing Lona Hankins as Interim Chief Executive Officer. The motion was approved unanimously.

B. Operations & Administration Committee Chairman's Report

Commissioner Neal stated that the RTA deferred the RTA Work Policies to the Board Agenda.

Commissioner Neal also thanked Alex Wiggins for his service.

C. Finance Committee Chairman's Report

Commissioner Walton thanked the Finance staff for a great job with the 2023 RTA Budget.

D. Jefferson Parish Report

No Report.

E. RTA General Counsel's Report

Sundiata Haley stated that the Board is going to have an Executive Session.

5. Selection of Official Journal

approved

[22-183](#)

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to adopt the Selection of Official Journal. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Enactment No: 22-093

6. Election of Officers

A. Chairperson

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to approve Mark Raymond as Chairman of the RTA Board of Commissioners. The motion was approved unanimously.

B. Vice Chairperson

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Ewell seconded to approve Art Walton as the Vice-Chairman of the RTA Board of Commissioners. The motion was approved unanimously.

C. Committee Assignments

Executive Committee

Art Walton - Chairman
Mark Raymond
Fred Neal
Tim Coulon

Operations and Administration

Fred Neal - Chairman
Maria DeFrancesch
Joseph Ewell
Sunni LeBeouf

Finance Committee

Art Walton - Chairman
Tim Coulon
Joseph Ewell
Fred Neal

7. RTA Chief Executive Officer's Report

Lona Hankins reported on the following:

2022 Annual Business Meeting
Operator of the Year - Mary Lewis
Maintenance of the Year - Donald Lymous
Most Improved Operator - George Franklin
Administrative Employee - Cassandra Bennett

8. RTA Chief Financial Officer's Report

Gizelle Banks reported that - Ridership - Ridership in October increased by 26.9% compared to September 2022 actuals. Through October, total system ridership (bus, streetcar, and paratransit) was 956K, 50.6% above October 2021 actuals (635K), 15% below October 2019 pre-COVID actuals (1.1M), and 30% above the forecast. This shows that ridership continues to make a steady recovery.

Gizelle Banks reported that - Farebox Recovery Rates 2022 vs. 2019 (Pre-COVID) - Fare revenue continues to offset a slightly higher percentage of operating expenses as ridership continues to rebound. October's farebox recovery rate increased slightly from 7.37% in the prior month to 9.69%; a total increase of more than 2%. The farebox recovery rate for October 2019 (Pre-COVID) was 15.34%.

Gizelle Banks reported that - Ferry Farebox Recovery Rates 2022 vs. 2019 (Pre-COVID) - The increase in farebox recovery to 12.42% in October from 7.92% in September is a result of increase in passenger revenues and a decrease in operating expenses from the prior month. Fare revenues continue to offset a small percentage of operating costs.

Gizelle Banks reported that - Operating Revenues (Budget, Actual & Prior Year) - RTA's two largest revenue sources are General Use Sales Tax (\$7.3M) and Fare Revenue (\$863K). The two combined make up 84% or \$8.2M in total revenue. Overall, total operating revenues for the month of October are \$9.8M. Passenger Fares for October increased by 40% or \$245K when compared to the previous month of September actuals (\$618K).

Gizelle Banks reported that - Net Revenue (Before and After Government Assistance) - Net Revenue (Before Government Assistance) is \$505K for the month of October. After applying \$3.1M in Government Operating Assistance, Net Revenue ended with \$3.4M or a positive variance of 3% for the month of October (when compared to the budget of \$3.2M).

Gizelle Banks reported that - Operating Expenses - Operating Expenses for the month of October are roughly \$8.9M. Labor and Fringe Benefits, the largest expenditure at \$5.7M, comprised 64% of this month's actual expenses. In total, Operating Expenses for the month of October show a slight increase of 6% from \$8.4M in September.

Gizelle Banks reported that - Operating Reserve - The strong positive variance that resulted from Net Revenue (After Government Assistance of approximately \$3.1M) added \$3.9M to Restricted Operating/Capital Reserve after the offset of \$567K in Debt Service.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Gizelle Banks reported that the Federal Dollars that the RTA receives are reimbursements from the RTA's Operating Expenses.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Gizelle Banks reported that staff was working on the 5 Year Projections.

9. 2023 Operating & Capital Budget Report

Gizelle Banks reported on the following:

Strategic Mobility Plan Goals

- Earn Trust
- Be Equitable
- Prioritize the Rider Experience
- Be Reliable
- Connect to Opportunities
- Support a Sustainable, Healthy Region

CY2022/2023 Goals and Capital Initiatives

Investing in the Customer Experience

- Expand number of Bus Shelters
- Building Interim Downtown Transit Center
- Improving Customer-facing Technology
- Substantial Completion on the Canal St. Ferry Terminal Project
- Revamping Fare Structure

Sources

| | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Operating Revenues | 123,004,292 |
|--------------------|-------------|

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Government Operating Assistance | 34,185,851 |
| Non-Operating Federal Sources | 29,548,334 |
| Other Local Sources | 2,266,743 |
| FEMA Funded Project Worksheets | 984,562 |
| <u>Total Sources</u> | <u>\$189,989,782</u> |

Uses

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Operating Expenses | 125,288,327 |
| TMSL Legacy Costs | 2,869,943 |
| Maritime Expenses (unfunded) | 6,661,542 |
| Capital Expenditures | 46,120,074 |
| FEMA Funded Project Worksheets | 984,562 |
| <u>Debt Service</u> | <u>8,065,334</u> |
| <u>Total Uses</u> | <u>\$189,989,782</u> |

Operating Expenditures

Total Operating Expenses- \$125 Million

894 Full Time Equivalents in budget (occupied and vacant)

Casualty and Liability insurance include claims reserves

TMSEL Retirement costs- \$2.8 Million

Projected ARPA funding for Operating- \$5 Million and additional \$13.9M in Maritime and Capital Expenditures for a total of \$18.9M in ARPA Funding

Capital and Maritime Expenditures

Capital Expenditures include projects that are on-going or anticipated to begin in 2023 at a percentage of revenue and expenditure and that align with the estimated project completion for the year

Most projects are partially funded (approx 80%) with federal and/or state government grants, but there is a local match required - \$14 million in CY23 (versus 9million in 2022).

Maritime Operations exceeds the level of State and federal funding allocated for CY22 by approximately \$6.6 Million. (\$8m in 2022)

Government Assistance and Debt Service

Government Assistance for Preventative Maintenance \$15.2 million and ARPA funding of \$18.9 million, leaving net revenue of \$8M before debt service

Debt Service \$8 million (cash); including expenditures of \$2.3 in CY23

RTA will evaluate operational and capital needs prior to spending additional allocated ARP funding.

Commissioner Walton stated that it is very important that the City of New Orleans stays operational with regards to COVID.

adopted

RTA CY2023 Operating and Capital Budget

[22-173](#)

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to adopt the

RTA CY2023 Operating and Capital Budget. Resolution No. 22-094 was adopted unanimously.

Enactment No: 22-094

10. Operations Update

Gerard Guter reported that total Ridership for the month of October 2022 was 938K.

Gerard Guter reported that On -Time Performance for bus was 77% during the month of October and 78% for streetcars.

Gerard Guter reported that Route 80 Desire-Louisa had the highest On-Time Performance with 91% and the route with the lowest On-Time Performance was Route 31 Leonidas-Gentilly 54%.

Gerard Guter reported that Route 9 had the highest ridership of 60K.

Gerard Guter reported that 21 of the 30 bus service routes were affected by Temporary Detours which was 70%, 4 of the 30 bus and streetcars service routes were affected by Long Term Detours which was 13% of the routes.

Gerard Guter reported that for the month of October RTA delivered 98% of Bus Service and 98% of Streetcar Service.

In response to Commissioner Raymond, Lona Hankins reported that the GPS on the app is still not working, and this is due from the app designer and other transit properties are having the same issues.

Gerard Guter reported that in late January 2023 the RTA should have a copy of the final Paratransit Report.

adopted

11. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. Resolution No. 22-095 was adopted unanimously.

Amendment/Extension to the Exclusive Right to Market Advertising Space on RTA Buses, Streetcars, Ferries, and Ferry Terminals

[22-166](#)

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to adopt the Amendment/Extension to the Exclusive right to market Advertising Space on RTA Buses, Streetcars, Ferries, an Ferry Terminals. Resolution No. 22-095 was adopted unanimously.

Enactment No: 22-096

2023 Agency Safety Plan

[22-169](#)

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to adopt the 2023 Agency Safety Plan. Resolution No. 22-097 was adopted unanimously.

Enactment No: 22-097

12. Authorization: RTA Work Policies New and Amended (Deferred)

RTA Work Policies New and Amended

[22-146](#)

This item was deferred.

13. New Business (UNANIMOUS VOTE REQUIRED TO CONSIDER)

None

14. 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.

Dustin Robertson stated that RIDE and the public was concerned when the new bus signage will be installed.

Dustin Robertson stated that the RTA should have a Dashboard on its Website.

In response to Commissioner Neal, Lona Hankins reported that the RTA has a contractor that designs the RTA's Website and she was going to check to see if the PowerPoint presentations were currently on the website.

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

adjourned

Personnel Matters

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to go into Executive Session regarding Personnel Matters.

The motion was approved unanimously.

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

New Business:

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to add Recommending Terri Wright Personnel File to the District Attorney Office and the Attorney General's Office. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner LeBeouf moved and Commissioner Coulon seconded to adopt the resolution to Recommend Terri Wright Personnel File to the District Attorney Office and the Attorney General's Office. Resolution No. 22-098 was adopted unanimously.

16. Adjournment

Commissioner LeBeouf moved and Commissioner Ewell seconded to adjourn the December 13 2022, Board Meeting. The motion was adjourned unanimously