



2817 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority Board of Commissioners

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

10:00 AM

RTA Board Room

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

[Board Meeting Minutes - January 24, 2023]

[23-021](#)

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner Ewell seconded to approve the Board Meeting Minutes of January 24, 2023. The motion was approved unanimously.
approved

4. Reports

A. RTA Chairman's Report

Commissioner Raymond stated that the Board of Commissioners used TMG Consulting to facilitate the process for the RTA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Selection Committee.

Commissioner Raymond stated that the CEO job position was placed in 6 publications that started on January 16, 2023, and ended on February 6, 2023.

Commissioner Raymond stated that the Selection Committee Members were Anthony Mumphrey, Jason Sappington and Courtney Jackson and the committee evaluated 8 applicants out of a total of 77 applicants and scored their qualifications.

Commissioner Raymond stated that 4 applicants were selected for the Executive

Committee to interview.

Selected applicants were:

Mark Major

Lona Hankins

Robbie Makinen

Herold Humphrey

Commissioner Raymond stated that the interviews were conducted on Friday, February, 24, 2023, and determined that the discussion for the CEO position needed to continue at another Executive Committee Meeting that was scheduled today at 8:30 a.m.

Commissioner Raymond stated that the Executive Committee passed a Resolution 23-010 stating that the Board narrowed the candidates to 2 finalist, Mark Major and Lona Hankins and will interview the finalist at a Special Board Meeting on Friday, March 3, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

Commissioner Raymond stated that this allows the Board to take a deeper dive into the candidates and make the right decision for the agency.

i. Consideration of resolution to appoint new CEO

This resolution was deferred until the Special Board Meeting on Friday, March 3, 2023.

B. Operations & Administration Committee Chairman's Report

Commissioner Neal stated that at the Operations and Administration Meeting staff gave a great presentation on New Links and there are things that the RTA still need to work through.

C. Finance Committee Chairman's Report

No Report.

D. Jefferson Parish Report

Foundation for new Eastbank Bus Facility will be poured February 23, 2023

Wilty Terminal: ADA construction is 75% complete.

Mardi Gras season was a success. No incident or accidents to report.

E. RTA General Counsel's Report

No Report.

F. RTA Chief Executive Officer's Report

Lona Hankins reported that the Board received the first CEO written report for the month and this report will be delivered to the Board monthly, this report will also be posted on the RTA website.

Lona Hankins reported that the RTA hosted the Women in Transit and on Thursday, March 2, 2023, and she will also speak at the Urban League on Transportation and Economic Mobility.

Lona Hankins reported that RTA held its 1st Annual Rosa Parks Day on Saturday, February 4, 2023, with Free Rides.

Lona Hankins reported that she met with FTA Administrator Nuria Fernandez and discussed the following:

- 2023 federal grants
- Fleet Modernization
- Planned BRT application
- UPT Utilization
- Ferry Terminal Update

RTA staff spent much of January preparing for the January 29th service changes which addressed feedback from the September service change.

The 62-Morrison-Bullard and 62-Morrison Owl service was rerouted between Crowder and Bundy to address safety concerns.

The 66-Hayne Loop now has a permanent connection to UNO and SUNO.

Due to ridership, we reduced early morning and late-night service on the 67-Michoud Loop plus, added a stop to better service the Folger's plant.

All New Orleans East routes received service with more stops around the New Orleans East Hub and within the New Orleans East Hospital campus.

Employee of the month for Operators was Sean Sawyer, Streetcar Operator and Patrick Elliott, Electronic Technician, Maintenance

G. Chief of Staff Legislative Update

Lona Hankins reported on the following:

Continue collaboration w/ New Orleans City Council on the proposed Bus Rapid Transit preferred local alternative (route).

Met with Sen. Sharon Hewitt to raise awareness of ferry funding fiscal cliff.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Lona Hankins reported that staff intends to brief all Legislators regarding funding for the ferry.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Commissioner Walton stated that the RTA was included in the City of New Orleans Legislators Update.

H. Operations Update

Gerard Guter reported that total Ridership for the month of December 2022 was 632K.

Gerard Guter reported that On -Time Performance during the month of December, for bus and streetcar was 74%.

Gerard Guter reported that Route 80 Desire-Louisa had the highest On-Time Performance with 88% and the route with the lowest On-Time Performance was Route 66 Hayne 28%.

Gerard Guter reported that 27 of the 28 bus service routes were affected by Temporary Detours which was 96.4%, 1 of the 4 streetcars service routes were affected by Temporary Service Delays which was 25% of the routes. 5 of the 32 Bus and Streetcar Service Routes are affected by Long-Term Detours which was 15.63%

Gerard Guter reported that during the month of December RTA delivered 95% of Bus Service and 92% of Streetcar Service.

I. RTA Chief Financial Officer's Report

Gizelle Banks reported - Ridership - Ridership in December decreased by 16.7% compared to November 2022 actuals. Through December, total system ridership (bus, streetcar and paratransit) was 648K and 778K for the previous month of November. The results show improved but mixed results across the spectrum.

Gizelle Banks reported - Farebox Recovery Rates 2022 vs. 2019 (Pre-COVID) - Fare revenue continues to offset a slightly modest percentage of operating expenses as ridership continues to rebound. December's farebox recovery rate increased slightly from 8.77% in the prior month to 9.39%; a total increase of 0.6%.

Gizelle Banks reported - Ferry - Farebox Recovery Rates 2022 vs. 2019 (Pre-COVID) - The decrease in farebox recovery to 7.57% in December from 8.73% in November is a result of increase in passenger revenues and an increase in operating expenses from the prior month. Fare revenues continue to offset a small percentage of operating costs.

Gizelle Banks reported - Operating Revenues (Budget, Actual & Prior Year) - RTA's two largest revenue sources are General Use Sales Tax \$6.2M and Fare Revenue \$874K. The two combined make up 82.5% or \$7M in total revenue. Overall, total operating revenues for the month of December are \$8.56M. Passenger Fares, however, when compared to the budget, favored unfavorably by 36k or 4%.

Gizelle Banks reported - Net Revenues (Before and After Government Assistance) - Net Revenue (Before Government Assistance) is -\$1.1M for the month of December. After applying the month's \$1.6M in Government Operating Assistance, Net Revenue is -\$38K for the month of December.

Gizelle Banks reported - Operating Expenses - Operating Expenses for the month of December are roughly \$9.3M. Labor and Fringe Benefits, the largest expenditure at \$6.4M, comprised 68.7% of this month's actual expenses. In total, operating expenses for the month of December show an increase of 7.79% from \$8.6M in November.

Gizelle Banks reported - Operating Reserve - To offset Net Revenue (After Government Assistance of approximately \$1.6M), approximately \$792K from Restricted Operating/Capital Reserve was used.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Gizelle Banks reported that the CARE ACT reimbursement should be done early next month.

Gizelle Banks reported that the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA Funds) of \$59.9 Million was approved and factored into the 2023 budget. These funds will be used for Operating Reserve Assistance and replace the aging fleet.

Commissioner Walton asked staff to give a more detailed statement of the ARPA Funds at the Finance Meeting.

5. State Safety Oversight (SSO) Annual Report - Kevin Lawson, Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development (LaDOTD)

Kevin Lawson, State Over Site with the State Department of Transportation, reported that Mike Smith was a great guy to work with.

Kevin Lawson reported that the State Annual Report was submitted to the Federal Government and on the recorded the RTA had 21 accidents that was reported to the FTA which was a good number according to the FTA Standards.

Kevin Lawson reported that the State did not conduct an audit of the RTA this year the next audit will take place in 2024.

Kevin Lawson reported that the State has weekly meetings with RTA. The FTA has taken notice and understand the relationship between the State and the RTA.

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Kevin Lawson reported that there are certain standards regarding accidents and the RTA numbers were good compared to other agencies.

In response to Commissioner DeFrancesch, Kevin Lawson reported that the State was the same reporting mechanism that was sent to the NTSB.

Commissioner Neal suggested that Kevin Lawson give a quarterly report to the Operations Committee.

Commissioner LeBeouf thanked Kevin Lawson for his assessment of the RTA and the great compliment that was given to Mike Smith.

6. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the Consent Agenda. Resolution No. 23-014 was adopted unanimously.
adopted

Leadership & Change Management Training - Change Order [23-009](#)

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the Leadership & Change Management Training - Change Order. Resolution No. 23-011 was adopted unanimously.

Enactment No: 23-011

Space and Rooftop Lease at Place St. Charles (201 Place St. Charles, LLC) [23-010](#)

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the Space and Rooftop Lease at Place St. Charles (201 Place St. Charles, LLC). Resolution 23-012 was adopted unanimously.

Enactment No: 23-012

FY23 RAISE Grant Application [23-014](#)

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the FY23 Raise Grant Application. Resolution No. 23-013 was adopted unanimously.

Enactment No: 23-013

7. New Business (UNANIMOUS VOTE REQUIRED TO CONSIDER)

None.

8. Audience Questions and Comments

Alan Drake stated that there will be a Recession and RTA need to prepare for the Recession now.

Alan Drake stated that the RTA should transfer the Chalmette/Lower Algiers Ferry back to the State this ferry does not support the people that support the RTA.

Alan Drake stated that the RTA need to ask the City for Stop Light Priority this would speed up the buses and streetcars.

Alan Drake stated that the RTA need to buy 35ft buses versus 40ft buses the 35ft buses take less fuel.

Korey Dupree, ATU Local 1560 President stated that there was a total of 77 applicants and

the process was narrowed to 4 and on March 3, 2023, there will be another set of interviews to select a candidate.

Korey Dupree stated that the RTA was driven by the employees that pickup the riders every day and these employees want to be treated like professionals, and the Board need to select the person that is most qualified for the job.

Dustin Robertson stated that the community was still looking for Transit Stop Shelters and would like to see the list of shelters locations and still have not received anything.

Dustin Robertson stated that regarding Paratransit the riding public have not seen any major changes to the service. The system was picking up people a hour early or a hour late and riders were missing doctors' appointments. The RTA need to start visiting the Senior Centers to understand the complaints.

Brenda Holmes stated that the Route #80 need to go back to Canal Street like it was prior to New Links. Route #80 is the only bus service in the Desire/Florida area that connects to other close bus lines. The #8 Route St. Claude is always delayed by the bridge or the train and after 10:30 p.m. at night there is no bus service and people have to walk from Chef Highway or from St. Claude Avenue to get a bus.

Brenda Holmes stated that Route #55 goes to Canal Street and the Route #80 doesn't. and bus service in that area has been cut drastically and when you call for a shelter bus you are told that one is not available.

Brenda Holmes asked that Route #80 goes back to Canal Street to help the riding public.

Courtney Jackson stated that she went to City Hall as the Co-Chair of the Complete Street Coalition in favor of BRT and politics was being put over people.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Courtney Jackson stated that the concern was in Algiers.

Lona Hankins stated that staff revised the language and added new language to the resolution that states no public authority has made a decision on transit priority lanes and staff was checking to see if any other changes should be made.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Lona Hankins reported that the resolution with the new language has been shared with the Chair of the Transportation Committee.

Commissioner Walton stated that staff should be looking for the Councilmembers feedback.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Lona Hankins reported that the next step was to meet with the District Councilperson.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Lona Hankins reported that staff does not have a defined strategy until staff have all the facts.

Lona Hankins reported that Senator Hewitt reported that she presented a resolution to DOTD to look at ferries across the State of Louisiana and do an Economic Analysis to determine what would be the best use for the ferries. Staff will contact the DOTD and ask for the results of the study.

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

None

10. Adjournment

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