



2817 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority Board of Commissioners

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 23, 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, March 23, 2021 at 10:00 am. All efforts will be made to provide for observation and input by members of the public.

Chairman Daniels was driving to Baton Rouge and Commissioner Raymond was the Chairman of this meeting.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Present: Chairman Flozell Daniels, Commissioner Fred Neal, Commissioner Mark Raymond, Commissioner Walt Tillery, and Commissioner Laura Bryan

Absent:

Late Arrival: Commissioner Mostofa Sarwar, and Commissioner Art Walton

3. Consideration of Minutes

3a. [Meeting Minutes from February 23, 2021]

[21-034](#)

Commissioner Tillery moved and Commissioner Bryan seconded to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2021 Board Meeting. Motion was approved unanimously.

4. Reports

4a. RTA Chairman's Report

No Report.

4b. Committee Reports

Operations & Administration Committee Report:
No Report.

Finance Committee Report:

Mark Raymond reported that staff was continuing to monitor the effects of COVID-19 on the RTA's budget and was excited that the RTA was moving forward with the Route Match pilot program in New Orleans East.

4c. Jefferson Parish Report

Commissioner Tillery stated that the Jefferson Parish Department of Transportation was working on a new transit operation facility that would be located on Airline Hwy and David Dr. and construction of this project would begin in mid May. Jefferson Parish was also going to implement a new listening software and was working on implementing a new logo.

4d. RTA General Counsel's Report

Sundiata Haley stated that there was an Executive Session.

4e. RTA Chief Executive Officer's Report

Alex Wiggins reported that the RTA was forming a partnership Task Force with JeT and the RPC to implement recommendations outlined in the New Links Plan and the first meeting was going to take place this week. Recommendations for New Links will be implemented in phases and the first phase was to return the system to full transit service which was scheduled to take place in the summer and staff was going to bring all set recommendations to the Board for approval.

Alex Wiggins reported that he wanted to thank Chairman Daniels for advocating for the transit workers to be included in the next round of vaccinations and the Governor announced last week that all transit employees are eligible to receive the vaccination based on their occupation and secondly the RTA was advised that the request for a closed pod vaccination site was also approved.

4f. DBE Report

Keziah Lee reported that during the months of January and February RTA awarded \$1.2 Million in contracts and of that amount \$137,075 was awarded to DBE's. Currently six projects has DBE participation and the goal achieved has not changed from last month's report but once outstanding invoices are processed there will be an increase in the goal achieved.

Keziah Lee reported that staff was working with the Infrastructure Department to identify projects for DBE participation.

Keziah Lee reported that DBE Department was going to hold an outreach and staff was going to focus on the New Orleans East Maintenance Project along with the Napoleon Facility Rehabilitation Project.

Keziah Lee reported that one additional project was added to the SBE list with a contract value of \$44,855.

In response to Commissioner Bryan, Keziah Lee reported that staff was looking at March 31, 2021 as the date for the outreach and the Marketing Department was getting information to the public.

5. Items for Consideration**5a. New Links Network Redesign Plan - Final Recommendations [21-015](#)
(REVISED BOARD REPORT)**

Samuel Buckley reported that staff was asking the Board to adopt the New Links Network Redesign Final Plan so implementation of the plan can begin.

Commissioner Bryan thanked Samuel Buckley and the RTA Team for the great work.

Commissioner Neal stated that he was ready for all the hard work that will go into implementing this plan.

Commissioner Raymond thanked everyone that was involved in the project.

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Tillery seconded to adopted the New Links Network Redesign Plan - Final Recommendations. Resolution 21-011 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 21-011

5b. Downtown Regional Transit Center [21-021](#)

Lona Hankins reported that staff was asking for approval of the Downtown Transit Center to begin pursuing land acquisition, project funding and prepare the Preliminary Engineering Assessment Phase for the Basin Street Location. This site was preferred by the riders and was also recommended by New Links. This location also includes a rest center for the operators and for the public and the buses will be able to pull on and off the streets with ease.

Lona Hankins also reported that the Potential Funding Sources will be the Bus and Bus Facilities Grant, Infra Grant, Build Grant, DOTD Transit, State, Municipalities and RTA Self Generated and the total estimated for this project is \$20.5 Million.

The Board congratulated staff for doing a great job and creating a more equitable transit environment.

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Tillery seconded to adopt the Downtown Regional Transit Center. Resolution 21-012 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 21-012

5c. Agency Safety Plan Revision Incorporating Recent Organizational Changes [21-025](#)

Mike Smith reported that the Agency Safety Plan Revision incorporated recent organizational changes that was originally approved on July 28, 2020. This report was an update of the plan due to the transition that took place in December between the RTA and Transdev and it was determined that the document needed a mid cycle revision and staff took this opportunity to adjust the Safety Performance Targets and staff adjusted the Safety Risk Management Tools and Processes, including revamping the Employee Safety Report Program and this report also reflects the New Safety Committee Structure.

Commissioner Tillery moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the Agency Safety Plan Revision Incorporating Recent Organizational Changes. Resolution 21-013 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 21-013

6. Consent Agenda

Chairman Daniels moved and Commissioner Tillery moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Resolution 21-014 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

6a. RTA Randolph Building Sewer Repairs [21-013](#)

Chairman Daniels moved and Commissioner Tillery seconded to adopt the RTA Randolph Building Sewer Repairs. Resolution No. 21-015 was adopted unanimously.
adopted

Enactment No: 21-015

6b. Approval of Routematch Contract [21-019](#)

Chairman Daniels moved and Commissioner Tillery seconded to adopt the RTA Randolph Building Sewer Repairs. Resolution No. 21-016 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 21-016

6c. Fixed Route Service Standards Policy [21-024](#)

Chairman Daniels moved and Commissioner Tillery seconded to adopt the RTA Randolph Building Sewer Repairs. Resolution No. 21-017 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 21-017

7. Financial Statements-January

Gizelle Banks reported that she will be presenting the January Financials. Ms. Banks reported that the actual ridership of 523K slumped by 10.6% or 62K passengers when compared to the budget and there were 523,000 riders in January compared to the prior year ridership of about \$1.2 million.

Ms. Banks reported on Operating Revenues - The adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Operating Revenue is quite apparent in the prior year-to-current year comparisons. Passenger Fares continue to fall short of projections. Highlighting this month's activity, however, is the amount by which General Sales Tax Revenues outperformed the budget - by \$1.4 Million.

Regarding Operating Revenues (Actual) - of the \$6.9 Million in Operating Revenues, 83% or \$5.7 Million is derived from General Use Sales Tax. which we are outperforming the budget.

Regarding Operating Expenses Ms. Banks informed the Commissioners that the Labor and Fringe Benefits is the expenditure, comprising 70% of this month's actual expenses. Actuals for this line item did not include the lump sum discretionary payment some pension benefits, the 3% cost of living adjustment and full staffing, creating a large positive budget variance. The contrast in prior year 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.

Commissioner Raymond stated that the reason for the services for the prior years are so high in comparison to this year was due to the Transdev Contract.

Ms. Banks reported that the Net Revenue (After Government Assistance) totaled \$1,318,845 Million for the month of January.

Ms. Banks reported that Capital Expenditures and Debt Service as result of he bond refinancing in September 2020, Debt Service was dramatically reduced by \$528,106 from prior year by category and Operating Revenues offset Operating Expenses along with the added \$1.3m in Net Revenue (After Gov't. Assistance), the RTA generated \$662,827 in Restricted Operating/Capital.

Commissioner Walton requested that staff give a month to month report on ridership for the last two years.

Alex Wiggins reported that the fare recovery ratio is going to change and every month the team was going to focus on while we look at recovery was the cost per trip for fixed route, Paratransit, ferry and streetcar.

8. New Business (UNANIMOUS VOTE REQUIRED TO CONSIDER)

Commissioner Daniels moved and Commissioner Tillery seconded to add the Low or No Emission Grant Program and the 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities - Large Urban Areas to the Agenda. Motion was approved unanimously.

approved

Grant application for federal funds to purchase Low-No Emission Buses **21-036**

Commissioner Tillery moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to adopt the Low or No Emission Grant Program. Resolution No. 21-018 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 21-018

5339 Bus and Bus Facilities: Large Urban Areas-REVISED REPORT **21-035**

Commissioner Tillery moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to adopt the grant for the Replacement for the Non-Revenue Vehicles. Resolution No. 21-019 was adopted unanimously.

In response to Commissioner Bryan, Lona Hankins stated that once staff know the rules and timelines for the Bus and Bus Facility Grant staff intend to pursue and bring the resolution before the Board and the there are several components to the Bus and Bus Facilities grant and the one for non revenue fleet was leftover money that FTA was offering to the local DOTD's to the large urban applicants.

adopted

9. 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.

Mr. Ryan Smith submitted a video for the Board the view and in the video he stated that he was a member of the Growth Dat Youth Program and he wanted to voice his support for the New Links Project and he rides the No. 84 Bus (Carrollton Bus to City Park) and he feels that the buses should run every 15 minutes.

Rochelle Odin, Community Organizer was in favor of the New Links Project and these improvements once implemented would improve the travel time for students.

Grace Ambrossi stated that language access was a very important and critically issue to the New Links Project and people that don't speak English should be involved in this important project and interpreter services could be available to the RTA for further meetings for the Spanish speaking community.

10. Executive Session: New Orleans Building Corporation and Riverwalk Marketplace, LLC (2/3RDS VOTE TO Consider)

Commissioner Tillery moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to go into Executive Session for New Orleans Building Corporation and Riverwalk Marketplace, LLC. Motion carried unanimously.

approved

11. Adjournment

Commissioner Raymond moved and Commissioner Tillery seconded to adjourn the Board Meeting of March 23, 2021. Motion was approved unanimously.

approved