



2817 Canal Street  
New Orleans, LA 70119

## New Orleans Regional Transit Authority Board of Commissioners

### Meeting Minutes

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Tuesday, February 27, 2024

10:00 AM

RTA Board Room

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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, February 27, 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: [rtaoard@rtaforward.org](mailto:rtaoard@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 ([rtaoard@rtaforward.org](mailto:rtaoard@rtaforward.org)).

#### 1. Call to Order

#### 2. Roll Call

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

#### 3. Consideration of Meeting Minutes

[Board Meeting Minutes - January 23, 2024]

[24-018](#)

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to approve the Board Meeting of January 23, 2024. The motion was approved unanimously.

approved

#### 4. RTA Chairman's Report

A. Swearing in of Jefferson Parish Commissioner

Judge Jupiter swore in Commissioner Brian Bruno.

B. Assignment of Committees

Commissioner Bruno will serve on the Operations and Administration Committee.

#### 5. Reports

A. Operations & Administration Committee Chairman's Report

No Report.

B. Finance Committee Chairman's Report

No Report.

C. Jefferson Parish Report

Commissioner Ewell gave the Jefferson Parish Report. This report can be found in the Board PowerPoint Presentation under Jefferson Parish Report.

D. RTA General Counsel's Report

No report.

E. RTA Chief Executive Officer's Report

Lona Hankins asked for a moment of silence for Tonora Butler, Communications Dispatcher who passed away.

The CEO reported that during Mardi Gras the RTA conducted maintenance on the streetcar system and construction began on the Rampart Streetcar Line on Canal Street and this work should take at least 6 weeks to complete. In response to a question from Commissioner Coulon, Lona reported that the rail project was a competitive bid and not a professional service contract. The project only received one bid.

The Women in Transit Conference is scheduled in New Orleans in May and the American Public Transit Association (APTA) held its Marketing and Communications & Customer Experience Working in New Orleans on February 11-14, 2024 and staff supported this conference. APTA also held its CEO Conference that the CEO attended. Lona explained that there are only two bus manufacturers in the United States and that costs have gone up across the country along with craftsman shortage.

After the January pick, the agency is receiving less complaints even with less buses on the streets.

In response to a question from Commissioner Ewell, Lona stated that staff was working with the Union to see if the Operators were paid their base line salary. She further stated that the RTA time-keeping system for the Operators was very antiquated and this system did cause problems with Operators pay and staff is looking to replace the system. A consultant was contracted to help solve the problem with the system. In response to an additional question from Commissioner Walton, Lona reported that the Union did agree to the operator's base-line pay and the problem with the pay was with the Operators that work the Board.

An update was given on the HR Consultant project. Lona reported that two weeks ago staff met with the consultants. The goal for the Human Resources Consultants is to be completed within 120 days but implementation of the recommendations may take longer. Commissioner LeBeouf requested to receive a copy of the consultants time-line and that she would like to see all gaps that the consultant identifies closed immediately.

Commissioner LeBeouf also requested to receive a copy of the Executive Summary on Oracle this week and an update on the permanent Bus Stop Signs.

Employees of the Month:  
Myron Hughes - Operator  
Richard Smith - Smith

#### F. Chief of Staff Legislative Update

Katherine Felton reported on the Legislative Update. This report can be found in the PowerPoint Presentation dated February 27, 2024, under the Chief of Staff Legislative Update.

In response to a question from Commissioner Ewell, Lona reported that the Capital Cost for the Ferry is reflected in the Capital Outlay Plan and that the \$7 Million covers the Ferry Budget. The report concluded with Lona mentioning a meeting she had with Congressman Carter to discuss Capital Projects and Federal Funding.

#### G. Operations Update

Chris Clark reported on the Operations Update. This report can be found in the PowerPoint Presentation dated February 27, 2024, under the Operations Update.

Operations reported that since the January Pick there has been significant improvements to the routes with a 70% on time-performance rate. Commissioner LeBeouf responded by saying that 70% was not great, and we must do better because people are relying on the RTA services. Commissioner Neal commented that ridership

has increased, and more people are riding the system.

Gratitude was expressed to the Operations Team for their efforts during Mardi Gras. Commissioner LeBeouf also thanked staff for their work. As a lesson learned, Commissioner Neal suggested that the RTA meet with city representatives to figure out how to address the problem of people blocking the streetcar line before parades start.

#### H. 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 February 27, 2024, under the Financial Report.

The Budget that was adopted did take into consideration the reduction of service and that there was a \$11Million surplus because services were under budget.

[December Financials]

[24-019](#)

### 6. La DOTD Report - Mr. Lawson

Kevin Lawson - LADOTD - Everything is working great between the RTA and the State. The State and the RTA has a great working relationship, and the Board should receive a copy of the oversight report this week.

Kevin Lawson stated that the State conducted a triennial review in December and nothing major was found and the Board approved the Agency Safety Plan at the January Board Meeting, and he attends the safety meeting. The RTA was going beyond the call of duty and Mike Smith was a great asset to the RTA.

### 7. Authorizations

5-Year Capital Investment Program 2024-2028

[23-216](#)

Commissioner LeBeouf moved, and Commissioner Neal seconded to defer the 5-Year Capital Investment Program 20204-2028 back to Committee. This motion was adopted unanimously.

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Cintas Uniform Service Contract

[24-005](#)

In response to a question from Commissioner Walton, Ronald Baptiste stated that this was the first time that the RTA was using Cintas on the State Contract. Cintas was having issues with the rugs that were being placed round the building and that was discussed and resolved with this new contract.

Commissioner Coulon moved, and Commissioner Neal seconded to approve the Cintas Uniform Service Contract. Resolution No. 24-010 was adopted unanimously.

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Transit Security Services - SEAL Security Services Contract  
Amendment

[24-009](#)

Ronald Baptiste provided the background for this procurement. He stated that the service started in 2021, and there is a potential for a court filing. This service contract has had internal and external issues, and the flaw is not in the Procurement Policy but in some of the applications and decisions made throughout the process that contribute to the protest and this particular service is not available on State Contract.

In response to a question from Commissioner Ewell, Ronald stated that if this was a contract it would have expired in May 2024 and if this amendment is not approved the RTA would be without security by the end of February.

Commissioner LeBeouf stated that the Procurement Procedures must be followed when engaged in a competitive process those participates in the process must be afforded a fair opportunity to do business with the RTA and Commissioner Ewell agreed with Commissioner LeBeouf.

Commissioner Ewell moved, and Commissioner Neal seconded to amend the Transit Security Services - SEAL Security Services Contract. Resolution No. 24-011 was adopted with 7 yeas and one abstention.

Enactment No: 24-011

Winter 2024 Service Change Title VI Analysis

[24-010](#)

Commissioner LeBeouf moved, and Commissioner Neal seconded to defer the Winter 2004 Service Change Title VI Analysis back to Committee. This motion was adopted unanimously.

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## 8. New Business (UNANIMOUS VOTE REQUIRED TO CONSIDER)

None

## 9. Audience Questions and Comments

Lane Trip, Aretha Lewis, Kevin Clark (signed up but didn't speak), Dr. Ashonta Watts, Rev Richard Bell, and Betty Dimarco were in attendance and all spoke in support of Lona Hankins as the CEO.

Kory Dupree - He stated that every month he comes before the Board to speak on behalf of the Operators. Currently, the RTA has some of the worst safety issues - the Director of Safety told him it was okay to drive a bus with the back door not working. There are some lines with only one bus on the line and passengers has to use the back door because the buses are so crowded. Some of the operators are spit on and things are thrown on them by passengers. He also stated that out of 600 union members only 60 Operators received a Safety Bonus and some Operators has not gotten paid for work they have performed. The

Operators are being totally disrespected on all levels.

Mr. Dupree further stated that some operators were not paid for their Safety Bonus, Outstanding Grievances, and Retroactive Monies, for a contract that was signed two-years ago and the system that is currently in place is not working when it comes to paying Operators and the numbers of Operators that received Safety Bonus should be different, because once the Operators attends all the Safety Classes they are eligible for a Safety Bonus and he feels that approximately 300 Operations are eligible for the Safety Bonus and the retroactive payments was a good faith agreement with management (Alex Williams) and he had spoken to Lona Hankins and Gizelle Banks regarding the Retroactive Payments.

In response, Gizelle Banks stated that every Safety Bonus originated from the Operations Department has been paid. Commissioner LeBeouf stated that the Operators are the driving force for the agency and she would like to make it a priority that Operators that have followed all the necessary regulations for the Safety Bonus be paid and get all these payment issues resolved immediately and share all updates with Yolanda Rodriguez. Commissioner Raymond added that the Operators are the front facing Customer Service Representative of the Agency and this Board does care about the Operators.

Shirani Jayasuriya - Ride - stated that with Mardi Gras being so early this year riders had limited time to become accustomed with the new schedules. Some of the riders' feedback was that the schedules are still unreliable and buses are still inconsistency and bus detours for route No.12 are still confusing and signage is need on the routes.

Timothy Curdner - Ride - stated that the detours for Mardi Gras were all wrong and one night he had to walk home Route 91 was not a clear route and for two Sundays there were Second-Lines in the City and the RTA did not communicate the necessary detours.

Loretta Barre -The RTA does not communicate with the passenger regarding detours and nothing is on the app and she has to pay for a Uber to get home. The St. Claude Route only has one bus on the line and is always late and no one is communicating this information to the riding public. The RTA does not need electric buses. The buses are not clean. The RTA need to communicate better with the passengers. The Commissioners do not ride the bus and don't understand the passengers issues. She feels that the Commissioners need to ride the bus.

## **10. Executive Session (2/3RDS VOTE TO Consider)**

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

adjourned

[02.27.24 Board PowerPoint Presentation]

[24-023](#)

BRC Construction Group Report

## **11. Adjournment**

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adjourn the meeting of February 27, 2024. The motion was approved unanimously.

approved