



2817 Canal Street  
New Orleans, LA 70119

## **New Orleans Regional Transit Authority Finance Committee**

### **Meeting Minutes**

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**Thursday, April 8, 2021**

**11:00 AM**

**Virtual**

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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 Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 11:00 am. All efforts will be made to provide for observation and input by members of the public.

1. Call To Order

#### **2. Roll Call**

#### **3. Consideration of Meeting Minutes**

3a. [Meeting Minutes for Finance February 11, 2021]

[21-047](#)

Commissioner Wegner moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to approve the Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2021. Motion was approved unanimously.  
approved

3b. [Meeting Minutes for Finance March 11, 2021]

[21-046](#)

Commissioner Wegner moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to approve the Meeting Minutes of March 11, 2021. The motion was approved unanimously.  
approved

#### **4. Committee Chairman's Report**

Commissioner Raymond reported that people were getting vaccinated, ridership was going up and Sales Tax Revenue was improving.

#### **5. Chief Executive Officer's Report**

Alex Wiggins stated that he was working with staff to make sure that everyone had an opportunity to get vaccinated and surveys were conducted to see the percentage of staff that

was vaccinated. The RTA would like to thank Dr. Herbert for spending a significant amount of his time at the RTA answering employees questions regarding the safety of the vaccine. The RTA was doing everything it could do to encourage the workforce to get vaccinated.

Alex Wiggins stated that staff continues to work on a proposal to return back to full service in June, implement the New Links recommendations in phases and introduce a model to ease the financial burden on our riding passengers by a temporary reeducation in fares and this proposal would also increase ridership.

**6a. [February 2021 Financials]**

**21-049**

Gizelle Banks reported that Ridership - Actual February ridership of 458K underperformed the budget by 12.7% or 142k passengers. Along with 2020 ridership, Pre-COVID ridership from 2019 is also included to illustrate the significant disparity in passengers due to the pandemic.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Operating Cost Per Unlinked Passenger Trip 2021 vs. 2019 (Pre COVID) - The disproportionate reductions in ridership and expenses as a result of the pandemic have more than doubled and even tripled pre-COVID costs per passenger trip.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Ferry - Operating Cost per Unlinked Passenger Trip 2021 vs. 2019 (Pre-COVID) - Similarly, ferry operations has experienced significantly higher operating costs per passenger trip since the onset of the pandemic.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Farebox Recovery Rates - 2021 vs. 2019 (Pre-COVID) - With dramatically fewer boarding's because of the pandemic, fare revenue is offsetting a significantly lower percentage of operating expenses.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Ferry - Farebox Recovery Rates 2021 vs. 2019 (Pre-COVID) - Likewise, ferry ridership has dropped drastically because of the pandemic. Fare revenue is offsetting a significantly lower percentage of operating expenses.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Operating Revenues (Budget, Actual & Prior Year) - The adverse of the COVID-19 pandemic on Operating Revenues is quite apparent in the February 2020-to-current year comparisons. Passenger Fares continue to fall short of projections. Actual City of New Orleans Sales Tax Collections have been received for January. These proceeds exceeded the budget by \$507K.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Operating Revenues (Actual) - Of the \$5.3 Million in Operating Revenues, 78% or \$4.1 Million is derived from General Use Sales Taxes.

In response to Commissioner Raymond, Gizelle Banks stated that the variance from February 2020 to February 2021 for Sales Tax Revenue was \$43%.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Operating Expenses - Labor and Fringe Benefits, the largest expenditure, comprised 79% of this month's actual expenses. The contrast in 2020 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.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Net Revenue (Before and After Government Assistance) Net Revenue (After Government Assistance) totaled (\$2.3 Million) for the month of February. This is largely because there has been no distribution of CARES Act Funding for the month as well as for the year so far.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Capital Expenditures and Debt Service - As result of the bond refinancing in September 2020, Debt Service was dramatically reduced by \$526K from prior year actuals for the month and by \$1.1 Million year-to-date.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Operating Reserve -- To offset the adverse position of Net Revenue (After Government Assistance), approximately \$2.9 Million from Restricted Operating/Capital was used.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Maritime Operations - The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is quite evident with Maritime Operations as well. Passenger fare revenue dropped by 50% when compared to February 2020. In contrast, February 2021 operating expenses fared better when compared to the prior year; there were more major repairs incurred last year. Also, the new vessels were not in operation until October 2020.

In response to Commissioner Wegner, Alex Wiggins reported that staff will implement the New Links Project in phases and the phases that best benefits the riders will be implemented first.

## **7. Infrastructure & Planning Report**

Lona Hankins reported that the SIS Building Flooring was complete and maintenance was being trained on how to care for the floors.

Lona Hankins reported that Shelter Program - five shelters need to be installed around the Hard Rock Location and one shelter will be located around the Ferry Project.

Lona Hankins reported that the Canal Street Ferry Terminal Project - construction was proceeding with the Temporary Berthing Project and materials have been ordered and staff will go out into the field to inspect the work. The demolition of the terminal building and the gangway was taking place.

Lona Hankins reported that the installation of the four Security Arms at the Bienville Street Bus Entrance was complete and staff was working on programming the nodes for automatic access.

Lona Hankins reported that the Riverfront Streetcar Line Track Install and Pole Painting - Thirty-Eight of the Hundred-Eight Poles was painted and phase one was complete and staff was working with the Scheduling Team to see if the Second Phase can begin before July.

Lona Hankins reported that staff was finalizing the Repairs for the Broken Sewer Lines at the Randolph Facilities and the Notice to Proceed would be issued any day now.

Lona Hankins reported that the ENO Exterior Envelope Repair was advertised last week and a couple vendors walked through the site to see the project.

Lona Hankins reported that the Algiers Ferry Terminal Rehabilitation and Modernization - This project was broken into two components and staff was working with the FTA to revise the grant to focus on primarily the building and the building would be used as Administrative Offices. The walkway and the tower will be torn down and when the 2021 grants are available for ferries the RTA will apply to purchase a new Ferry Barge.

Lona Hankins reported that the Napoleon Facility Rehabilitation is currently with the FTA for review and the FTA sent a letter to SHIPO letting them know what stage the RTA was in the process.

Commissioner Raymond stated that the Board did talk about having the Boardroom at the Napoleon Facility.

Commissioner Neal stated that these plans need to be tied back to the facilities plan.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Lona Hankins stated that the building has not been placed on the register but anything over 50 years old was eligible for the register and this building was eligible and no grant money has been looked into for this project.

Commissioner Walton was in favor of using Napoleon as a Boardroom.

Alex Wiggins stated that staff would like to present the Board with different options for the Napoleon Facility and take the Board guides.

Chairman Daniels stated that he would like to make sure that the riders that want to come to the meetings has the proper access.

Lona Hankins reported that the Downtown Loop Pavement Replacement Project was replacing deteriorated asphalt with concrete and staff was working with DPW to finalize the package.

Lona Hankins reported that the Carrollton Double Crossover - When doing the ADA Project staff realized there was a greater opportunity for ADA Compliance so the engineers redesigned the double crossover to allow for better and safer ADA ramps.

Lona Hankins reported that the Recovery from the Hard Rock Hotel Collapse Canal Street Line - This project has been split into two phases and was focusing on the Canal Street Line

first and then the Rampart Streetcar Line. Once available staff will conduct a damage assessment of the Rampart Streetcar Line and some poles will need to be ordered for this project and these lines should return to service by July.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Lona Hankins stated that parts of the Rampart Streetcar Line that staff was able to access was inspected and there are parts of the line that are still not accessible.

Lona Hankins reported that the Installation of New Non-Advertising Bus Shelters - The RTA has a total of \$500,000 that would install 16 bus shelters and staff has identified 42 stops.

Lona Hankins reported that the Katrina/Rita Disaster CDBG and the new Director of Strategic Planning was focusing on working with the French Quarter Management District because they would like to purchase some buses for a circulative route.

Lona Hankins reported that she brought to the CDBG Community about replacing our bus fleet because the RTA was not made whole after Katrina and they like this idea and it could be tied back to Katrina and the RTA meets the National Poverty Standard for this application.

Lona Hankins reported that the State DOTD 5339 this money was offered to the Large Urban in the community and the RTA was using this grant to replace the SUV and the large trucks that are in the RTA fleet.

Lona Hankins reported that the Capital Projects - Grants Opportunities The RTA was going to use the INFRA Grant to build the Downtown Transit Center and FEMA announced a grant for Cyber Security and this grant due on May 12, 2021. The Lo-No Emission grant was being finalized it was due April 12, 2021. The Bus and bus Facilities 5339 was not announced yet but staff was going to ask for money for the Downtown Regional Transfer Center and the Passenger Ferry - 5307 was also not announced yet but staff was going to ask for the Ferry barge for the Algiers Point.

Commissioner Wegner asked staff to not forget about the Gretna Ferry.

Alex Wiggins reported that staff was meeting with the Mayor of Gretna to begin the discussions with the ferry and the biggest challenge will be the operating costs.

In response to Chairman Daniels, Lona Hankins reported that \$500 was set aside for self generated and that another \$585 that would come from the Formula Grant.

Alex Wiggins reported that there was money in the budget for shelters and Lona Hankins was talking above the budget benchmark.

Lona Hankins stated that the 42 shelters would not impact New Links.

Alex Wiggins reported that at the next meeting a detail report will be presented to the Board regarding the bus shelters.

## 8. DBE Report

Keziah Lee reported that the RTA has awarded \$1,836,085 in contracts of that amount \$375,870 was awarded to DBE/SBE Prime Contractors and the total DBE participation was 20%. There were no new contracts awarded with DBE Participation.

Keziah Lee reported that the DBE Consulting Services Project has gone up slightly from 27% to 40% and now there is movement on the Disaster Recovery Grant Management Project at 10%.

Keziah Lee reported that the Repair Broken Sewer Line Project was 100% participation and that project was valued at \$238,795.

Keziah Lee reported on Wednesday, April 7, 2021 the DBE Program held a Webinar so that DBE's can learn more about the RTA's DBE Program. The Webinar included four components on how to become certified as a DBE, Adonis Expose discussed the Procurement process from A-Z and two Project Managers spoke on two up and coming projects the New Orleans East Maintenance Building and the Napoleon Building Project.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Keziah Lee stated that the Canal Street Ferry Project does have DBE participation but the percentage of payment was not enough to document.

In response to Chairman Daniels, Keziah Lee stated that the Canal Street Ferry Project does not have enough DBE participation to register at this point of the contract and a lot of pressure has been put on the main contractor for DBE participation and every week they have to report the DBE participation.

Keziah Lee reported that the DBE Goals of 30.55% was based on the project the 0% was based on the invoices that were paid to DBE's.

Chairman Daniels stated that the 30.55% DBE Participation may sequentially hit later in the construction project and if the contractor is planning on meeting their goals RTA will stop the project.

Commissioner Walton stated that the Canal Street Ferry was a very large contract and that the DBE Goal was set and was achievable and the look of the project for DBE's does not look good.

Alex Wiggins will meet with the contractors and make the RTA's position very clear.

Keziah Lee reported that APC was going to be responsible for meeting 15% of the DBE Goal and they are the joint partner in this project and they lost their DBE Certification about 5 months ago so staff has been working with the contract to help them find and identify areas where they can still meet the 30.55% goal.

## 9. Procurements

### 9a. New Flyer Proprietary Parts

[21-029](#)

Alex Wiggins reported that the bus parts to maintain the new buses was unique to the manufacturer.

Commissioner Wegner moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to approve the New Flyer Proprietary Parts. The motion was carried unanimously.  
approved

Enactment No: 21-021

**9b.** CARES Act Funding [21-032](#)

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Wegner seconded to approve the CARES Act Funding. The motion was approved unanimously.  
approved

Enactment No: 21-022

**9c.** Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire [21-039](#)

Commissioner Wegner moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to approve the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire. The motion was approved unanimously.  
approved

Enactment No: 21-023

**9d.** Resolution to Ratify Purchase of Inventory [21-040](#)

In response to Commissioner Walton, Alex Wiggins reported that these parts on hand was to maintain the bus and streetcar fleet.

Commissioner Wegner moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to ratify the purchase the Inventory from Transdev. The motion was carried unanimously.  
approved

Enactment No: 21-024

**9e.** [Amendment of ADP Contract-Deferral is requested until May 13, 2021 Committee Meeting.] [21-045](#)

Deferred  
approved

## **10. New Business**

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Wegner seconded to add Connecting Communities - NORTA Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Planning Project.  
approved

**10a.** Connecting Communities-NORTA Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Planning Project [21-038](#)

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Wegner seconded approved the Connecting Communities - NORTA Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Planning

Project. The motion was approved unanimously.

approved

## **11. Audience Questions & Comments**

None

## **12. Adjournment**

Commissioner Wegner moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to adjourn the April 8, 2021 meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

adjourned