



2817 Canal Street  
New Orleans, LA 70119

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

### **Meeting Minutes**

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**Thursday, March 11, 2021**

**11:00 AM**

**RTA Board Room**

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

#### **1. Call To Order**

The meeting was called to order at 11:23 a.m.

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

**Present:** Commissioner Mark Raymond, Art Walton, Walt Tillery,  
Mostofa Sarwar and Sharon Wegner

**Absent:**

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

Deferred

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

No Report.

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

Alex Wiggins reported that staff wanted to thank RTA partnership with the City and the State for helping with the welfare of the RTA's employees because about a week ago the Paratransit Operators were prioritized to receive the COVID Vaccine and over 60% of the operators has taken the vaccine and the RTA continues to work with the State for the closed pod vaccine.

Alex Wiggins reported that the employees were taking part in a survey to see who was

vaccinated and who are going to opt out of taking the vaccine.

Alex Wiggins reported that next week the RTA was hosting Iconic Women in Transportation as part of the celebration of Women's History Month. The panelists are three fantastic leaders in transportation one was our very own Lona Hankins, Deputy CEO, of Infrastructure and Planning and the other two panelists are Carolyn Flowers, Managing Principal and Partner, InfraStrategies LLC., and Grace Crunican, Consultant, Crunican, LLC., Retired General Manager of Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART).

Alex Wiggins reported that the region was making great progress and making great trends with the Sales Tax Revenue and the RTA should be up and running fully by the fall and staff was going to bring before the Board was a Restoration Plan that would include the recommendations made in the New Links Plan.

Alex Wiggins reported that he was asking for the Board to allow staff to study how to make the burden light on the riders that use the monthly Passes by a temporary reduction of the monthly transit pass, introducing a low or no cost monthly pass for seniors, introducing a low or no cost monthly pass for the students 18 and younger and the monthly pass will include all travel modes. If this is marketed effectively this would actually increase revenue and ridership by offering a more competitive monthly pass to riders and a Title VI Analysis may need to be done.

Alex Wiggins reported that staff would like to conduct a Fare Structure Analysis and lay the groundwork for Regional Fare Integration with our transit partners as the RTA implement New Links to make sure the riders has a seamlessly ride between the two transit agencies and the streetcar offers the best tour of the city of \$1.25 and that a study should be done to find that correct fare would likely to come before the Board in May with recommendations.

Commissioner Wegner stated that she was interested in the Fare Study and the discounted monthly pass for seniors and the fare reduction for the school kids and tying in an education training program.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Alex Wiggins stated that management has hired some very experienced staff as part of the finance team that have the experience in doing this type of work so I am very confident that this work can be done in-house.

Commissioner Wegner stated that staff should keep in mind the New Links Study.

## **6. Chief Financial Officer's Report**

## **7. Financial Statements - January**

### **7a. [January Financials]**

**21-031**

Gizelle Banks reported the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Operating Revenues was reflected in the prior year-to-current year comparisons. Passenger Fares continue to fall short of projections and highlighting this month's activity, however is the amount by which General Sales Tax Revenues

outperformed the budget - by \$1.3 Million.

Gizelle Banks reported that Operating Revenues of the \$6.9 Million 83% or \$5.7 Million was derived from General Use Sales Tax.

Gizelle Banks Labor and Fringe Benefits is the largest expenditure, comprising 70% of this month's actual expenses. 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 are directly related to the transition from the O&M contractual arrangement with Transdev to 100% in-house operations.

Gizelle Banks Operating Expenses of \$6.8 Million were \$2.8 Million under the budgeted amount of \$9.6 Million for the month of January. The prior year actual totaled \$8.4 Million.

Gizelle Banks reported that the TMSEL Legacy Costs for the month exceeds both the budget and prior year actuals.

Gizelle Banks reported that the Net Revenue reported a positive \$1.3 Million in Net Revenue largely because Operating Revenues kept the pace with Operating Expenses. This was compared with \$713k in CY20. Government Assistance include: Preventative Maintenance, Cares Act funding and State Parish Transportation fund totaled \$1.5 Million for January and the Total Net revenue after Capital Expenditure and Debt Service is \$662,827.

Gizelle Banks reported that the actual ridership slumped by 10.6% or 62K passengers when compared to the budget. The prior year results are pre-COVID as illustrated graphically the drastic difference in ridership.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Gizelle Banks reported that the CARES Act can be used for General Operating Revenue.

## **8. Procurement**

### **8 a. Procurement Status Report**

None

### **8 b. RTA Randolph Building Sewer Repairs**

**[21-013](#)**

Commissioner Wegner moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to approve the RTA Randolph Building Sewer Repairs to Industrial and Mechanical Contract. The motion was passed unanimously.  
approved

**Aye:** Commissioner Raymond, Commissioner Walton,  
Commissioner Tillery, Commissioner Sarwar and  
Commissioner Wegner

**Absent:**

**8 c.** Approval of Routematch Contract

[21-019](#)

Commissioner Wegner moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to approve the Route Match Contract. The Motion was approved unanimously.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Alex Wiggins reported that this was the initial purchase of the software.  
approved

**Aye:** Commissioner Raymond, Commissioner Walton,  
Commissioner Tillery, Commissioner Sarwar and  
Commissioner Wegner

**Absent:**

## **9. New Business**

None

## **10. Audience Questions & Comments**

Valerie Jefferson stated that she would like to thank Commissioner Wegner for speaking up for the Operators and Thomas Stringer did add the operators to the planning committee and there was an issue with an Operator and Robert Hickman did handle the issue.

Alex Posorske stated that the riders was excited about the Fare Study and he would like the RTA to look at other ideas such as Pay-As-You -Go Fares and the RTA need to eliminate transfer fees and also look into eliminating the transfer fees between the RTA and Jefferson Parish.

## **11. Adjournment**

adjourned

**Aye:** Commissioner Raymond, Commissioner Walton,  
Commissioner Tillery, Commissioner Sarwar and  
Commissioner Wegner

**Absent:**