



2817 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority Board of Commissioners

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 27, 2022

10:00 AM

RTA Boardroom, 2nd Floor

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, September 27, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. Please be advised that all meeting participants will be required to wear masks inside the boardroom due to the recent rise of COVID-19 cases in the City of New Orleans and at the RTA.

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: rtaboard@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.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

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

Commissioner Absent: Commissioner Defrancesch

3. Consideration of Meeting Minutes

[Board of Commissioners Meeting - August 23, 2022]

[22-144](#)

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the Meeting Minutes of August 23, 2022. The motion was adopted unanimously. adjourned

4. Reports

A. RTA Chairman's Report

Commissioner Raymond stated that the New Links Routes has begun on the streets of New Orleans.

i. Presentation of Board Resolution to Former Commissioner Laura Bryan

Yolanda Rodriguez read into the record the Resolution of Appreciation for formal Commissioner Laura Bryan.

Commissioner Raymond moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the Resolution of Appreciation for former Commissioner Laura Bryan. The motion was adopted unanimously.

adopted

ii. Introduction of New RTA Commissioner Sunni LeBeouf

The Honorable Tracy Flemings-Davillier swore in new Commissioner Sunni LeBeouf as a RTA Board Commissioner.

iii. Assignment of Committees

Chairman Raymond made the following Committee Appointments:

Operations Committee

Commissioner LeBeouf

Commissioner Ewell

Commissioner Coulon will no longer be a part of the Operations Committee.

B. Operations & Administration Committee Chairman's Report

Commissioner Neal stated that the New Links did roll out and he has received a lot of positive feedback from riders. The riders like the regional connections and RTA plan on building a transit hub downtown.

Commissioner Neal also thanked staff for doing a great job.

C. Finance Committee Chairman's Report

Commissioner Walton welcomed Commissioner LeBeouf to the Board.

Commissioner Walton thanked staff for doing a great job rolling out New Links.

D. Jefferson Parish Report

Commissioner Coulon reported on the following for Jefferson Parish:

Ridership - Increased by 14%

Paratransit - On-Time Performance 86%
The new Elmwood Route started on September 25, 2022

E. RTA General Counsel's Report

Sundiata Haley stated that he would handle his report in Executive Session.

F. RTA Chief Executive Officer's Report

Alex Wiggins reported that the RTA received A+ Positive rating for its Finance Standing.

Alex Wiggins reported that RTA has a staffing problem with operators coming to work to assist in getting the necessary service out staff is using the Extra Board Operators and Supervisors to make service is on the streets.

Alex Wiggins reported that two temporary hubs have been identified for the riders one is in New Orleans East by the New Orleans East Library and the other hub is downtown at the Library.

Alex Wiggins reported on the following:

Bus Network Redesign:

Outreach Continues through 10/1: RTA Staff and 10 paid transit ambassadors

Customer Inquiries:

Increase of calls of riders needing help with their new routes but very few complaints

Media Coverage: WGNO, WWL, WDSU, WBOK, WWNO, Big 970, 97.5 (Hispanic)

Social Media Impressions 9/19 - 9/26: 86,221 people

Other Coverage: Think 504, The New Orleans Agenda

Vulnerabilities:

Operator staffing remains an issue

Supervisor support: 15-Sunday/ 9-Monday

Staff contingency on stand-by

Hurricane Prep:

The RTA will maintain service across all transit modes as long as weather conditions allow us to do so safely.

In the event of a CAE, the RTA will....

Transport evacuees and their pets (those in small and extra-small carriers) from pickup locations to the Smoothie King Center (SKC). Pet buses also be provided for evacuees with large pets. Muzzles and leashes are a

must.

Provide paratransit support for transport of home-bound citizens from their residences to the SKC.

Provide supplemental transport of hotel visitors from the hotel staging centers to MSY, if required.

Operate a limited number of regular bus routes, as resources permit.

Gretna Fest Ferry Service:

RTA to participate in ferry service pilot in partnership with the City of Gretna.

RTA will operate between the Gretna and Canal Street terminals.

Schedule:

Friday 10/7: 4 - 11:30 PM

Saturday 10/8: 11 AM - 11:30 PM

Sunday 10/9: 11AM - 8:30 PM

G. Chief of Staff Legislative Update

Katherine Felton reported on the following:

Meetings with Louisiana Senators Patrick Page Cortez (Budget Committee) and Patrick McMath (Transportation Committee)

Upcoming visit to the Louisiana State Penitentiary with Rep. Troy Carter.

H. Operations Update

Gerard Guter reported that total Ridership for the month of July 2022 was 776K. On-Time Performance for bus was 78% and streetcar was 77%.

Gerard Guter reported that On-Time Performance for Paratransit was 81%.

Gerard Guter reported that Route 45-Lakeview had the highest On-Time Performance with 90% and the route with the lowest On-Time Performance was Route 64 Lake Forest Express 63%.

Gerard Guter reported that 25 of the 34 service routes were affected by Temporary Detours which was 73.5% of the routes, 2 of the 5 streetcars service routes were affected by Temporary Detours which was 40% and 7 of the 38 bus and streetcar service routes were affected by Long Term Detours which was 18.4% of the routes.

Gerard Guter reported that for the month of July RTA delivered 95% of Bus Service and 96% of Streetcar Service.

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Gerard Guter reported that the issue with the Paratransit buses was a manufacture defect with the A/C.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Gerard Guter reported that the vendors are fully aware of the defects.

In response to Commissioner Raymond, Gerard Guter reported that ongoing discussions are taking place with Jefferson Parish to make the necessary improvements with Paratransit.

Commissioner Raymond stated that the goal was to make the trips between parishes cost efficient and easy to navigate.

Commissioner Raymond stated that he would like a report on the RTA Flex Program at the next Operations Committee Meeting.

I. Launch Update (Bus Network Redesign-New Links)

Gerard Guter reported on the success and challenges of the New Links roll out with the following:

Successes:

The schedule upload (Clever) and Rideline (Interactive Voice Response) systems over to New Links with seamless transit tracking and customer service systems.

Sunday morning on-time performance was 84% and Monday morning 94%

Rideline saw increased call numbers with customers primarily seeking new route information.

Outreach teams are assisting riders at major hubs (Main Library, New Orleans East, Wilty Terminal, Gentilly Woods)

Challenges:

Operator staffing challenges: To mitigate impacts supervisors deployed to minimize service disruptions.

Temporary signage is being installed at Main Library Hub and Wilty Hub. Infrastructure working to install temporary signs and Transit Ambassadors are deployed to assist riders during peak hours.

Main library hub is open but due to construction delays, staff has secured staffing, temporary signs, and temporary lighting to ease rider burden.

Gerard Guter reported on the following On-Time Performance since the Implementation of Links:

Sunday On-Time Performance was 84%

Monday On-Time Performance was 94%

Tuesday On Time Performance 88%

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Alex Wiggins stated that the User's Guide documents were published for staff, but more can be printed for the public.

Commissioner Neal would like a report on how many riders were using the new app.

J. Chief Financial Officer's Report

Gizelle Banks reported on - Ridership - as COVID wanes, ridership gradually recovers while service levels remain steady. However, the number of public transit trips taken by riders in July 2022 792K shows a slight decrease of 14K from the previous month of June 2022. Compared to the prior year, ridership in July 2021 was 663K and 401K in July 2020; this shows ridership continues to make a slow but steady recovery.

Gizelle Banks reported on - Farebox Recovery Rates 2022 vs. 2019 (Pre-COVID) - Fare revenue continues to offset a slightly lower percentage of operating expenses as ridership continues to rebound. July's farebox recovery rate decreased slightly from 12.48% in the prior month to 7.27%; a total decrease of 5.2%. The farebox recovery rate for July 2019 (Pre-COVID) was 16.37%.

Gizelle Banks reported on Ferry - Farebox Recovery Rates 2022 vs. 2019 (Pre-COVID) - The decrease in farebox recovery to 8.24% in July from 11.97% in June is a result of decrease in passenger revenue and a slight increase in operating expenses from the prior month.

Gizelle Banks reported on - Operating Revenues (Budget, Actual & Prior Year) - Overall, Operating Revenues display positive results \$9.7M for the month of July when compared to the prior year \$8.3M due to strong Sales Tax Revenues. Passenger Fares for July, fared unfavorably by \$-53K or -6.5% when compared to the budget.

Gizelle Banks reported on - Net Revenue (Before and After Government Assistance) - Net Revenue (Before Government Assistance) is \$(969K) for the month of July. After applying the month's \$2.9M in Government Operating Assistance, Net Revenue ended at \$969K.

Gizelle Banks reported on - Operating Expenses - Operating Expenses for the month of July is roughly \$10.5M. Labor and Fringe Benefits, the largest expenditure at \$6.9M, comprised 56% of this month's actual expenses. In total, Operating Expenses for the month of July show a slight increase from \$8.1M in June.

Gizelle Banks reported on - Operating Reserve - The strong positive variance that resulted from Net Revenue (After Government Assistance of approximately \$2.9M) added \$702K to Restricted Operating/Capital Reserve after the offset of \$291K in Debt Service.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Gizelle Banks reported that the RTA was currently over budget on the Canal Street Ferry Terminal Project by \$4 Million.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Gizelle Banks stated the staff was working on the 5 Year Capital Plan.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Alex Wiggins reported that ridership across the country was still low due to COVID and transit agencies are lobbying the Federal Government for more federal aid.

[July 2022 Financials]

[22-143](#)

5. Procurement Items

A. Authorizations

Switch Points/Tongues

[22-066](#)

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Lona Hankins reported that the correct amount was \$376,772.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Lona Hankins reported that the quantity did not change the dollar amount was wrong in the report.

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the Switch Points/Tongues. Resolution No 22-069 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 22-069

RTA Work Policies New and Amended

[22-135](#)

In response to Commissioner Raymond, Darwin Anderson reported that these policies apply to all Safety Sensitive Employees.

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Alex Wiggins reported that .04 was the level that employees will be considered impaired and taken out of service. The federal government was modifying the DOT testing by using breath and swapping samples.

Alex Wiggins reported that this policy was given the employees an opportunity for treatment.

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Alex Wiggins reported that no exceptions will be giving for the use of Cannabis per the guidelines of DOT.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Alex Wiggins reported that the RTA was going to use the Second Chance Rule if you are randomly tested.

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Ewell seconded to adopt the RTA Work Policies New and Amended. Resolution No. 22-070 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 22-071

Fare Policy

[22-137](#)

Jack Duffy reported on the following:

Fare Policy Goals

Clarifies existing practice and connects to relevant policies Define RTA's responsibility to riders in fare-related decisions

Identifies internal reporting to support long-term fare decision making

Technology-agnostic policy

Major Changes

Identifies eight objectives for the agency in fare-related decisions

Updates names of rider discount categories (Adult, Priority Rider, Youth)

Criteria for each category largely the same

Identifies fare-free days and defines RTA ability to set promotional fares

Streamlines bulk discounts, introduces University Pass

New Procedures

Commits RTA to producing an Annual Fare Report to the Board of Commissioners

Commits RTA to completing a Fare Structure Review every two years (counting January 2022 review as the first)

Outlines procedures for RTA to change fare structure and/or fare pricing

In response to Commissioner Neal Alex Wiggins reported that Executive Staff will look for the Board for directions when "Free Fare" is being considered.

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Alex Wiggins reported that currently the RTA is offering Free Fares with the rollout of New Links for four days.

Alex Wiggins reported that the protocol for "Free Fares" is getting Board approval first and then go before the City Council.

Commissioner Neal stated that the passes do include the fare for the ferries.

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to adopt the Fare Policy. Resolution No. 22-071 was approved unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 22-071

RTA "Pink Tax" Exemption

[22-138](#)

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner LeBeouf seconded to adopt the RTA "Pink Tax" Exemption. Resolution 22-072 was adopted unanimously.

Enactment No: 22-072

FY 2022 All Stations Accessibility Program Grant
Application

[22-139](#)

In response to Commissioner Walton, Lona Hankins reported that the Grants funds applied for was for a study on St. Charles Street.

Commissioner Coulon moved, and Commissioner Walton seconded to adopt the FY2022 All Stations Accessibility Program Grant Application. Resolution No. 22-073 was adopted unanimously.
adopted

Enactment No: 22-073

B. Amendments

Office Space Planning

[22-129](#)

In response to Commissioner Neal, Lona Hankins reported that accessibility space will be considered in the Space Planning.

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to adopt Office Space Planning. Resolution No. 22-074 was adopted unanimously.
adopted

Enactment No: 22-074

Fleet Unleaded Gasoline Fuel Card Services

[22-134](#)

Commissioner Ewell moved and Commissioner Coulon seconded to adopt the Fleet Unleaded Gasoline Fuel Card Services. Resolution No. 22-075 was adopted unanimously.
adopted

Enactment No: 22-075

Security Vehicle Amendment

[22-140](#)

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Lona Hankins stated that the vehicles will still be Ford vehicles.

Commissioner Coulon stated that it was not unusually for a City to have a State Contract with a vendor that the State of Louisiana does not have.

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to adopt Security Vehicle Amendment. Resolution No. 22-076 was adopted unanimously.
adopted

Enactment No: 22-076

Non-Revenue Support Vehicles

[22-141](#)

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to adopt the Non-Revenue Support Vehicles. Resolution No. 22-077 was adopted unanimously.
adopted

Enactment No: 22-077

C. Ratifications:

New Links Title VI Analysis

[22-142](#)

Vivek shah reported on the following:

Policy document required by FTA and updated every three years

Contains Service and Fare Equity Analysis Policy:

- Ensures that Major Service Changes do not intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against minority or low-income populations

For Major Service Changes, RTA will

- Determine the benefits to and potential negative impacts on minority and low-income populations;

- Quantify expected effects (positive or negative); and

Determine the appropriate course of action to prevent, minimize or mitigate the impacts as warranted

Major Service Change (Triggers analysis)

- Any change of more than 25% of the revenue hours or route miles on a given transit route

- Any change to the span of service on a given transit route (bus or streetcar) of 2 hours or more

- The introduction of any new transit route

- The discontinuation of a route or portion of a route with no alternative service within ¼ mile.

Disparate Impact (applies to minority populations)

- If the population bearing an adverse effect has a higher minority percentage than the service area as a whole, then the change will be deemed to have a disparate impact.

Disproportionate Burden (applies to low-income populations)

- If the population bearing an adverse effect has a higher percentage of persons in poverty than the service area as a whole, then the change will be deemed to have a disproportionate burden.

Equity based decision process

- Extensive public outreach (100+ meetings, rider surveys, stakeholder outreach)

- Improve service for those who need it

- Right-size streetcar service to pay for bus improvements

More frequent service on major routes and corridors

- Reduce redundancy and overlap

- Restructure low ridership routes

Increased cross-parish connections

Restructured neighborhood service
New regional transfer hubs
Increased neighborhood / local service.

Increased overnight service.

Increased share of **residents** are within ½ mile walk of **frequent transit** coming every 20 minutes or less

19% in February 2020

38% in New Links network

Increased share of **regional jobs** are within ½ mile of **frequent transit** coming every 20 minutes or less

35% in February 2020

60% in New Links Network

Increased share of low-income residents, households without access to a car, and residents of color with access to a bus or streetcar coming every 20 minutes or less:

65% of households without access to a car would have access to frequent transit

Existing: 35%

45% of residents of color would have access to frequent transit

Existing: 21%

47% of residents in poverty would have access to frequent transit

Existing: 23%

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Ewell seconded to adopt New Links Title VI Analysis. Resolution No. 22-078 was adopted unanimously.
adopted

6. New Business (UNANIMOUS VOTE REQUIRED TO CONSIDER)

None

7. Audience Questions and Comments

PLEASE NOTE: Persons wishing to speak must complete and submit a slip.

Alan Drake stated that everyone should receive the new booster shots that has been approved by the FDA and RTA should give a cash bonus to any employee that receives the new booster.

William Hamilton stated that the New App does not have GPS and he rely heavily on the GPS.

William Hamilton stated that he was concerned with the new route for the No 11 Magazine. He stated that a lot of people work in the French Quarter that would need to use the Magazine Bus and this route was the best bus route in the system and currently he now has to take 3 buses to get to LSU. The changes have no logic.

Commissioner Raymond stated that staff was working on the app to get the GPS function working.

Commissioner LeBeouf thanked the Commissioners and the staff and was glad to work with the RTA staff and Commissioners.

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

adopted

Amalgamated Transit Union, et al v. New Orleans Regional Transit Authority, et al No.: 21-CV-1790

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to go into Executive Session regarding:

Amalgamated Transit Union, et al v. New Orleans Regional Transit Authority

The motion was adopted unanimously..

9. Adjournment

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adjourn the Board Meeting of September 27, 2022. The motion was approved unanimously.