



2817 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority Board of Commissioners

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

10:00 AM

RTA Board Room

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, May 28, 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: 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.

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 (rtaboard@rtaforward.org).

1. Call to Order

3. Consideration of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Daniels moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to approve the Board Meeting Minutes from May 23, 2024. The motion was approved unanimously.

approved

[Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes - April 23, 2024]

[24-046](#)

4. Reports

A. RTA Chairman's Report

No Report.

B. Operations & Administration Committee Chairman's Report

Commissioner Neal stated that at the Operations and Administration Commissioner Meeting staff reported on the May 19, 2024, Route Changes.

C. Finance Committee Chairman's Report

Commissioner Walton stated that the Finance Committee did review the Finance Agenda Items but did not take any actions.

D. Jefferson Parish Report

Commissioner Cisco stated that Jefferson Parish held its ribbon cutting for the new East Bank Bus Facility on David Dr. and this is the first designated transit building on the East Bank for Jefferson Parish.

E. RTA General Counsel's Report

Sundiata Hailey stated that he was going to give his report in the Executive Session.

F. RTA Chief Executive Officer's Report

Lona Hankins presented the Employee of the Month - April
Kim Jones - Bus Operator
Benoit Tolbert - Electrician

Lona Hankins reported that the RTA participated in the 16th Annual Hurricane Preparedness meeting and the riders were told at the meeting to report to the nearest bus stop and the RTA will transport all riders to the Smoothie King Center.

Lona Hankins reported that the Rampart Streetcar was up and running.

Lona Hankins reported that the bus stop signs are in the final stage of the Procurement Process.

Lona Hankins reported that the RTA needs to create interest in working at the agency at an early age, so the RTA is partnering with Youth Force NOLA and will have interns and teachers working this summer. The teachers will learn the diversity that is needed in the transit industry and staff will also partner with STEM to have an all-day learning session with its students.

Lona Hankins reported that the RTA received from the Federal Government \$5.5 Million which will allow the RTA to build out the accessibility transit stops needed along the St. Charles Streetcar Line. This project will take about 3 years to complete.

Lona Hankins reported that the Shelter Installation Project was coming to an end and maintenance staff has started visiting the bus manufacturer to conduct inspections.

G. Chief of Staff Legislative Update

Lona Hankins reported that the Governor signed Rep Bayham Bill that straighten the penalties for operators assault and Rep Boyd HB544 was also on the Governor's desk for signature.

In response to Commissioner Daniels, Lona Hankins reported that staff was going to install Bus Stop Signs in a two-phase approach. The first vendor that was awarded the contract for Bus Stop signs could not handle the RTA's request. The first phase of the signs will be mylar stickers that have the reflected tape, this will be used to reinstall the existing signs. The second phase is a standard uniformed sign.

In response to Commissioner Daniels, Lona Hankins reported that a communication strategy will be developed and presented to the Board at the Operations and Administration Meeting and with Board approval will be distributed to the public.

In response to Commissioner Daniels, Lona Hankins reported that the RTA has to follow the FTA regular standard practices when it comes to receiving the money for the \$5.5 Million for the Accessibility Grant. The RTA will have to work with the City for the Design Phase and the Construction Period will take approximately 2 1/2 years. The RTA has to receive pre-award authority from the FTA to get reimbursed for any monies spent before award authority.

Commissioner Daniels ask that staff put together a timeline for the Accessibility Grant Project.

In response to Commissioner Sams, Lona Hankins reported that the staff has put together a master schedule for all Capital Improvements Projects that she can distribute to the Board and to Commissioner Neal's point the Accessibility Project may be included in the 5 Year Capital Plan.

Commissioner Neal stated that he would like staff to look into all the new technology that is now available for Bus Stops.

H. Operations Update

Justin Cayless gave the Chief Transit Officer's Report. This report can be found in the Board Meeting PowerPoint dated May 28, 2024.

Commissioner Neal would like to learn more about the power issues regarding the St. Charles Streetcar at the Operations and Administration Committee Meeting.

Justin Cayless reported that staff was going to report holistically on Paratransit Service.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Justin Cayless reported that the Paratransit System was set-up different from fixed route. Paratransit has a 30- minute window for pick-up and drop-off and the detours do not impact Paratransit like it does with

fixed-route.

Commissioner Daniels would like to know the industry standards for On-Time Performance and the RTA's baseline for On-Time Performance and when does the RTA anticipate hitting its On-Time Performance. The RTA need to make a commitment to the public regarding On-Time Performance, explain to the public how the RTA was going to accomplish such a thing, what are the RTA's barriers, what the RTA does not have money to accomplish and, what are the hiring timelines.

Commissioner Daniels stated that he was frustrated with the complaints that he receives from the riding public. He stated that he wanted to make things easy for the public to understand.

Commissioner Walton stated that staff should start collecting this data now before the new buses arrive.

Lona Hankins reported that the new buses will be available for the Fall Schedules. Commissioner Walton would like the public to know when the new buses' arrive, the new buses will bring about new expectations for the RTA and these expectations should be explained to the public.

Commissioner Sams stated that Route 66 (Hayne) has had On-Time Performance issues from the bridge on this route and this should be explained to the public so when the new buses arrive the public will understand that the new buses will not change the On-Time Performance for that route.

I. RTA Chief Financial Officer's Report

Gizelle Banks gave the Chief Financial Officer's Report. This report can be found in the Board Meeting PowerPoint dated May 28, 2024.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Gizelle Banks reported that the Maritime Insurance has had a slight increase from last year.

Gizelle Banks reported that the RTA was using the ARPA Funds to pay for the purchase of the new buses. The RTA has until January, 2026 to use all of these funds.

Commissioner Daniels asked that staff present to the Finance Committee the Investment Policy, and he would also like to see the Long Term Financial Forecast. Gizelle Banks reported that staff presented to the Board a 5-Year Projection that included the Capital Plan.

5. Authorizations

Algiers Ferry Barges Replacement Project

[23-219](#)

In response to Commissioner Walton, Lona Hankins reported that this is to replace the Landing Barge, and design them that they are common and can be

used anywhere in the system. The Ferry Terminal Building on the Algiers Side design will assist with how the Ferries are fueled.

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Daniels seconded to adopt the Algiers Ferry barges Replacement Project. Resolution No. 24-017 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 24-017

FY 2024 Dell Marketing LP - Desktop Computer Replacement [24-014](#)

Commissioner Daniels moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to adopt the FY 2024 Dell Marketing LP-Desktop Computer Replacement. Resolution No. 24-018 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 24-018

Purchase Para/Support Vehicle Wrecker [24-015](#)

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Daniels seconded the Purchase Para/Support Vehicles Wrecker. Resolution No. 24-019 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 24-019

Canal Streetcar Axle Repairs [24-030](#)

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Sams seconded to adopt the Canal Streetcar Axle Repairs. Resolution No. 24-020 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 24-020

Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Drydocking & Maintenance [24-036](#)

In response to Commissioner Walton, Ronald Baptiste reported that this Drydock was mandated by the Coast Guard which requires the RTA to take the vessels out of service every five years for a service inspection.

In response to Commissioner Daniels, Lona Hankins reported that the money used to pay for these services come from Operating Revenues that the RTA receives from the State. The Thomas Jefferson vessel was built in the 40's. The Levy Vessel will cost \$6 Million to Drydock due to all the lead on the boat. The RTA will be able to apply for Capital Outlay Money and Federal Funding for the repairs.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Lona Hankins reported that she needs to check on the Life Expectancy of a ferry vessel. Commissioner Walton would like to present to the public the cost to repair a vessel vs. replacing a vessel so they can be aware of the cost.

Commissioner Daniels moved and Commissioner Cisco seconded to adopt the Thomas Jefferson (TJ) Drydocking & Maintenance. Resolution No. 24-021 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 24-021

Various RTA Insurance Coverages 2024-2025

[24-038](#)

In response to Commissioner Neal, Mark Major reported that the RTA will get reimbursed for the falling catenary on the Rampart Streetcar from the lawsuit that was field by General Counsel against the Hardrock Hotel. The RTA used insurance proceeds to cover the cost incurred to meet the May 19, 2024, deadline to get the streetcars up and running.

In reply to Commissioner Walton, Mark Major reported that New Orleans needs to have a name event storm to use the Parametric Insurance. The renewal of this policy next year will line up with the other polices on the June 2025 renewal.

Commissioner Daniels moved and Commissioner Sams seconded to adopt the Various RTA Insurance Coverages 2024--2025. Resolution No. 24-022 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 24-022

6. Amendments

Amendment 10 to the CEA between DOTD and RTA to revise Exhibit K

[24-031](#)

In response to Commissioner Daniels, Lona Hankins reported that for FY2024 the RTA has the necessary money for the Ferry.

In response to Commissioner Neal, Sundiata Haley stated that the RTA has a 60 Year CEA with the State, when the RTA accepted the additional money for the ferry terminal the CEA was amended for 60 Years.

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Daniels seconded to adopt Amendment 10 to the CEA between DOTD and RTA to revise Exhibit K. Resolution No. 24-023 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 24-023

Authorization to Extend Transit Security Month-to-Month Services with Security Experts and Leaders (SEAL)

[24-033](#)

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Daniels seconded to defer the Authorization to Extend Transit Security Month-to-Month Services with Security Experts and Leaders (SEAL). This motion was approved unanimously.

tabled

Enactment No: 24-036

Addendum that is continuing in form and substance of the Third-Party Administrator ("TPA") Contract with Hammerman and Gainer, Inc. ("HGI")

[24-039](#)

In response to Commissioner Daniels, Mark Major reported that the total amount of the contract was \$487,875. He also asked that he receive a report on how much the RTA pays for settlements. Sundiata Haley stated that currently an audit is being conducted on the Legal Settlements and the reports can be sent to the Board.

Commissioner Daniels moved and Commissioner Sams seconded to adopt the Addendum that is continuing in form and substance of the Third-Party Administrator ("TPA"). Resolution No. 24-024 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Enactment No: 24-024

7. New Business (UNANIMOUS VOTE REQUIRED TO CONSIDER)

Commissioner Daniels moved and Commissioner Neal seconded to add House Bill 760 and House Bill 544 to Executive Session.

The Acting Chair opened the floor for public comments from the audience regarding House Bill 760 and 544 being added to Executive Session.

There were no public comments.

approved

8. Audience Questions and Comments

Bela Trujillo and Lola - Both are Ride New Orleans Youth Ambassadors and they both ride transit every day and they can't wait to work with the RTA in making sure the needs of the youth or met. Commissioner Walton thanked them for their public service.

Jim Goodwin - A public meeting was held on the Algiers Terminal and he would like to know when the Boarding and Accessibility will be discussed. Also, there is a bus shelter that is not being used because the bus no longer stop at that corner of Verrette and Opelousas and it would be great if it can be moved to another stop.

Kory Dupree - He asked if the RTA has a grant for security for the operators. One of the operators was beaten, one was punched in the face and another operator was spit on. The operators need to be protected they are the backbone of the agency, but the agency doesn't have any urgency to protect the operators. House Bill 125 was passed in the Legislation that would give a stiffer penalty to anyone that would assault an operator.

Commissioner Daniels stated that he would like to work with staff to help with violence prevention and the Board does care about the operators safety while working on the vehicles and he would like to work with Kory Dupree and the union to discuss safety issues.

Kory Dupree stated that he and the operators thought that the buses would be in for the summer pick, but now they will be in for the fall pick so he is looking for clarity on how the buses will be distributed on the routes once they arrive. Lona Hankins reported that the buses will start arriving in June and all through the summer and will not be put in service until the fall and she is not sure if the schedules will be adjusted to increase frequency or maintain at the current schedule. Commissioner Daniels asked that Lona Hankins and Kory Dupree work together on this issue.

Commissioner Walton stated that the RTA do a disservice when we give a specific date, because the buses are still being assembled. He stated that an outline should be given to the public instead of a concrete date because there are still supply chain issues.

Joshua Guss - He stated that on the 86 Bus Route there is only one bus and that bus keeps breaking down and he has to wait an hour for another bus and during the summer there should be 2 buses on that route.

Devon White - He stated that his arbitration case was settled in March, and nothing has been done and by law the RTA should have paid him within 10 days and it has been 60 days and nothing has been done regarding his money or his job.

Valerie Jefferson - She read a letter into the Board record. She stated that the company and the union should have monthly meetings to handle matters internally and not at public meetings.

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

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

Commissioner Neal moved and Commissioner Daniels seconded to come out of Executive Session. The motion was approved unanimously.
approved

O.E. By and Through His Parents versus New Orleans Regional Transit Authority
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana
No.: 2023-2578, Section: "G" - 4

Ernest N. Morial Convention Center versus New Orleans Regional Transit Authority
Civil District Court for the Parish of Orleans
No.: 2021-04470, Div. "J" - 15

BRC Construction Group, LLC versus New Orleans Regional Transit Authority
Civil District Court for the Parish of Orleans
No.: 2024-0335, Div. "F"- 5

[05.28.24 Board Meeting PowerPoint Presentation]

[24-052](#)

10. Adjournment

Commissioner Cisco moved and Commissioner Richard seconded to adjourn the Board Meeting of May 28, 2024. The motion was approved unanimously.

adjourned