



2817 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority Board of Commissioners

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 26, 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, November 26, 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

2. RTA Chairman's Report

A. Swearing in of Commissioners

Judge Chase swore in Commissioner Louis Colin and Mitchell Guidry to the Board of Commissioners.

B. Election of Officers

Commissioner Daniels moved and Commissioner Colin seconded to approve Fred Neal as the Regional Transit Authority Board Chairman. The motion was adopted unanimously.

C. Assignment of Committees

The following are the Committee Assignments:

Executive Committee:

Commissioner Walton, Chair
Commissioner Daniels
Commissioner Neal

Operations and Administration Committee:

Commissioner Sams, Chair
Commissioner Guidry
Commissioner Daniels

Finance Committee:

Commissioner Walton, Chair
Commissioner Colin
Commissioner Daniels

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Colin seconded to approve the Committee Assignments. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Commissioner Colin, Commissioner Daniels, Commissioner Guidry, Commissioner Neal, Commissioner Walton

Commissioner Absent: Commissioner Sams

4. Consideration of Meeting Minutes (08/08/24)

Commissioner Daniels moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to approve the Minutes of August 8, 2024. The motion was approved unanimously.

approved

[Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes - August 8, 2024]

[24-124](#)

5. Reports

A. Operations & Administration Committee Chairman's Report

No Report.

B. Finance Committee Chairman's Report

No Report.

C. RTA Board Counsel's Report

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

D. RTA Chief Executive Officer's Report

Lona Hankins reported that she was glad to have the Board's expertise and vision at this pivotal time in transit. She stated that the RTA was committed to delivering reliable innovative and exclusive services that empower our residents, local business and enhances the quality of life.

Employee of the Month and Quarter

Angelique Simon - Operations - Lift

Davis Jones - Maintenance - Statistical Clerk

Kevin Severin - Administrative

Calvin Hayward - Operations

Brian Lala - Maintenance

Lona Hankins reported that the RTA has received 9 of the 13 New Paratransit Vehicles, 12 New Non-revenue and Pool Vehicles and 29 New fixed route buses (15 of them hybrid) are currently in service.

Lona Hankins reported that if a bus stop sign had a pole, it received a new bus stop sign.

Lona Hankins reported that the RTA held a total of 6 Community Meetings regarding the Algiers Ferry Terminal Renovation Project. The next step is the procurement process which begins in December and construction will begin in Spring 2025.

Lona Hankins reported that the RTA gave Free Rides for Early Voting on Saturdays, Election Day and Congressional General Election.

Lona Hankins reported that she is working with the Super Bowl Committee. Also, the RTA has a program called RTA LEAD-Cohort 2 and a Apprenticeship Program.

Lona Hankins reported that the RTA was paying attention to the Federal Priorities and preparing for the Triennial Review that will take place in 2025. The RTA did receive \$3Million from the City of New Orleans for the Ferry and received a request from Congressman Carter to rename the Algiers Ferry Terminal.

Commissioner Neal asked that staff set-up a tour of the Streetcar Barn for the new Commissioners.

In response to Commissioner Colin, Lona Hankins reported that there should be a minimal impact to the riders during construction of the Ferry Terminal

Lona Hankins reported that Adonis Expose' has been keeping the DBEs informed regarding the construction side of the project for the Ferry Terminal and regarding the

vendors the RTA was trying to work out a space plan for the vendors and develop a process on how vendors would be selected.

Commissioner Daniels stated that the RTA could improve the On-Time Performance with the purchase of new vehicles and these vehicles were purchased with Federal and State funding.

In response to Commissioner Guidry, Lona Hankins reported that the Operations Department reports directly to her.

E. Chief Transit Officer's Report

Lona Hankins gave the Chief Transit Officer's Report. This report can be found in the Board of Commissioners PowerPoint Presentation dated Tuesday, November 26, 2024.

In response to Commissioner Walton, Lona Hankins reported that the Hayne Loop service has improved.

Commissioner Guidry stated that the Automatic Passenger Count System (APC's) was used for the NTD report. The APC's count passengers do not count revenue. Passenger counts should be used from the Genfare Fareboxes (GFI Fareboxes). These fareboxes can count revenue, passenger count and transfers and with this information the RTA can better serve the passengers. He stated that the RTA pays a lot of money to purchase the GFI fareboxes and all new vehicles came with GFI Fareboxes.

Commissioner Neal asked that staff do a report on the difference of the GFI Farebox and APC's.

In response to Commissioner Colin, Lona Hankins reported that the Employees of the Month are celebrated with a plaque.

In response to Commissioner Colin, Lona Hankins reported that the RTA has a Training Department that train operators.

F. RTA Chief Financial Officer's Report

Gizelle Banks gave the RTA Chief Financial Officer's Report. This report can be found in the Board of Commissioners PowerPoint Report dated November 26, 2024.

In response to Commissioner Daniels, Gizelle Banks reported that the City of New Orleans reported that in 2024 Sales Tax would slow up and the RTA are seeing that trend and in 2025 there would be a decrease in Sales Tax.

Commissioner Daniels stated that the RTA should be looking into a revenue stream for the ferry.

G. Presentation of the CY2025 Draft Operating Budget

Gizelle Banks reported on the CY2025 Draft Operating Budget. The report can be found in the Board of Commissioners PowerPoint dated November 26, 2024.

Commissioner Walton stated that the RTA needs to start solving some of RTA financial issues at the State Level. Inflation will have an impact on the RTA.

Commissioner Daniel stated that the RTA should be using local dollars as much as possible to drive service and staff has done a great job matching Capital Projects that would advance On-Time Performance.

In response to Commissioner Daniels, Gizelle Banks does not have any concerns with the ARPA funding being taken back by the Federal Government. This money has been appropriated to the RTA.

Commissioner Daniels stated that the RTA does not have the necessary budget to give the passenger what they deserve and he would like to have a more in-depth conversation with staff.

Gizelle Banks reported that the next steps regarding the Budget, on December 6, 2024, the RTA will hold a Public Hearing on the Budget and another presentation will be made at the December Finance Committee Meeting and ask for adoption at the full Board.

6. Ratifications

adopted

Award Contract for Interim Transfer Hubs Phase 2 Construction

[24-083](#)

In response to Commissioner Walton, Lona Hankins stated that timeline would be January 2025 for the downtown portion and the remaining of the project will be finished in the spring of 2025.

Commissioner Daniels moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to Award a Contract for Interim Transfer Hubs Phase 2 Construction. Resolution 24-049 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) Between the City of Gretna and the Regional Transit Authority (RTA)

[24-090](#)

Commissioner Colin moved and Commissioner Guidry seconded to approve the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) Between the City of Gretna and the Regional Transit Authority (RTA). Resolution No. 24-050 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Fare-free Transit on Early Voting Saturdays for 2024 Election [24-103](#)

Commissioner Neal stated that this was a great program for the RTA.

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Guidry seconded to adopt the Fare-free Transit on Early Voting Saturdays for 2024 Election. Resolution 24-051 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Change Order Request: Thomas Jefferson's (TJ) Drydock and Maintenance Contract [24-108](#)

In response to Commissioner Daniels, Lona Hankins stated that the State owns the ferries, the RTA has the use of the ferries. The Levy and the Armature was returned to the State

In response to Commissioner Colin, Sundiata Haley stated that the amended CEA goes for 60 years.

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Daniels seconded to adopt the Change Order Request: Thomas Jefferson's (TJ) Drydock and Maintenance Contract. Resolution No. 24-052 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

7. Authorizations

Janitorial Services Permanent Contract-EDS [24-080](#)

Lona Hankins stated that this would be a one-year pilot program under the State Contract.

Wayne August stated that he was asking the Board to reconsider awarding this Contract. He stated that Janitorial Contracts were set aside for DBE's and a great opportunity for locally own minority business. The RTA has received negative press for the management of No Bid Contracts and has RTA put in the necessary safeguards to manage a No Bid Contract such as this.

Wayne August stated that it seems as if no committee has vented EDS to see what type of services they will provide to the RTA and their contract amount was higher than some of the local vendors for the same services. Also, EDS is located in Baton Rouge and his company was a local company.

Lona Hankins reported that the previous vendor quit and an RFP was issued for a temporary janitorial contract and every time this contract was rebid there was some type of protest, so the state was looked at for a contract.

Commissioner Walton stated that this agenda item comes before the Finance Committee, December 12, 2024.

Lona Hankins stated that another change order will be issued to the vendor for another month.

In response to Commissioner Colin, Lona Hankins stated that there was nothing wrong with the current vendor.

Commissioner Daniels stated that the RTA has the capacity to manage a No Bid Contract and it is a frequent practice to use State Contracts, and the RTA also has a commitment to local businesses.

Commissioner Neal stated that the DBE Report would show RTA commitment to local DBE businesses.

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Colin seconded to defer the Janitorial Services Permanent Contract-EDS. The motion was approved unanimously.

Heritage Crystal Clean, LLC Contract Award

[24-087](#)

Commissioner Walton stated that this is not a new service for the RTA.

Commissioner Daniels moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to adopt the Heritage Crystal Clean, LLC Contract Award. Resolution No. 24-053 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

RTA Clever Devices Maintenance Agreement

[24-097](#)

In response to Commissioner Daniels, Lona Hankins reported that she was satisfied with the Clever services.

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Colin seconded to adopt the RTA Clever Devices Maintenance Agreement. Resolution No. 24-054 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

FY2021 Low-No Emissions Bus Program

[24-089](#)

Commissioners Walton moved and Commissioner Daniels seconded to adopt the FY2021 Low-No Emissions Bus Program. Resolution No. 24-055 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Canal Bus Wash Replacement[24-109](#)

In response to Commissioner Walton, Lona Hankins reported that once the Board approves this item, a formal letter will be sent to the previous vendor.

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Colin seconded the Canal Bus Wash. Resolution No. 24-056 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Canal Streetcar HVAC Replacement[24-111](#)

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Daniels seconded to adopt the Canal Streetcar HVAC Replacement. Resolution 24-057 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

8. Amendments**ADS System Safety Consulting, LLC Contract Extension**[24-085](#)

In response to Commissioner Walton, Lona Hankins reported that the original contract was for 3 years with 2 additional year options.

Commissioner Walton moved and Commissioner Daniels seconded to adopt the ADS System Safety Consulting, LLC. Contract Extension. Resolution No. 24-058 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

Amend Contract for Transit Shelter Advertising and Maintenance[24-099](#)

Lona Hankins reported that this contract will cover all the shelters located downtown.

Commissioner Daniels moved and Commissioner Colin seconded to adopt to Amend the Contract for Transit Shelter Advertising and Maintenance. Resolution No. 24-059 was adopted unanimously.

adopted

9. New Business (UNANIMOUS VOTE REQUIRED TO CONSIDER)

None.

10. Audience Questions and Comments

Alan Drake - The RTA need to purchase 35 ft buses because they last longer, and the operating cost is much less. The RTA needs to conduct a survey on the Chalmette Ferry to see how many passengers are from New Orleans and how many are from other regions to

see if the RTA can get funding from other sources.

Alan Drake - There are times that the GFI fareboxes do not work so the RTA should have a dual count system.

Lola Raymond - A meeting was held for the Opportunity Youth Pass, and it was very successful. Unfortunately, operators are still passing up passengers at bus stops.

Willie Simms - The riders has lost faith in the RTA and does the RTA understand its customers. Are the RTA running the service needed for the passengers. Morale is at an all-time low. If the RTA put the one-cent sale tax back on the ballet it would fail because people don't have faith in the RTA. The RTA is in a crisis and needs to change their service.

Commissioner Daniels would like staff to meet and talk to Mr. Simms regarding his recommendations to make the agency better.

Valerie Jefferson - Congratulated the Board of Commissioners on a Job Well Done

Shirani Jayasuriya - Riders need better communications and transparency with the RTA. RIDE has been asking the RTA for its official communications for riders' delays.

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

Commissioner Daniels moved and Commissioner Walton seconded to go into Executive Session the motion was approved unanimously.

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

approved

- Ernest N. Morial Exhibition Hall Authority versus Regional Transit Authority
Civil District Court No 2021-04470, Division "J-15"
- Dwight Dabney versus TMSEL, et al
Civil District Court No 02-00704, Division "G"
- BRC Construction Group, LLC versus New Orleans Regional Transit Authority,
Civil District Court for the Parish of Orleans No.: 2024-0335, Division "F"- 5
- 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

12. Adjournment

Commissioner Daniels moved and Commissioner Guidry seconded to adjourn the Board Meeting of November 26, 2024. The motion was approved unanimously.

[11.26.24 Board Meeting Presentation Slides]

[24-131](#)