



2817 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

New Orleans Regional Transit Authority Operations & Administration Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 14, 2022

9:00 AM

Virtual

The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority's Board of Commissioners hereby certifies that it will convene a meeting on Thursday, July 14, 2022 electronically via Zoom in accordance with the provisions of La. R.S. 42:17.1(A)(2)(a)-(c).

1. Call To Order

2. Roll Call

Commissioner Present: Commissioner Neal, Commissioner Bryan, Commissioner Coulon and Commissioner DeFrancesch

Other Members Present: Commissioner Ewell

3. Consideration of Meeting Minutes (June 9, 2022)

[O&A Minutes - June 9, 2022]

[22-107](#)

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner Bryan seconded to approve the minutes from June 9, 2022. The motion was approved unanimously.

approved

4. Committee Chairman's Report

Commissioner Neal stated that during the month of July RAC did not have a Meeting and the August RAC meeting will be held in the RTA Board Room and discuss New Links.

5. Chief Executive Officer's Report

Alex Wiggins reported that the RTA went through two audits the Financial Audit and the Triennial Review. The agency only had one finding on the Triennial Review.

Alex Wiggins reported that the agency was still having issues regarding staffing with the operators related to COVID and at present there are 27 staff members with COVID. Due to

the positive COVID cases the mask mandate was implemented inside the building.

Commissioner Coulon stated that he would like to continue zoom meetings to be on the safe side.

Commissioner DeFrancesch stated that this strain of COVID was not as dangerous as it was before.

6. Chief Operations Officer's Report

Gerard Guter reported that Total Ridership for May 2022 was 853,000 riders.

Gerard Guter reported that during the month of May On-Time Performance for bus was 75% and streetcar 77%.

Gerard Guter reported that during the month of May the highest performing Line was Route #45 Lakeview, and the lowest performing line was Route 86 Lower Nine/Chalmette.

Gerard Guter reported that 13 of the 34 Service Routs were affected by Temporary Detours and 6 of the 34 Service routes are affected by Long Term Detours.

Gerard Guter reported that 92% of the System was in service.

Gerard Guter reported that Paratransit On-Time Performance was 86%.

Gerard Guter reported that Boarding Per Revenue Hour for Bus was 11.9 and Paratransit was 1.99.

Gerard Guter reported that Preventable Accidents for Bus during the month of May was 1.61 and on the streetcar side it was 4.57. Paratransit had no Preventable Accidents for the month of May.

Commissioner Neal stated that when New Links is implemented the OTP Data will have to be merged with the old data to get an accurate percentage.

Alex Wiggins reported that staff will be looking at the improvement in mobility with less time waiting and look at what is working well and what can be done better.

7. Ferry Operations Report

Jose Ruiz reported that he was reporting on the Ferry Operations for the month of May.

Jose Ruiz reported that the Chalmette Ferry did not complete the trips planned due to mechanical breakdowns.

Jose Ruiz reported that the Canal Street Ferry average passengers per trip was 18; Chalmette average passenger per trip was 23 for a combined average of 20 passengers per

trip for the month of May.

Storage of Ferries during Storms/Hurricanes

USCG sets port conditions depending on the expected arrival of sustained gale force winds (39-54 mph/34-47 knots), using a system of port conditions. The port conditions use specific terms for understanding the port conditions based on the weather characteristics. Vessel operators use these terms to prepare for a storm/hurricane. These port conditions range from Whiskey (72 hours ahead of the expected arrival of gale force winds) to Zulu (12 hours ahead of the expected arrival of gale force winds). Under port condition Zulu, the port is closed.

Ferry hurricane plan has been updated for the 2022 hurricane season, with special attention to protecting the ferries.

New approach includes relocating and storing the ferries along the Harvey Canal, between the Harvey lock and the Lapalco Boulevard Bridge (area excluded from the USCG's Regulated Navigational Area activated during a storm/hurricane).

Arrangements have been made to store the ferries at different locations within the Harvey Canal

At port condition Whiskey, ferries out of service or on stand-by to be relocated.

At port condition X-Ray (48 hours ahead of the expected arrival of gale force winds), ferry service to shut down and ferries in service to be relocated (for traffic at Harvey lock and availability of reserved wharf space considerations)

Commissioner Neal stated that once Ferry Service is stopped please make sure that the necessary Public Service Announcements are sent to the public.

8. Public Safety Report

Robert Hickman reported that on Sunday, July 3, 2022 there was an attempted carjacking of one of the Paratransit Vehicles. The operator was putting a passenger on the vehicle when the subject tried to steal the vehicle. Unfortunately, he was a mental patient and was not successful in taking the vehicle.

Robert Hickman reported that during the month of June there was one crime which was a felony crime. Two passengers were arguing on the bus and one passenger brandished a gun and he fled the bus, and no one was arrested.

Robert Hickman reported that there was one misdemeanor, for a fare dispute on the bus between the driver and the passenger. The passenger spit on the driver and fled. The other incident was at a comfort stop and the passenger wanted the operator to leave and threatened to cut her in the face. The Transit Police was called, and no arrest was made.

Robert Hickman reported that there were 21 calls of service; the Transit Police conducted 14 ride-a-longs; 33 interactions with the homeless and the Transit Police wrote 3 citations.

Robert Hickman reported that the RTA participated in a Tabletop exercise with TSA and participated in 22 Operators Quarterly Safety Meeting that focused on de-escalation.

In response to Commissioner Coulon, Robert Hickman stated that Calls for Service are initiated from the operators to the Dispatch System and it could be any type of criminal activity to an accident and the RTA has New Orleans Police Officers assigned to the agency.

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Robert Hickman reported that there was a telephone that the operators have on the bus that would immediately connect to dispatch they can also use their cell phones for an emergency situation and there is also an emergency button on the bus that alerts dispatch.

In response to Commissioner Ewell, Robert Hickman reported that he would look into this type of technology of having a device around the operator's neck that they can use for emergencies.

Robert Hickman reported that for the month of June there were 25 contacts with different individuals that are homeless in the area and 3 referrals were made by finding the necessary help needed.

9. Update from the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Commissioner Neal stated that the agency value inclusion and gender diversity.

Alex Wiggins reported that equity was a core focus of the agency across the board and the RTA was on the leading edge of transit agencies across the country.

Dee Hebert Johnson reported on the following:

Equity as Key RTA Priority
World ridership experience
Regional connections
Innovation
Equity
Workforce Development

High Level 2022 Equity Goals

2022 Agency Goal:

Integrate our race and social justice practices in agency decision making and work processes.
Measured by the number of staff trainings and the number of times the Race and Social Justice Toolkit is utilized

Success Indicators:

DBE/SBE utilization program of at least 32% of contracts
Introduce equity training to all RTA staff
Hold quarterly DBE outreach events with community partners
Develop and launch U-Pass pilot
Expand Race and Social Justice Toolkit utilization
Use equity filter to identify 30 new shelter locations
Continue partnerships with youth serving agencies

Commissioner Neal asked how the Board of Commissioners can continue to support this role in the agency.

Commissioner Ewell stated that he would like to help in any way; he has experience in this area and applauds the efforts that he has seen so far.

10. New Links Update

Dwight Norton reported that the presentation that was given at the Executive Committee Meeting will be presented to the New Orleans City Council Transportation Committee Meeting.

Dwight Norton reminded the Commissioners that in 10 weeks the New Links Project will be implemented on September 25, 2022.

Dwight Norton reported that along with New Links the RTA was going to introduce a new app that would be launching in August which was an improvement to the old app which would make it easier to communicate with the riders.

Dwight Norton reported that all this information would be on the RTA's website.

11. New Business

None.

12. Audience Questions & Comments

Shawn Holahan stated that she lives on Henry Clay Avenue and the area has poor street conditions and she would like to know if the RTA was coordinating with the City to deal with street conditions. Also, the buses speed down the street which make the conditions of the streets worst.

In response to Shawn Holahan, Alex Wiggins stated that the RTA looked at the different impact New Links would have around the City. The RTA was not introducing additional buses to Henry Clay Avenue and plan to have 2 buses per hour on Henry Clay Avenue. The RTA was working with the City of New Orleans to help improve the infrastructure across the board.

In response to Shawn Holahan, Alex Wiggins stated that once New Links is implemented the operators will be trained to reduce their speed below the speed limit and when buses are operating on residential streets the RTA need to consider the type of equipment being used on the streets.

Shawn Holahan stated that she has two sink holes in front of her home, and she has to wait for the City to fix her street and she did not hear any mention of a time-line getting any of this work done.

Commissioner Neal stated that there were 10 other sensitive areas of the city that the RTA was addressing with the stakeholders and the RTA was also trying to balance their needs.

Jim Goodwin, President of the Algiers Point Association stated that he has concerns with speeding buses over the 4th of July Holiday's since then the buses has slowed down.

In response to Jim Goodwin, Alex Wiggins stated that the ferries will be docked in the Harvey Canal for hurricanes.

John Krzystowczyk, represents Entergy's Smart Program. This program was developed by the City Council and was administered by Entergy New Orleans. This program has energy savings goals and would like to make sure that the RTA was maximizing the incentives and dollars that this program can provide. This Program provides incentives to cover up to 100% of project costs for any energy efficiency upgrades.

Andree Fans stated that she lives on Henry Clay Avenue and she would like clarification on the number of buses that was going to be passing on the street because at a meeting she attended she was told that the people that lived on Henry Clay would be able to negotiate a solution regarding the numbers of buses that pass on the street.

Alex Wiggins reported that the request from the people that live on Henry Clay Avenue was not to have no more than two buses that pass on the street. The original New Links Project had proposed five buses and that recommendation was tabled to two buses.

Alex Wiggins reported that Jefferson Avenue would be used as a turnaround so the bus can get to Children's Hospital.

Alex Wiggins reported that he understands residents' concerns regarding buses operating on residential streets and he would prefer to operate on major streets.

Mary Cullen stated that she lives on Henry Clay Avenue and would like to know if the RTA was considering taking the buses off Henry Clay permanently.

Alex Wiggins reported that the RTA has to maintain access to Children's Hospital, but it could be something that the RTA can work on. The RTA would like to lessen the impact on neighborhoods but unfortunately this is the way the City of New Orleans is designed.

Kenny Landry stated that he lives on Henry Clay Avenue and the buses has shaken his home and Tchoupitoulas and Napoleon can service the buses that need to get to Children's Hospital.

13. Adjournment

Commissioner Coulon moved and Commissioner DeFrancesch seconded to adjourn the Operations and Administration Committee Meeting. The motion was adjourned unanimously.
adjourned

Note