

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Of the Lima/Allen County Regional Transit Authority Board of Trustees
Held at the RTA Administration Building
200 East High St., Lima, Ohio
March 5, 2019 @ 12:00 PM

Present were Brad Taylor, President; Joan Davis, Vice-President; Joshua Parker, Holly Rex and Scott Cockerell, Board Members; David Stratton, prospective Board Member; Shelia Haney, Executive Director; Marlene Shumaker, Lima/Allen County Regional Planning Commission; Karen Garland, Operations Director; Josh Ellerbrock, The Lima News; and Teresa Brown, Board Secretary/Treasurer.

First Item of Business – Roll Call: Roll Call was taken and noted for the minutes. Mr. Schroeder was not present.

Second Item of Business – Campaign Update – Leslie Rigali: Ms. Rigali said the ACRTA provides a vital service to Lima and the surrounding areas. She is helping with our campaign and has a lengthy list of credentials. She owned her own businesses several times in the past, then consulted with start-up agencies. After going on an African Safari, she saw a need there and came back to Lima to set up a foundation called ARC for Africa. It has a school and a medical clinic and has grown from three to eight classrooms with 450 kids. After that Ms. Rigali started volunteering consulting services. She started out asking Shelia a few questions and now she has gotten an email from the Mayor referring to her as the Campaign Manager. She has done a lot of campaigns in the past. She was the Women's Regional Coordinator for Dick Celeste, she worked on Sam Bassitt's campaign for County Commissioner, on Jack Rex's Commissioner campaign, Joe Bowsher's Sheriff campaign, Jeff Bridges' Judge race, and 30 years of Mayor Berger's campaigns. She also has worked with the Senior Citizens and Lima City Schools levy campaigns. Ms. Rigali has done pro bono work with organizations, doing fundraising and promotional campaigns. Some of those include the Bradfield Center, Boy Scouts, YMCA, Bluffton College, Junior Achievement, Teddy Bear Fund, ArtSpace, and Door to Tomorrow. She has served on six Boards of Directors including Chamber of Commerce, Crossroads Crisis Center, Crime Victims Services and Rotary. The last campaign was run by the staff and they didn't have the kind of funding they needed. This time we have 23 people on the campaign committee. There are riders and people from all over the community. There is better reception of the levy this time, partially since we were able to ask for less money. It amounts to 2¢ on a \$20 purchase. Last year we had 46,600 trips provided to elderly and disabled passengers. There are three Campaign Co-Chairs; Esther Baldrige, Bev Beery and Steven Horton. The Campaign Kick-Off will be held here at the RTA on Wednesday, March 13th at 11:30 a.m.

Mayor Berger has come out in support of the levy and has reached out to all the Mayors in Allen County. He was able to secure the support of all the Mayors except one. They are going to join him in press conference to publicly endorse the campaign. Lima/Allen County Regional Planning Commission, for the first time in 30 years, is going to endorse the campaign. Activate Allen County and all their member organizations are going to endorse it. The Bath Fire Department Chief is supportive of it. Shelia did a presentation at Bluffton City Council and they are endorsing it along with their Mayor, and the Low Vision Coalition is endorsing it.

When the Mayor of Bluffton saw that we provided 1500 trips there last year he was astounded. We also provided 1300 Delphos trips. We just picked up a new rider in Cairo today. The ballot will have our issue county-wide, two issues in Delphos, two in Bluffton, and the Bath Fire Department renewal. We are expecting voter turnout to be low, around 8,000 - 10,000 voters. We will be doing a targeted campaign in the areas we know will have greater voter turnout as far as our mailings and canvassing. We will also target the precincts we know supported us in the last levy. We have a specialized IT person on the campaign committee who is analyzing the voter patterns and data to help guide our strategy. We will also be putting out a lot of yard signs in those areas.

We have started an aggressive social media campaign, with postings on Facebook and Instagram with public awareness of our services. Elliot just put one up yesterday that already has 900 views. (We played the most recent video for the Board, of Erica Stapleton).

The Mayor made a request at Hometown Stations to have a half hour show. They have done shows like that before, like when they talked about the community-oriented policing. Hometown Stations said they have more viewers in the evening during the news; and said why don't we do a week-long series about RTA in the week leading up to the vote instead.

The levy is a workforce issue. We transport over 1000 workers a month. It is a quality of life issue, we transport over 1475 special need kids a month. It is also an economic issue. Leslie was behind a woman at Meijer a couple weeks ago, and she filled her cart with \$120 in groceries. She then said she had to fit the groceries in her portable cart so she could catch the bus home. People who use the bus system are working, paying tax dollars that provide income for the county, they are buying products and services from local stores.

The Board Members should be a voice for the campaign and need to be an advocate for the organization when they are out and about in the community. If they are not able to help, they can consider a donation. Mr. Stratton can help by getting us an audience with the AEDG.

We provide over 900 trips a month just to Nelsons and are transporting 62 of their employees. We have one gentleman who has relied on the bus to get to his job at Casa Luau for years.

Early voting starts April 9th. We will probably start canvassing the week before that. The media campaign will start the day before early voting, and we will start doing some mailings. In the meantime, we will continue to do presentations. Shelia had done a presentation at Delphos City Council the previous night.

Third Item of Business – Approval of Previous Minutes: Ms. Rex made a motion to accept the previous minutes as presented and Ms. Davis seconded the motion. All members voted in favor thereof.

Fourth Item of Business – Board President Comments: Mr. Taylor said the fact that RPC is endorsing the levy is indicative of the support we have in the community. It is also great the Mayors of Allen County minus one are supporting us; and Activate Allen County.

Fifth Item of Business – Operations Report – January: Shelia has been continuing to do many presentations. We have not done anything further with the business plan. It has been presented to the business community. Fixed route numbers are going down while the door-to-door service continues to go up. For Capital projects, we are continuing to work on the three buses we have been working on for the last 20 months. We have a new wheelchair pod for the buses. The salesman came and set it up in the lobby and the drivers and passengers all really liked it.

For accidents in December, we just had a couple of clipped mirrors.

Mr. Stratton asked what the timetable was for when we would hear something on the 2017 audit. We don't really know when they will be done. We try to make sure we supply them with any information they need. We can't really hurry the state audit. The audits have always been about 2 years or more behind.

Ms. Davis made a motion to accept the Operations Report and Mr. Cockerell seconded the motion.

Mr. Parker asked what will happen if the levy fails. Shelia stated that Leslie has a lot of previous success and data driven analytics to help run the best campaign. He feels we need to discuss what happens alternatively to be best prepared. We only have one Board Meeting between now and the election. He asked if FTA will just step in and say no more. Shelia replied that FTA does not do that unless someone is doing something that is not within their guidelines. They will continue to offer us grant money, we just have trouble finding the 50% local match. One option without the levy for designated funding is corporate campaigning. This involves approaching business and asking them for donations to support transportation. You then have to keep going back to them every year. Shelia is very positive the levy will pass this time. We have already shut down a third of our service and we are still running flat. It didn't save us any money if the door to door service continues to grow and with a 20% aging population, this service will continue to be a demand for this community. If we don't pass the levy the only other option besides corporate campaigning will be to start shutting down more services until there are none.

All members voted in favor of the Operations Report.

Sixth Item of Business – Financial Report – January: As Bob reviews the accounts you can see the 2018 Financials, we were within \$3,000 of a break even after the service cuts. Mr. Taylor asked how the day-to-day flow was going with no Finance Director on site. Shelia said it is going very well. Teresa and Lori have continued to do the daily receivables and payables while Bob is working on organizing the chart of accounts by the FTA guidelines. Teresa and Lori both went to an all-day training on understanding financials and that has been a benefit. Bob then comes in and reviews all the entries into Quick Books to verify the balances. I feel confident that invoices are calculated correctly now, and the Grants will be balanced. After the State Audit we can produce a final 2018 balance and start 2019 in a better position of reports. Lori has continued to reconcile the Medicaid and has our recertification completed. Ms. Rex asked about the cost to put the levy on the ballot. If the levy passes, the money comes straight out of the funds raised. If it doesn't pass, we will have to pay it out of the remainder of the Citizens 4 RTA money and the rest by the RTA. It could be up to \$70,000. The bill from the previous levy was \$24,000 and we sold some vehicles that were past their useful life and scrap metal to pay for it.

Mr. Cockerell made a motion to approve the draft financial statement. Ms. Davis seconded the motion and all members voted in favor thereof.

Seventh Item of Business – New Board Member (David Stratton) – Oath: Mr. Stratton was sworn in as a Board Member.

Eighth Item of Business – Correct Board Oaths from 2 to 3 years (Holly Rex and Joan Davis): Ms. Rex and Ms. Davis signed their oath of office with corrected term lengths.

Ninth Item of Business – Board Discussion – Finance Audit by Bob Ruzinsky: Bob already splits his time between Dayton and Butler County RTAs. He has reviewed all of the invoices from 2018 in their entirety. Bob has not found any signs of misuse of funds, just some sloppy work. Some Grant items were charged at 50% operating that should have been 100% capital so we have lost some money. The Fuel Sales calculations and procedures were done incorrectly, and we need to account for that error. He is waiting for the completion of the State Audit for 2017 so we can correct accounts from that point.

Tenth Item of Business – RPC Update: There is no update currently. Mr. Taylor extended his gratitude to Thom and the Board of RPC for their endorsement of the levy campaign.

Eleventh Item of Business – Adjourn: Mr. Cockerell made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Stratton seconded the motion and all members voted in favor thereof. Meeting ended at 12:54 P.M.

The next monthly Board Meeting will be held April 9th, 2019 at 12:00 Noon.



Brad Taylor, Board President



Teresa Brown, Board Secretary/Treasurer