



Allen County Regional Transit Authority
Board of Trustees Meeting
January 9, 2024

The Allen County Regional Transit Authority Board of Trustees met on **January 9, 2024 @ 12:00 p.m.** in the Allen County Regional Transit Conference Room, 200 East High Street, Suite 1-B, Lima, Ohio. Proper public notice was given in advance of the meeting. Mr. Moening, ACRTA Board President, conducted the meeting.

PRESENT: Robert Moening, President
Scott Cockerell, Vice-President
Doug Olsson
Richard Bales
Brad Taylor

STAFF: Brian Wildermuth, Co-Executive Director
Karen Garland, Co-Executive Director
Teresa Brown, Secretary/Treasurer

ABSENT: Joan Davis
Richard Schroeder

CONTRACTORS: None

LACRPC: Rebecca Phillips, Finance Director

CITIZENS: Spencer Smith, ODOT
Stefanie Motter, AAA3

Minutes:

1. Roll Call

Mr. Moening called the meeting to order at approximately 12:01 p.m. Ms. Brown took roll call. A quorum of the Board was present. Mr. Moening wanted to take a moment at the start of the meeting to personally acknowledge the Board's thanks and appreciation for all the years Ms. Rex spent on the Board and her contributions to the ACRTA.

2. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Olsson made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Cockerell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Previous Minutes

Mr. Cockerell made a motion to approve the December 12, 2023, Annual and Regular Board meeting minutes. Mr. Olsson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Citizens Comments

Spencer Smith, the Urban Transit Planner from ODOT, was here to spend time with ACRTA. He is fairly new to the role and is going to visit all the agencies he oversees. Mr. Smith manages the Governor's

Apportionment for Small Urban agencies, the UTP (Urban Transit Program) funds, and OTP₂ (Ohio Transit Preservation Program) funds.

5. Secretary/Treasurer's Report

Ms. Brown presented November's financials, including a summary of profit and loss YTD actual versus prior year, income statement YTD actual versus budget, detailed profit & loss, and balance sheet. A Cash Receipts Journal and a Cash Disbursements Journal were also included. Revenue is up and expenses remain under budget, with a net gain for the YTD. The Final 2022 Audit has been released and uploaded to the Federal Audit Clearing House. The auditors made some recommendations on the depreciation schedule, and those changes were made.

ACRTA is moving some of the UTP funds just awarded from ODOT from Operating funds to purchase two support vehicles for staff. The vehicles had been in the STIP for a few years and there are now Explorers on State Contract at a good price. A Resolution for approval to purchase the vehicles was included in the Board Packet.

Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve Resolution 24 -1. Mr. Olsson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Cockerell made a motion to accept the Secretary/Treasurer's report. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Action Items and ED Report

a. Richard Bales was sworn in for an unexpired term commencing from December 21, 2023, to November 14, 2024.

b. Scott Cockerell was sworn in for a new three-year term commencing from January 19, 2024, to January 18, 2027.

c. The MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) for 2024 with Lima Allen County Regional Planning Commission was included in the Board Packet. LACRPC is the MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) for ACRTA and the region. Mr. Bales made a motion to approve the MOU with LACRPC. Mr. Olsson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

There are new rounds of RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) grant funding being issued by FTA. Mrs. Garland will be applying to get money to replace the entire fleet over the next few years. RAISE grants can be spread out over seven years vs. the normal five-year grant cycle if funds are obligated. The minimum grant award through this is five million. ACRTA may be able to get funding at 100% instead of an 80/20 split due to the poverty status in Lima. There was a debriefing after the last round of RAISE grants to let applicants know what they could do to better their chances for this round.

ACRTA will be having a Triennial Review this year. The staff went through the process in 2020/2021 so it should go smoother this time.

2023 ridership and funding statistics are due soon to the NTD (National Transit Database).

Ridership was down 1,867 from last month and up 567 from the same time last year. There were 14,073 more riders in 2023 over 2022, or an increase of 6.6%. The fixed route went down 1,270 passengers and Uplift was up 15,343 passengers. Uplift has been trending up the last few years. The on-time performance

and efficiency have also improved. In 2022 we had 30 drivers and 29 in 2023; while decreasing overtime by 836 hours. There were a few large events in 2023 that may not be duplicated in 2024.

OTRP (Ohio Transit Risk Pool), our insurance pool, has come up with a new training method for employees. The courses are self-paced, web-based modules that the employees would do on their own time. ACRTA is looking to incentivize the program to get the employees to complete the courses. The idea is to give the employees PTO time to compensate for the hours. The total time for completion is approximately 20 hours. The average driver wage is \$20 - \$21 per hour, so the cost would be \$400 per driver. The training program will be provided by OTRP for free initially but will have a cost after the first year.

Jaime Baker, the director of transportation at HHWP CAC (Hancock Hardin Wyandot Putnam Community Action Commission), came to visit ACRTA a few weeks ago. The Commission is looking at doing fixed routes in Hancock County, mainly in the City of Findlay. ODOT approached ACRTA about being involved in some capacity with the project, and the consultant Hancock County is using reached out also. HHWP CAC has a steering committee that is working with the consultant. Findlay has the HATS (Hancock Area Transportation Services) program that provides door-to-door service like ACRTA's Uplift service, but they are interested in a fixed route option.

HHWP CAC is not sure what route is best for the community yet. Bringing ACRTA in to do routes could be an option. ACRTA has a route to Bluffton, half of which is in Allen County and half in Hancock County. LACRPC provided numbers showing there is a considerable number of people commuting from Lima to Findlay and vice versa daily, so another option may be just the Bluffton route meeting up with a route coming from Findlay to exchange passengers. ACRTA's vans go all over Northwest Ohio. Mr. Baker wasn't sure what the Hancock County Commissioners are leaning towards yet, they are just now going public with it and gathering information. ACRTA has had talks with ODOT and FTA on how this could work, they are very big on Regionalization.

HHWP CAC wants to make a recommendation to the Hancock County Commissioners by July. For now, ACRTA is looking for the Board's concurrence to keep talks open until something is decided to bring back for approval.

The garage construction has begun. The sidewalks are blocked off and Hume is tearing up the existing concrete.

7. Discussion Items

Mr. Taylor asked if there were any updates on the disgruntled former passenger who had complained to the NAACP about being trespassed from the buses. The gentleman's name was Jack Alexander and he had come in the previous Friday with someone who had been giving him rides and an NAACP representative. He had sent a letter explaining it was a hardship financially to get back and forth to work without the bus system. Mr. Alexander got worked up quickly and the people with him were trying to keep him calm, he kept asking what Mr. Wildermuth was offering him. Mr. Wildermuth explained ACRTA was not offering anything, the idea was to find out if there was any way to get him back on the bus without waiting out the entire year of the trespass and he wouldn't be let back on if he was going to harass the drivers again. Mr. Alexander admitted he had said stuff to the drivers, the dispatchers, and the Transportation Manager who picked him up when he was put off the bus so the police would not pick him up and take him to jail.

In order to let Mr. Alexander back on the bus he will have to assure ACRTA that the incidents will not continue, and he should apologize to the employees. He has been trespassed from the bus system three separate times now.

Mr. Bales will not be able to attend the next few scheduled meetings as they directly conflict with his teaching schedule at ONU.

8. RPC Updates


LACRPC has prepared an ADA plan for Bluffton, and it is on their desk for review. It will go to public comment now, and all public right ways are in ADA compliance on the bus route.

AAA3 runs the Find-A -Ride program, which is typically 5310 funding geared towards individuals over the age of 60 or any age with a disability. ACRTA has not been able to use that funding as match money, but AAA3 will be funding the program with a different source this year so the funds will be eligible as local match. Ohio Loves Transit week will be coming up soon and Mrs. Motter offered to assist with any marketing or digital advertisement for anything ACRTA had planned for that week. Ohio Loves Transit is the week of February 11th.

9. Adjourn

Mr. Moening made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Olsson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:43 p.m.

Submitted: 
Teresa Brown, Secretary/Treasurer

Approved: 
Robert Moening, ACRTA Board President