

**TWIN CITIES AREA TRANSPORTATION
AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING (MINUTES)**

March 26, 2024

Call to Order

A Board Meeting of the Twin Cities Area Transportation Authority was held on March 26, 2024, at the City Hall Chambers in Benton Harbor, MI. The meeting started at 5:30 pm and was presided over by Board Member Ron Singleton.

Roll Call/Attendees

Board Members Present: Mr. Ron Singleton- Board Member
 Mr. Spencer Nesbitt- Board
 Member
 Mr. Daryl Jackson- Board
 Member
 Mrs. Cora Robinson- Board
 Member
 Mr. Virgil Hatcher- Board
 Member

Board Members Absent: NONE

Staff Present: Mr. Rufus Adams- Executive Director
 Mr. Nick Fort- Operations Manager
 Mrs. Toranita Meridy- Brooks, Human
 Resources

Staff Absent: None

Public: Nidra Singleton
 James Parson

Doris Sanders
Debra Bailey
Doris Sallie

The board meeting was called to order by Ron Singleton.

Cora Robinson took Row Call; all board members were present.

A motion was requested by Ron Singleton to approve the agenda. Cora Robinson approved, and Spencer Nesbitt supported.

Secretary's Report: NONE

A motion was requested by Ron Singleton to approve the January 23rd Board Minutes. The motion was approved by Spencer Nesbitt and Dayrl Jackson supported.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT- RUFUS ADAMS

DIRECTOR'S UPDATES:

Financial Statements: Executive Director Adams stated financials statements are for the months ending December and January of fiscal year 2024. Net income was positive for both months, December and January, year to date profit is \$284K. Year over year, this is a \$370K increase. Both months were negative last year in the months of December and January. Net income has been positive for three consecutive months. Revenue year to date is \$1.3M. This is a \$650K increase year over year. Total expenses year to date increased by \$190K, the main drivers of the increase were labor and benefit costs and there also increase in preventive maintenance costs as well.

Any questions regarding financial statements? Ron Singleton asked about the revenue sources. Director Adams stated the revenue came from federal and State funding, farebox and token sales. Ron Singleton also asked where the largest increase of revenue and Director Adams said it was from Federal and State funding.

Ron Singleton made a motion to approve the financial report, approved by Spencer Nesbitt and supported by Dayrl Jackson.

Capital Projects: Director Adams stated that construction has started on the EV charging stations. Hi-Tech Electric is the vendor, and they are about two weeks into the project and the project is coming along well. EV vehicles, we are getting closer to a delivery date. The supplier will pick the vans up from the factory soon. We did receive two new gas cutaways this month, those bus numbers are 53 and 54.

State Audit Review- Most of the documents have been sent over to the State auditor. Will wait for the results. The auditor will set up a time for a site visit.

Federal Review Update. I have sent over most of the documents the auditors need. There will be a site visit later this year from the Feds.

TCATA Updates:

Director Adams stated that preventive Maintenance expenses year to date are \$36K. We had some repairs for buses such as engine replacement, transmission replacement and two fuel tank repairs to buses as well. Fuel expenses were \$14K in December and \$11K in January.

Ridership- Ridership for the month of January was 9,364 passengers, this is an increase of 1,400 passengers year over year. Ridership for the month of February was 10,475 passengers, this is an increase of about 900 passengers year over year. The driver of the month for the month of January was Rohnette Mckinney for the month of January and Letecia Henderson for the month of February. A copy of this month's internal newsletter is attached to the board packet for review. We had our first employee engagement at Kelly Bowl this month. About nine of us showed up and about five of us bowled, including myself. Looking forward to the next one in June. And this concludes the Director's report, any questions?

Ron Singleton asked if the charging stations have been set up and Director Adams stated they have been set up, the two slower chargers have been set up, and we are just waiting for a transformer to come in to get those powered up. Ron Singleton also about the exterior work if that is where the charging stations are located, and Director Adams replied yes. Ron Singleton asked about the two new gas buses, and wanted to know if the new buses are what we need a Commercial Driver License for, and Director Adams replied with either a driver with a CDL or chauffeur license can drive the two new cutaway gas buses.

Ron Singleton made a motion to approve the Director's report, approved by Spencer Nesbitt and supported by Dayrl Jackson.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

CHAIR'S REPORT- Ron Singleton stated that he will reserve his report after public comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Ron Singleton made comments for the public. James Parsons came to the podium and stated he had worked at TCATA in the past and he stated he slipped and fell in the garage. James was off sick and said it was another lady in charge. The HR lady called James's back and let James know she had a shift opened from 2p-6p, and James stated his original shift was from 6a-10a. James said he also called Toranita Meridy-Brooks and it has been over a year since he worked for TCATA. James wants the shift that he originally worked on when he was at TCATA. Ron Singleton responded to James that this is something that the Director can look at and make an appointment and this will be the best way to address it. Nidra Singleton stated said she had some things that she would like to discuss, and she spoke to Director Adams about one of them. Nidra Singleton stated that there is favoritism that is going in regarding people expressing what they going to do. The phone answerer is going upstairs doing paperwork, Miss Gaynell coming in at 9am and the office opens at 8am and there is fairness across the board. Nidra stated she earned her stripes and has been at TCATA for twelve years. Nidra Singleton also stated she talked to Mr. Adams yesterday about her raise for five years of employment and stated that Mr. Adams will investigate it. Ron Singleton responded to Nidra that she is part of the Union, and she needs to follow the Union process. Joann Rayford approached the podium, and asked about the dollar raise and stated that some people got the raise, and some people didn't, and Miss Nidra didn't get hers and she will work that out with the Union. Joann Rayford also stated operations employees do not know who to report to, and what is Nick Fort's position and Richard Lee's position and who do they go to once there is an issue and would like their role to be posted. Jeffrey Halliburton maintenance coordinator came to the podium and stated that he talked to Mr. Adams right before the meeting and he feels as if there is some favoritism as to who must take a drug test. Jeffrey believes that everyone that operates equipment or works chemicals. Jeffrey also stated how he knows everyone does not get drug tested is because he been there a year and never got pulled for a random and think that everyone should. Joann Rayford came back up to the podium and stated that employees cannot go to her and get information because she assumes that she is blocked out and must go through Mr. Adams and stated that can that be fixed. The comment for public comments is now closed.

Board Comments: Dayrl Jackson asked how many new buses we have in fleet and Director Adams stated the number two. Dayrl Jackson also asked are those gas or electric. Director Adams responded with

“gas”. Dayl Jackson asked to have there been any problems with any of the buses? Director Adams responded with no. Dayl Jackson once again asked at this time, everything is fine then correct, and Director Adams responded with “yes”. Spencer Nesbitt then asked Director Adams why it wasn’t something on the agenda for Human Resources to have something to report on and wanted to know are there issues with her or things the Director needs to speak about it? And according to the comments, why can’t HR give out information, is she overloaded, or she just can’t do it? Director Adams stated that Toranita Meridy-Brooks had all her access back from when he first started. Director Adams also stated that there are some tasks that he must do as HR Director and some tasks that Toranita Meridy-Brooks must do as HR Coordinator. Virgil Hatcher then asked is there some reason why Toranita Meridy-Brooks doesn’t have the responsibility to do certain things, irrespective of job description, is there certain things she can’t do? Director Adams responded that he would have a conversation with Mrs. Brooks about what type of requests that employees are coming to her with because this is the first time he is hearing about this, and he stated this is why the problem resolution form exists so he can know about these types of issues. Ron Singleton clarified that the Executive Director is the Human Resource Director and Mrs. Brooks is the Human Resource Coordinator, there is some distinction, ultimately, the Executive Director is the personnel director. Toranita Meridy-Brooks stated that some of the stuff that she is referring to is as simple as printing off a W-2 or a check stub, it is not that I don’t know how to do it, it is I don’t have access to do it. So, when those requests come, I do forward them to Mr. Adams, but it’s nothing other than I am assuming that Joann Rayford feels that I should be able to do it and it’s not a conversation that I had with Joann Rayford about anything. Ron Singleton asked is possible that the HR Coordinator can start performing this function and Director Adams responded “absolutely”. Virgil Hatcher then stated that the question remains if a staff member is looking for specific information can they get it? Director Adams stated yes, they receive it instantly. Cora Robinson stated that one of the things that Rufus has been asking the Board to do is to let him do his job. And that is what we are trying to do, to let him do his job. But it does not mean that he must do every job. That is why we have an organization that has an Operations Manager, HR Coordinator, Dispatchers, drivers, and it doesn’t seem like everyone has a clear understanding of what their job is and who they report to. One of Rufus’ jobs is to make sure, and this board has been asking him for job descriptions. Cora Robinson also stated even when it gets down to bus assignments, who assigns the buses. If Mr. Halliburton is the Maintenance Supervisor in the garage, he should know who gets the bus, he is there in the morning. We really want Rufus to do his job, we don’t want you guys to call us and from this point forward, we are going to let Rufus do his job and let everyone else do their job. When something is being conveyed to us in your absence of who is in charge, put it in writing. Director Adams stated that there was a written notice that was put out the last time he was in training in Chicago, I clearly in the letter and in email to my office staff and placed in everyone emails, that Nick Fort was in charge. If employees have any questions they are to go to Nick Fort. If there are any questions that Nick Fort cannot answer, then Nick Fort will contact me by phone. It was clearly stated in the letter and whoever is saying they didn’t know who to

report in the letter, it is unequivocally false. And regarding job descriptions, about 95% of these people were employed before I got here, so I am quite sure they had their job descriptions, but I have no problem with giving everyone their job descriptions again, so it can be clear. Cora Robinson then stated that she is not trying to be offensive, I try to be firm, and I am trying to be clear about job descriptions. The maintenance coordinator is saying that the drug testing policy is not being enforced and there is clearly a drug testing policy. Director Adams stated that is his first-time hearing about the drug testing issue. Cora Robinson also stated that everyone should have a CDL license, that is all we are saying. Spencer Nesbitt then asks if there are one or two people that the people know who to report to, Richard Lee or Nick, is it clear that they know its one person. Director Adams stated as of March 1st, everyone got a notice saying everyone will be reporting to Nick Fort, it was clear and in their mailboxes. Spencer Nesbitt then asked Mr. Lee is not the person they go to, and Director Adams responded with "yes". Ron Singleton asked if the Organization Chart can be updated, and Director Adams responded with yes it can. Cora Robinson then asked Director Adams what he thinks is needed for everyone to know their roles and to move forward. Director Adams stated that some of the comments and issues that he is hearing for the very first time and one of the things he would like to do is to setup weekly one on ones with the Chairman, Ron Singleton. Ron Singelton agreed to have weekly one on ones. Cora Robinson also mentioned to the Director to keep giving job descriptions to employees so that they are clear about what they do and have a wide-open door policy.

ADJOURMENT

**The meeting ended at 6:45pm on March 26th,
2024.**