

**RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**MINUTES OF Monday, January 27, 2014 MEETING**

**Board Members Present:** Mayor Scott Avedisian, Chairperson; Jerome Williams; Stephen Durkee; Margaret Holland McDuff; Maureen Martin and Peter Ginaitt

**Absent:** Director Michael Lewis

**Also Present:** Raymond Studley, CEO; Wayne Hannon, Resource Team; Todd Gleason, Outside Counsel; Marie DiToro, Recording Secretary; and other members of RIPTA's staff, and members of the public whose names are on the sign-in sheet.

**Agenda Item 1: Approval of December 16, 2013 Meeting Minutes**

Mayor Avedisian calls the meeting to order. He asks for a motion to accept the December 16, 2013 minutes as presented to the board. Mr. Ginaitt makes a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Williams seconds the motion and it passes unanimously.

**Agenda Item 2: Public Comment**

*(Board members take public comments under advisement, but do not respond except for clarifications. Members may follow-up on public comments in writing post-meeting as permitted by applicable law.)*

Mayor Avedisian asks if there is anyone here who would like to speak under the public comment portion of the meeting.

Mr. D'Amico, a bus rider on the 19, states that the service was cut on January 18, 2014. He finds it hard to believe that this particular bus could be cut. Johnston is doing so much to revive that section of town. This area has the Town Hall, low-income housing, housing for the elderly and handicapped, supermarkets, drug stores, banks, the library, a middle school, high school and the Atmed Treatment Center.

FM Global is there and Northwoods, which is vacant now, and this could be a great incentive for a tenant knowing that the bus would come directly to them to bring employees to and from work. Rhode Island has the worst unemployment in the country according to Forbes Magazine. It is very difficult to get to work. He states that he now has to walk two miles to catch the bus to go to work. Doing this walk in the winter is dangerous because the sidewalks are not cleared which forces him to walk in the street to catch his bus. Mr. D'Amico states that he came here today very upset and wants his services respected. Not just for him but for others that are not able to come here and voice their concern. He thanks the Board for their time.

Mr. Cole, driver for RIPTA, and an advocate for public transportation, would like to reiterate on what this gentleman was saying. There have been some changes that added service to areas that needed it and this is appreciated by the riders. However, the COA report has also taken away service and is forcing people to walk further to catch a bus. Mr. Cole states that there are not a lot of full time jobs in Rhode Island and many people have multiple part-time jobs which means they have to take the bus from one job to another and so on. He understands that RIPTA is tight on finances and is chopping away at services, which impacts the public. Certain issues, Line 20 is a pet peeve of his and approximately 8 years ago this service was cut and a Resolution was passed and it was signed by the governor at the time and the service was re-instated. He is not sure what Resolution means and if they are only good while that Governor is in office. The numbers have been cut there, but that is because the service has been cut and these passengers had to find other means. This service needs to be brought back. He states Johnston is probably the same thing. There are so many places on Atwood Ave that people need to get to. Service is cut due to low ridership according to RIPTA's numbers, however not as far as the people who are taking the bus. People need the bus. It is not always numbers on a piece of paper. People need the service. Thank you.

Mr. Harrington states that he was at the State of the State speech by Governor Chafee and it was certainly encouraging that he wants to put out a \$40 million bond for infrastructure on hubs for mass transit system. The design is somewhat new and it is encouraging that he wants to modernize the facilities for our passengers, however on the disappointing end; there is no funding measure in the bill or budget for the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority. There will be work ahead over the next six months to get key pieces of legislation passed that would hopefully improve the budget and get resources where RIPTA can add service where it once existed or improve service it currently has. The Governor does support mass transit and we look forward to the future with new hubs and hopefully get some legislation through that will help with the finances.

Ms. Ele Felaco states that she has been complaining about no service to CCRI and it is still that way, however she would like to say a few things that she does appreciate about what RIPTA has been doing during the transition and the implementation of the COA. She really likes the new schedules. The maps and schedules are great. She is very impressed with RIPTA on Facebook. Responses come right away. She is impressed with the shuttle on Sundays to make up for loss-of-service. That is good. She is impressed with the shuttle in Cranston to get to Stop and Shop. She has seen some improvements and suggests everyone keep on complaining. Thank you very much.

With no further public comments, Mayor Avedisian moves on to the CEO Report and asks Mr. Studley to begin.

**Agenda Item 3: CEO Report**

Mr. Studley introduces Ben Salzillo to the Board. Mr. Salzillo has been hired as In-House Legal counsel, a position RIPTA has never had in the past. It is great for RIPTA and he has already been a huge asset in the week he has worked. Mr. Salzillo thanks Mr. Studley and the Board welcomes him.

Mr. Studley moves on to the memorandum that was presented to the Board in their packets. He has asked Mr. Salzillo to oversee the claims. Anything catastrophic would still be presented to the Board for Board approval by Mr. Stanziale, however with Mr. Salzillo's background and expertise Mr. Studley would like Mr. Salzillo to be more involved in this process and asks the Board to provide him the authority to settle legal claims under \$50,000.

Mr. Durkee asks approximately how many there are during the course of a year. Mr. Studley responds there are approximately 700 of which many are property damage. Most of them are under \$50,000.

Mr. Studley moves on to the CEO Report. Ridership is up 5.5% from last year. That is a really good indication that the COA data is accurate and if it is not working the staff is diligent to go back over it and make the necessary changes. The KPI report is from November. As mentioned last month KPI reports will be presented a month behind due to the timing of collecting data. As previously mentioned to the Board they are looking at changing the KPI's to be a better assessment of RIPTA. The mean distance between failures has dropped from 5000 in 2012 to 4538 in 2013. The reason for that is that the gas valves in the 2010 through 2013 buses caused a lot of road service calls. Maintenance and inventory departments came together to work through this.

Complaints went up, especially on the Fixed Route side; however that is to be expected with the implementation of the COA changes. RIPTA clearly has to do a better job documenting complaints and compliments. Currently, comments that come in through social media are not categorized in the AS400 system, where phone calls get documented. An overall assessment of this must be done.

Mr. Studley goes on to look at the complaints for the RIde program which are based on 100,000 revenue miles. Their customer base is not the same for the RIde program as the Fixed Route. This needs to be customized to get a better feel for whether RIPTA RIde Program is doing a good job. RIPTA needs to work on this internally and make sure good data is received.

Mr. Durkee states that RIPTA should look at what metrics other agencies in the industry are looking at so that RIPTA can compare data to other agencies.

Mr. Studley responds that the American Bus Benchmarking Group (ABBG), which RIPTA is a part of, gathers statistical data and compares this data from agency to

agency. In some areas RIPTA does very well but there are areas that RIPTA will need to focus more on.

Mr. Williams has a couple of questions on the Financial Summary. It mentions that the expense reduction is made up of several categories of which insurance is one. Are the settlements down or is it a reduction in insurance costs? The other bullet point is the federal grant revenue is \$1.1 million less than budget and he is curious if this is just lagging or does RIPTA actually have a reduction. Mr. Studley responds that it is just a lag. The report states that the funding sources have not changed and it is a timing issue only. Many of these are waiting for the drawdown to happen FTA lifted that due to the FMO responses so he hopes to see less of a lag going forward.

Mr. Hannon agrees with Mr. Studley that it is clearly a timing issue. By the end of the fiscal year they should be caught up. RIPTA did have a problem with the Echos for a while, but that is just about cleared up. As far as the insurance claims he thinks it is a combination of both instances.

Mr. Studley states that one other area of concern is the Federal Transit Fund and if congress decides to lessen the funds that would have a huge impact on transportation. RIPTA staff is doing their best to be pro-active and meet on the implications this could have on RIPTA funding.

With no further questions on the CEO Report, Mayor Avedisian moves on to the ATMS Update and asks Mr. Laflamme to speak.

Mr. Laflamme states that since the last board meeting they have deployed the new winter schedule and testing continues with the audio and visual announcements. New announcements were downloaded to buses for the winter schedule. The customer information signs have been installed at Kennedy Plaza. One each of the 5 line LED and 2 line LED signs have been running since early December. He has not heard or seen any problems with that. He has given Xerox the go ahead to power up the rest of the LED signs. The LCD TV's inside the waiting area unfortunately don't have the capability to identify the berth for each sign and is waiting for a fix from Xerox on this. The signs are almost useless unless you can tell the customer which berth the bus will pick them up at.

Mr. Ginaitt asks if this is the first project the company has done for a transportation company and Mr. Laflamme responds no. Most agencies use numbers for the berths and RIPTA uses letters and their system does not support letters.

Mayor Avedisian states then that RIPTA should change over to a number system. He states that one of the things he spoke to Mr. Williams about is that it has been several months beyond when it was supposed to be done and there does not seem to be a lot of progress made each month. Mayor Avedisian asks Mr. Laflamme what the expected

date of completion would now be. Mr. Laflamme states that falls under the current status and that he is still waiting for a full schedule or plan of the remaining functionality. Xerox has not come forth with this.

Mayor Avedisian states that he and Mr. Studley should have a meeting with Xerox due to the fact this is way behind schedule and it doesn't appear that a lot of progress is being had. Mr. Studley agrees with Mayor Avedisian.

Mr. Ginaitt asks if RIPTA changes to berth number system, what other things would have to change. Mr. Laflamme responds that the sign posts will have to change, however does not know the full extent of what other changes would be necessary.

Mr. Durkee and Mayor Avedisian agree that there should be an easy way around this problem and this should not be holding up completion of this project.

Mayor Avedisian states at the bottom of the update it states months of testing required before final acceptance so it will be well over a year behind schedule. Mr. Laflamme states he put months in there, however it is probably a month of solid testing to make sure that they have met every single requirement in the specifications and then another month of mean time between failures. They must have a certain percentage of operation over a month's period of time for Mr. Laflamme or RIPTA to sign off on it.

Mr. Williams states that his concerns over the past few months are in regards to the audio and visual announcements and every month the report states that new announcements are being downloaded and training is continuing. Mr. Laflamme states that training did start in November and is ongoing. The announcements have been downloaded onto the buses since last May and have been updated continuously. Mr. Durkee asks if they are working consistently. Mr. Laflamme responds that yes when the drivers are logged in.

Mr. Ginaitt asks Mr. Laflamme if he had to come up with a percentage of drivers that were trained in November this would help the Board determine if it is an administrative issue. Mr. Laflamme responds that he knows that there have been 160 drivers trained. However, Mr. Laflamme responds that probably 80% of the drivers are using it and logging in.

Mr. Studley states to Mr. Laflamme that the there is no way to tell if the system is working unless the drivers report back in to the office. Mayor Avedisian agrees that is exactly what they are asking. It may be all downloaded, however that doesn't mean it is working correctly. Mr. Studley states that there is a form that the drivers should be filling out and bringing back into the office with updates on the system. Mr. Studley adds that they do not want to sign off on acceptance until they are certain it is running correctly. There is a lot of money invested into this system and he does not want to rush through it until he and the Board are comfortable signing off on it.

Mr. Durkee states that he agrees that RIPTA should not rush into signing off on it, however this system will allow RIPTA to provide a much higher level of service and RIPTA has spent millions of dollars on it for years and he thinks it is time not to rush, but to come to the conclusion.

Mayor Avedisian states that a meeting will have to take place and Xerox will have to provide a level of service that they are supposed to provide based on the contract. Mr. Studley states that this will get set up immediately.

**Agenda Item 4: RFP: 14-09 Drug & Alcohol Compliance Oversight Services**

Mr. Mencarini states that RIPTA Board of Directors is requested to award a contract to US Mobile Drug Testing-RI of Warwick, RI to provide Drug and Alcohol Testing Services to RIPTA. Two bidders submitted proposals, Occupational Drug Testing of Providence, which is RIPTA's current vendor and US Mobile Drug Testing of Warwick. A proposal evaluation committee met to discuss the cost, experience and training and the committee recommends going with US Mobile. Mr. Mencarini states for clarification this is a five year contract in total. It is one base year with four annual options to renew. The Staff Summary reads slightly differently. The cost of the contract is on average \$26,330 a year. Last year's expenditures were around \$36,000. The Authority will save approximately \$10,000 a year. Lastly, the program is administered by Maureen Ruzzano, Human Resource division at RIPTA and is in accordance with FTA requirements.

Mr. Studley adds that RIPTA has not been in compliance with FTA requirements in this area and this company would really assist Ms. Ruzzano and Street Supervisors in testing more efficiently and in a timely manner.

Mr. Ginaitt asks how the testing is done now, scheduled, planned, unplanned. Ms. Ruzzano responds that both happen currently. It is scheduled and unscheduled. She states the testing is randomized. The company has a computer generated program that selects people at random. She is given a list monthly by the current vendor of employees to be tested and whether they are day, night weekend shifts and testing is done accordingly. Mr. Ginaitt responds that then theoretically someone could go an entire year without being tested and others more regularly. Ms. Ruzzano responds yes.

Ms. Holland McDuff asks for clarification on the \$26,000 for five years or each year of the contract and Mr. Mencarini responds that on average it is \$26,000 a year.

Mr. Williams makes a motion to award the contract to US Mobile Drug Testing. Mr. Durkee seconds the motion and it passes unanimously.

**Agenda Item 5: RFP: 14-03 Safety Life Lines (Chafee Building)**

Mr. Harwood states that the safety lines that he is asking the Board to approve is for the maintenance workers to work on mainly the Hybrid vehicles because the warranty is out of date and the work will now be done by RIPTA's maintenance department. It is an OSHA requirement and it would keep a mechanic from falling off of the Hybrid Buses. Mr. Harwood states that three would be the ideal number, one for scheduled maintenance, unscheduled maintenance and one for body shop.

Mr. Durkee asks if having only three would restrict the number of buses that maintenance could work on. Mr. Harwood states three would be perfect and RIPTA does have the option to purchase more at that price if necessary.

Mr. Ginaitt asks how many people does each Safety line hold and Mr. Harwood responds 3 safety lines, but each would be able to carry two people.

Ms. McDuff asks if the funding is from a Federal Grant and Mr. McGrane responds that yes, it is a Federal Grant.

Mr. Ginaitt makes a motion to award a contract to Nadeau Corporation for the purchase of three safety lines. Mr. Williams seconds the motion and it passes unanimously.

#### **Agenda Item 6: R-Line Update**

Mayor Avedisian states that there is no need for Executive Session today, so he asks Ms. Pettine to provide an R-Line update as the last agenda items for the day. She introduces Greg Nordin, the project lead, as the presenter today.

Mr. Nordin will provide a walk through on the R-Line implementation with the full implementation scheduled for June 2014.

He will go through the five big pieces of this project and provide an update on the timeline.

Number one is the Transit Signal Prioritization this occurred with the ARRA dollars and the construction for this was completed in December of 2013. The fine tuning portion of this will be completed by April 2014 and it will be fully operational in time for the June 2014 schedule change. Mr. Nordin states some of the benefits that will be seen is up to 15% time savings along the R-Line operationally which will reduce the number of buses that RIPTA needs from 13 down to 11. It will also make a faster ride for the passengers as well with a reduced dwell time at intersections.

The second piece of this project that is moving along nicely is the Passenger Amenities/Wayfinding that is the branding of the R-Line. RIPTA has reduced the number of stops along this route from 150 to 56. Mr. Nordin states that it sounds like a lot, however it is approximately ¼ mile spacing between stops. 26 new shelters, 4 windscreens, 42 benches, 31 trash cans and 24 bike racks will be installed by June 2014.

Mr. Durkee asks where the longest stretch is between stops and how far it is. Mr. Nordin thinks it is on the southern part and this is the part that goes over the interstate and there would be no reason for a stop there. The distance would be closer to a 1/3 of a mile.

46% of the stops on this route will have some sort of shelter for passengers. 17 of the 56 bus stops will include public art. This was coordinated with the City of Providence. The sheltered stops will include name plates.

Mr. Ginaitt asks if these shelters are being maintained by Lamar. Mr. Nordin responds no they are not. Mr. Ginaitt states that there are a lot of businesses that may want to “adopt a stop” to help clean up stops near their businesses.

Mayor Avedisian states that Mr. Studley has been looking over the Lamar Contract which was a 30-year contract and it is just about up. Mr. Studley and his staff are also reviewing all contracts to ensure consistency among contracts.

Mr. Durkee asks if the notion of LCD Displays at shelters is realistic or unrealistic to have. Mr. Nordin looked into Solar Panel designs on the bus stops, right now doesn't not make sense to do it, however the Way Finding Designs can be retro fitted if in the future that is something RIPTA wants to do.

Mr. Ginaitt asks if the bus stops are made out of glass and Mr. Nordin responds that it is safety glass the ceiling is polycarbonate. The safety glass is easier maintenance even though it is breakable it is easier to keep clean and looking nice than the polycarbonate. Mr. Nordin according to manufacturer rocks will not break the glass. It would be good to ask if there is a site that is consistently being broken are there alternatives that could be done to protect those sites.

Mr. Nordin states that the City of Providence underwent a very long process to hire 17 artists and 16 are from Rhode Island and they have begun fabricating artwork for each of the stops. Mr. Nordin goes through examples of art work and how the artist had come to that selection for each stop based off of history, food and culture related to that area of Rhode Island.

25 of the stops will be receiving “Wayfinding Totems” with information of stops along the R-Line and also what there is within a 5-minute walk of that stop. Also, in some instances provide them with some cultural information. These are made out of high density plastic and can be cleaned with power washing. These totems have the capability for real time display, however that is on the back burner for now but RIPTA may want to revisit in the future.

The 31 remaining stops do not receive the “Wayfinding Totem” will receive “Enhanced Transit Signs” that will include the map and boarding information but will not have the cultural piece. The maps were just finalized and will be in both English and Spanish.

Number three is Bus Branding. RIPTA is currently working with a consultant to develop brand that is unique, distinctive, tied to the current RIPTA brand and is easily maintained. Mr. Nordin shows some examples of what has been proposed to date.

Mr. Durkee states that if the Bus is branded for the R-Line then that bus can only be used for the R-Line and it could create a maintenance issue. Mr. Nordin states that they are working through this with Mr. Harwood. He states that it would be painted on to the buses and all these examples are actually too complex to paint and need something a little more subdued.

The fourth is Route Scheduling. This will go into affect with June choose up. It will maintain a 10 minute headway that RIPTA is proud of during peak/midday. The R-Line will be able to improve evening/night service from 45 minutes to 20 minutes. It will also improve the Saturday/Sunday midday service from 20 minutes to 15 minutes. With all these achievements will be able to reduce the fleet y two buses.

Mr. Durkee asks when the last bus will run on this line. Mr. Nordin responds that weekdays and Saturdays it will be around 1am and Sundays around 12 am.

The fifth piece is the Ticket Vending Machines (TVM's) which were purchased with ARRA money. There are 7 of them total. Five of them will be installed at Kennedy Plaza, one at Providence Station and one at Transit Center in Pawtucket. Mr. Nordin states that this is the slowest moving piece because there are greater implications beyond the implementation of the R-Line regarding to the Fare Product. Fare Products will have to be updated to reflect changes with TVM's. The most valuable aspect of new Fare Product would be the reloadable stored value Smart Cards.

Mr. Durkee asks if there is a discount if people use the Smart Cards and Ms. Pettine states that is still something that they are working out.

Mr. Studley mentions another issue regarding the charges associated with the TVM's.

Mr. Nordin recaps the timeline for completion of this project. In January they will finalize the signage and signage content. February begin manufacturing of signage, issue bid for passenger amenity installation. March they will finalize bus branding and finalize TSP fine tuning. April they will begin passenger amenity installation and begin marketing campaign. May they will paint the buses and finalize passenger amenity installation. Lastly, in June they will adjust the scheduling and the R-Line will be up and running.

Ms. Holland McDuff asks if the marketing and branding will incorporate the art work of the bus stops. She goes on to say that psychologically the art work will become the riders branding. Mr. Nordin responds that definitely because he realizes people will associate stops with the art work. Ms. Holland McDuff thinks this is great.

Mr. Ginaitt asks what the ultimate goal is of the R-Line project. Ms. Pettine responds that the R-Line has been called for in planning documents because it is a fifth of our ridership. When the service guidelines were updated this year called out Key Corridors which are significant corridors with significant ridership. Mr. Nordin started out with RIPTA as part of a grant for the R-Line is now on RIPTA's staff and part of his job will be monitor R- Line but think about investments that can be made on key routes. Signal Prioritization expansion is a good bang for the buck so looking to put aside grant money to expand that. Passenger amenities on high passenger routes could be another area to focus on.

Mayor Avedisian states that this entire process has opened up a lot of other discussions regarding Lamar and what other changes that RIPTA needs to make.

Mr. Ginaitt would like to say how impressed he is with the people who work at RIPTA, the leadership at RIPTA and all these collective programs and he is very proud to be part of RIPTA.

Mayor Avedisian states that there have been a lot of changes over the past year.

Mr. Studley states that he has receive a lot of positive emails and phone calls regarding the information put out on the website and social media.

Mr. Williams states that RIPTA is now at the point where implementing things that are lower cost, but also expanding positive benefits for customer service for the Riders. He thinks it is terrific that RIPTA is making a real difference for the riders.

Ms. Holland McDuff adds that RIPTA is working toward the mission now not just responding to crisis.

Ms. Martin would like to add that it has been inspirational to see how much a year has changed and the staff and Union working together. Embracing social media is good to see and level of exposure is tremendous.

### **Agenda Item 7:     Adjournment**

Mr. Durkee makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Williams seconds the motion and it passes unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

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Marie DiToro  
Recording Secretary