



**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, July 19, 2023**

**1:30 p.m.**

**269 Melrose Street, Providence**

**Transportation Board Room**

**Members Present:** Peter Alviti, Board Chair; Robert Kells, Board Vice Chair; Michelle Wilcox, Board Treasurer; Patrick Crowley, Board Secretary; James Leach; Normand Benoit; and Heather Schey

**Absent Members:** Marcy Reyes

**Also Present:** Scott Avedisian, CEO; Christopher Fragomeni, Esq., Board Counsel; Courtney Marciano, Director of Media and Executive Communications; Jamie Pereira, Chief of Security; Steven Colantuono, Chief Legal Counsel; Kathy Nadeau, Chief Human Resources Officer; members of RIPTA's staff; and members of the public.

**Call to Order:** Mr. Alviti called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m., indicating that quorum was present.

Mr. Alviti opens with comments, thanking Mr. Benoit for his tenure as Chairman of the Board; he wishes Mr. Benoit well and knows he will continue to be a valuable board member.

Mr. Alviti continues that the Governor, House of Representatives, and the Senate voted to install him, or the Director of the Department of Transportation, whoever that may be, as Chairman of this Board. Mr. Alviti continued that he has assured the Governor and the people of Rhode Island that he will put in the time and effort to make things better for RIPTA. He plans to address the fiscal cliff and identify ways to address the funding gap. A solution, in his opinion, does not include any cuts in transportation.

**Agenda Item 1:** **To Consider for Approval the Draft Regular Meeting Minutes of the June 21, 2023 Meeting.**

Mr. Crowley makes a motion to approve the minutes of the June 21, 2023 meeting. Ms. Wilcox seconds, and the motion passes with favorable votes by Mr. Leach; Mr. Alviti; Ms. Schey; Mr. Kells; and Mr. Benoit.

**Agenda Item 2:**                    **Public Comment**

**1. Patricia Raub:**

- a. On behalf of the RI Transit Riders, wishes Director Alviti well on his leadership as Chairman of the Board.
- b. RI Transit Riders has concerns about the Wakefield Mall bus stop. They feel that the current location of the bus stop is too close to the highway. RI Transit Riders would like to see the stop moved to a better location.
- c. Photo ID Office at Kennedy Plaza remains closed and understands why. However, they would like to have the schedule of site visits posted on the doors of Kennedy Plaza and/or other places than strictly on social media because not everyone has internet/social media access. They would also like to see RIPTA staff come to the downtown transit center on a regular basis to help riders sign up.
- d. Would like to see more police presence in Kennedy Plaza. Does not feel that Providence Police Department presence is as robust as it should be with RIPTA paying the bill. Does not feel the Plaza is secure as it should be.

**2. Barry Schiller:**

- a. Mr. Schiller distributes a list of ideas and hopes that could help guide RIPTA management, staff, and the board members make transit even better than it is right now.
- b. Mr. Schiller highlights some of the key takeaways from the handout. How can we use climate change as a marketing tool? Can we offer free rides during April for Earth Month?
- c. Mr. Schiller also wants more focus given to the downtown transit rider as well as north-side service. He included ideas on how to promote these services in his handout.
- d. Mr. Schiller remains optimistic about the future of transit in Rhode Island, and feels that if we work together, we can make it better for all those who utilize the system and even get more ridership as time goes on.

**3. Grant Dulgarian:**

- a. Would like each Board Member to provide three (3) ideas on how they plan to get more people to ride RIPTA. Would like to see that as a specific agenda item to be reviewed during the August meeting.
- b. Would like to revisit handing out gift cards to the most senior drivers—Ecology Rhode Island will fund the gift cards with the caveat that Director Alviti agrees to meet them on a bi-monthly basis for 90 minutes to discuss how to move RIPTA in a positive direction.
- c. Currently, the shelter at CCRI Warwick is fenced off due to construction. Would like to see a makeshift shelter set up for students as we head into the season(s) of inclement weather.

**4. Randall Rose:**

- a. Has read the RFP for the Pawtucket-Central Falls Bus hub; it is much better written and designed than the RFP written for the Dorrance Street hub.
- b. Mr. Rose would like to ensure that RI Transit Riders are included in the kickoff meeting as they are supposed to be a key stakeholder.
- c. With respect to the new building being planned for Pawtucket, real-time digital screens need to be maintained once they are installed. They should be durable, and RIPTA needs to make sure there's enough additional funds available to repair and replace them as

needed. This has not been the case in Kennedy Plaza and there should be a plan in place to ensure that we do not have the same issues in Pawtucket.

- d. Mr. Rose agrees that the Board should be promoting transit, but please be careful underselling transit in interviews. Saying that 97% of people do not use transit is not an accurate statistic.
  - e. Mr. Rose would like to see RIPTA continue with the Transit Master Plan (TMP) and not back down from the long-range needs of RIPTA. Would like to see more public engagement and attention to be given to the TMP.
5. **Walter Melillo:**
- a. Mr. Melillo introduces himself as the new ATU president.
  - b. Mr. Melillo states his intentions and goals to work with management and the Board to bring safe, reliable transit to riders. He expresses that making cuts is not the solution and that under his leadership he intends to be a helpful partner and advocate for his union members, as well as those who utilize the system.
  - c. Mr. Melillo asks the Board that if there are issues, questions or concerns to please bring the ATU into the conversation and help find meaningful solutions.

### **Agenda Item 3: CEO Report**

Mr. Alviti begins with outlining new additions to be added to the monthly CEO Report.

#### **A. Items to Add to CEO Report:**

Every comment and/or question from the public to be answered in written form and presented at the next Board Meeting.

- Board members should receive the answers/responses within one week of the meeting so that they have adequate time to review them.
- Questions should be answered in detail so that it is clear what direction the Agency is taking to address the comments/concerns/questions.
- Answers to the questions/comments/concerns should be included in their own section of the CEO report with detailed answers to be addressed during the Board Meeting.

#### **B. Questions and Requests for Information from Board Members:**

- If any comments, questions, or requests for information are brought up during the Board Meeting, they should be fully addressed within one week of the meeting.
- At the next Board Meeting, responses should be addressed in full detail.

Mr. Alviti continues that all the questions raised during the June Board of Directors meeting were all inadequately answered. He reviews the ten questions that were asked and asks that the RIPTA team re-develop the answers to all questions.

Scott Avedisian, RIPTA's CEO, presents the CEO report. Topics included in his update were:

1. RIPTA At A Glance
2. RIPTA In The News
3. Commendations
4. Financial Update:
  - a. Nathan Watchous RIPTA's Executive Director of Financial Planning & Analysis, reviewed and presents the monthly financials for the Authority.

**Agenda Item 4: Procurement Updates for the High-Capacity Transit Corridor: Planning will re-bid to better define the scope of work so that maybe there will be a smaller disparity among bids received.**

John Chadwick, Executive Director of Procurement and Inventory for RIPTA, presents the update.

Mr. Alviti expresses while there is a minute point difference between the scoring of the two proposals, there is a million-dollar difference between the cost proposed by the two proposers. Mr. Alviti suggests that the RIPTA procurement team should consider utilizing the Brooks Act for this procurement and/or consider separating the cost-proposal from the qualitative proposal prior to assigning points.

**Agenda Item 5: Microsoft M365 G5 License Renewal**

Gary Jarvis, Chief of Information Technology for RIPTA, presents the request.

Mr. Benoit makes a motion to approve. Mr. Crowley seconds, and the motion is held with favorable votes by Mr. Leach; Mr. Alviti; Ms. Wilcox; Ms. Schey; and Mr. Kells.

**Agenda Item 6: Pawtucket-Central Falls Passenger Facilities Building Design**

James Canty, Executive Director of Project Management for RIPTA, presents the request.

Mr. Crowley makes a motion to approve. Ms. Wilcox seconds, and the motion is held with favorable votes by Mr. Leach; Mr. Alviti; Mr. Benoit; Ms. Schey; and Mr. Kells.

**Agenda Item 7: Resolution for Bank Authorization**

Nathan Watchous, Executive Director of Financial Planning & Analysis for RIPTA, presents the request.

Mr. Benoit makes a motion to approve. Ms. Schey seconds, and the motion passes with favorable votes by Mr. Crowley; Mr. Alviti; Mr. Leach; Ms. Wilcox; and Mr. Kells.

**Agenda Item 8: Adjournment – 3:23 p.m.**

Mr. Crowley makes a motion to adjourn. Ms. Wilcox seconds, and the motion passes with favorable votes by Mr. Leach; Mr. Alviti; Mr. Benoit; Mr. Kells; and Ms. Schey.

Respectfully submitted,

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Patrick Crowley, Secretary