



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 23, 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; Marcy Reyes; and Heather Schey.

Absent Members: None.

Also Present: Scott Avedisian, CEO; Christopher Fragomeni, Esq., Board Counsel; Courtney Marciano, Director of Media and Executive Communications; Christopher Durand, Chief Financial Officer; 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 1:32 p.m., indicating that quorum was present.

Agenda Item 1: **To Consider for Approval the Draft Regular Meeting Minutes of the June 19, 2023 Meeting.**

Ms. Schey makes a motion to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2023 meeting. Mr. Crowley seconds, and the motion passes with favorable votes by Mr. Leach; Mr. Alviti; Mr. Benoit; Ms. Wilcox; Ms. Reyes; and Mr. Kells.

Agenda Item 2: **Public Comment**

1. Patricia Raub:

- Ms. Raub: Reads statement on behalf of RI Transit Riders into the record.
- Ms. Raub states that the Dorrance Street Project, if fully realized, could be good for all riders. However, asks that we remain fiscally responsible and not vote on awarding a contract until multiple steps are taken.

2. Erin Ritter

- Ms. Ritter: Reads statement on behalf of Conservation Law Foundation into the record.
- Ms. Ritter expressed her opposition to the Dorrance Street Transit Center.
- Ms. Ritter said that she feels the public has been kept out of the process thus far and has concerns about how things will progress as the project moves forward.
- Ms. Ritter expresses that she believes the current contract gives the chosen developer a "sweetheart" deal and that RIPTA needs to stop and reconsider.

3. John Flaherty:

- Mr. Flaherty expressed that he believes RIPTA has been chronically underfunded for years.
- Mr. Flaherty expressed that, despite being underfunded, RIPTA continues to outperform agencies of similar sizes that receive more funding dollars.
- Mr. Flaherty expressed that over the last several months there have been many combative statements made in the media. He continued that this is the time to come together and work collaboratively to bring long-term change to the agency.

4. Doug Victor:

- Mr. Victor is the Chair of Elmwood and South Providence Crime Watch.
- Mr. Victor expressed that he is dependent upon RIPTA services.
- Mr. Victor feels that drivers accelerate and stop far too quickly. It can be dangerous for all passengers.
- Mr. Victor commended RIPTA for their efforts but asks that the Agency reinforce with drivers that they need to be mindful of older riders who may take more time getting to seats.

5. Randall Rose:

- Mr. Rose expressed that he is speaking on behalf of the Kennedy Plaza Resilience Coalition.
- Mr. Rose wants RIPTA to reconsider awarding this contract.
- Mr. Rose believes there is no guaranteed maximum price for the new transit center.
- Mr. Rose expressed that there has been no transparency throughout the entire RFP process up to this point. He questioned if that will really change as things progress if the contract is awarded.
- Mr. Rose claimed that the RFP was largely written by the consultants and not RIPTA staff which is another issue.
- Mr. Rose is concerned this could lead RIPTA down the road to bankruptcy.

6. Grant Dulgarian:

- Mr. Dulgarian spoke on behalf of Ecology Action of Rhode Island.
- Mr. Dulgarian feels that what the public was told a decade ago is directly opposite of what the public was promised.
- Mr. Dulgarian expressed that the R-Line should never have been made free. He wants the public to have ample time to understand that the R-Line will no longer be free.
- He deferred 3 action items provided by the Board until next month.

7. Mikeda Barnes:

- Ms. Barnes thinks moving RIPTA out of Kennedy Plaza is a mistake. She feels that moving out of Kennedy Plaza is like saying they are moving Central Park out of New York.

- The project should not be on the backs of taxpayers. She expressed that RIPTA is already in debt so badly that she cannot get her pension money that she feels she is owed.
- Ms. Barnes said that she feels there are many people who are getting kickbacks from moving out of Kennedy Plaza to Dorrance Street.
- Ms. Barnes claimed she cannot get her pension— says she lost her job because she reported safety issues.
- Ms. Barnes questioned who is going to benefit the most from the P3 project. Thinks that the project is lining people's pockets, and no one cares about the impacts for the actual riders.
- Ms. Barnes wants to see more bus drivers attending meetings to discuss the real issues happening in KP and make them better.

8. Andrew Nosal:

- Mr. Nosal expressed that he is a lifelong user of transit in Rhode Island and many other cities.
- Mr. Nosal believes that the current RFP for the P3 is the worst idea. It will make national headlines and not in a good way.
- Questions: Will there be more service? Will buses come more frequently? Will wait times be less? Will there be less transfers necessary? Mr. Nosal currently expressed that the current answer to all of these questions is no.
- Mr. Nosal questioned whether RIPTA has a wish list for this project.
- Mr. Nosal is frustrated that it appears that the largest piece of the project is a parking garage which is the opposite of transit.

Agenda Item 3: CEO Report

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. Christopher Durand, Chief Financial Officer for RIPTA, reviews and presents the monthly financials for the Authority.

Agenda Item 4: Executive Session

The Board, staff, and counsel entered executive session at 2:44 p.m.

The Board, staff, and counsel exited executive session at 3:21 p.m.

Agenda Item 5: RFP – 23-31 Construction Contract for Security Gates and Fences

Jack Plouffe, Project Manager for RIPTA, presents the request.

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

Agenda Item 6: Review and Approval of Revised Board of Directors Bylaws

The item was deferred.

Mr. Crowley makes a motion to defer this agenda item. Mr. Leach seconds, and the motion is held for review with favorable votes by Mr. Alviti; Mr. Benoit; Ms. Wilcox; Ms. Reyes; Mr. Kells; and Ms. Schey.

Agenda Item 7: Dorrance Street Transit Center Joint Development Project

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

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

Agenda Item 8: Adjournment - 3:34 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Crowley, Secretary