

**TWIN CITY AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
Board Meeting**

November 26, 2024

I. Welcome and Opening:

1. Call to Order: The special meeting of the Twin City Area Transportation Authority Board of Directors was held at the Benton Harbor City Hall Building, 200 E. Wall Street, Benton Harbor, MI 49022, on Tuesday, November 19, 2024.

2. Roll Call of Persons Present:

Spencer Nesbitt, Vice Chair Dayrl Jackson, Member
Virgil Hatcher, Member

Roll call: Vice Chair Spencer Nesbitt (here), Member Virgil Hatcher (here), Member Dayrl Jackson (here). A quorum was established, and Board Vice Chair Spencer Nesbitt called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call of Persons Absent: Chair Ron Singleton. Board Secretary Cora Robinson, who joined the meeting later.

3. Approval of Agenda: Member Dayrl Jackson made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Member Virgil Hatcher. Roll Call: Vice Chair Spencer Nesbitt (yes), Member Dayrl Jackson (yes), Member Virgil Hatcher (yes). The Board unanimously approved the agenda.

4. Finance Committee Report: Chief accountant Kevyn Kozumplik presented the following report:

Covered a full fiscal year. Showed significant changes from last year to this year. The balance sheet shows \$700,000 at the end of the year; fixed assets shows the biggest changes, \$2.1m at the end of the year, increased almost a million from the prior year. Profit and Loss revenues increased significantly due to capital grant (1.8m) , reimbursement of capital grant for bus purchases and other capital items, which shows reason for inflation of income. Also shows no expenses because its being reflected in depreciation. Shows accounts payable aging, detail of vendors owed at end of year, and then all expenses by vendor.

No questions by the Board.

5. Human Resource Committee Report: (previously deleted as agenda item)

6. Approval of September Minutes: Dayrl Jackson supported motion to approve September minutes, seconded by Virgil Hatcher. Roll Call: Vice Chair Spencer Nesbitt (yes), Member Virgil Hatcher (yes), Member Dayrl Jackson (yes). The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

7. Approval of November Special Meeting Minutes: Member Dayrl Jackson supported motion to approve September minutes, seconded by Member Virgil Hatcher. Roll Call: Vice Chair Spencer Nesbitt (yes), Member Virgil Hatcher (yes), Member Dayrl Jackson (yes). The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

II. Financial Updates: Previously addressed.

III. **Director Updates:** Executive Director Todd Shurn presented the following updates:

8. **Insurance Update:** Advised TCATA has secured insurance from a broker called Abyssinian , which means there will be no interruptions/lapse in services. Deputy Director Greschak advised of cost increase from \$70,000 to just u/\$300,000, which was expected. Need to develop a plan to adjust for cost increase but is possible to sustain.
9. **Route changes:** Looking at service changes that will not create public deficiencies but efficiency within TCATA which will cut down on expenses, i.e., extra fuel cost, overtime, etc. Still asking the public to call 24 hours in advance for pre-trips, riders to provide personal info in order to be advised of possible wait times; and allow reasonable call time for same day service.

Other plans are to observe more closely preventative maintenance on vehicles; increase staff training; showed training video by RTOP focusing on ADA training regarding wheelchair securement training; checking motor vehicle records of staff; tightening hiring practices whereby two persons will approve new hire (HR and supervisor of department); hiring qualified persons; increased safety measures, i.e., painting of poles, which are in line with Triennial compliances; will be installing a camera on the building pointed at bullpen area where all spare vehicles are kept to minimize theft.

Executive Director Shurn addressed ongoing issues with staff after having had training. Chief Safety Officer Nick Fort will mete out discipline: overall safety plan, investigation plan for accidents utilizing cameras and trackers. Deputy Director Greschak addressed rumor of a passenger on a bus passing away after an accident. Investigated using trackers and cameras and determined the passenger had not been on a TCATA bus for at least two hours before the incident occurred. This is one failsafe to minimize risks. It protects us, the public, and staff. Most of the staff participated in the wheelchair training, others will be getting training in a week or so, post-Thanksgiving.

To also limit liability, legal counsel was added. Matt Koerner, member of the firm Foster Swift Collins & Smith PC that specializes in transportation, can also provide counsel on employment and unions. He was recommended by Ken Gallagher from SWM Planning Commission. No contract. Bill only on the 12th of the hour.

Mr. Fort with regard to safety, advises that training has to be embedded in each person to do their job till it becomes second nature to them; need to understand the process, especially strapping down wheelchairs; take pride in their work, work on attendance, and be accountable. Discipline falls on safety Officer Fort, but ultimately, the Deputy Director and Executive Director makes the final decision. Deputy Director Greschak advises, so far, no problems with new hires. Wheelchair checklist instructions were suggested to be posted in the bus, along with sign on/sign off sheets to be turned in at end of day as verification checklist completed. Accountability is critical. Executive Director Shurn agreed and advised he will check and report back. He advised that the cameras will also keep staff accountable. Deputy Director Greschak will check on practicality.

10. **FTA Findings:** Executive Director Shurn presented the following summary of FTA findings:

As previously stated, TCATA now has a transit attorney. Financials were single audit findings. Deputy Director Greschak addressed audit findings regarding the Open Meetings Act, procurement and finance issues. Several have been addressed in policies previously drafted. Some have due dates set for the end of December to allow for triple checking. Need to come up with Open Meeting/Notetaking policy to be approved at the end of December, and possibly take another look

at procurement as well. Need to be consistent with satisfactory continuing control, which was a deficiency received because we didn't have cameras that covered the axillary lots or the bullpen areas. Installers checked today and by the end of year will have cameras covering the entire lot. That deficiency can be crossed off. A few more can be crossed off. Procurement would include fixing the steps on the side of the building, which will be positive proof we're following procedures outlined. Missing FTA clauses were added, so can now be crossed off. The other two aren't going to be crossed off until we actually do a procurement. We've been informed that our procedure is correct. Deputy Director Greschak addresses maintenance issues. All maintenance records will be kept by way of hardcopy and the Verizon Connect Reveal system that will be connected to the trackers. Maintenance to continue to be consistent in producing hardcopy records, which will be put into the system. The system records will show excel breakdowns of all maintenance categories. The system will alert us when maintenance is due and note when completed. This system will aid in our federal findings when we're asked to produce records of preventative maintenance done. We can include other things, i.e., fire extinguishers, also. Executive Director Shurn advises that this system was installed at the University of Michigan to generate data for research and as the product matured it had this additional component, so we transitioned this into TCATA. The initial trackers on vehicles was a University of Michigan University thing.

No questions by Board.

IV. Old Business: There was no further old business to come before this Board.

V. New Business: There was no further new business to come before this Board.

VI. Proposed Resolution: Executive Director Shurn requests resolution to purchase insurance for \$285,000.

Vice Chair Nesbitt makes motion to accept resolution, seconded by Jackson. Roll call: Vice Chair Nesbitt (yes), Member Jackson (yes), Member Hatcher (yes), Secretary Robinson (yes). The Board unanimously approved the resolution. Executive Director Shurn will report back when the contract is executed - should be tomorrow.

VII. Public Comments: Public reminded Board will not answer questions, and they have three minutes.

Mr. Al Pscholka with Lake Michigan College. Comments made about the importance of TCATA to about 100 students and 10 employees. They have finals on December 9th. Will advise students to be diligent in giving 24-hour notice and share contact info. Glad to hear the insurance was coming through. Advised if deductible is so high you become almost self-insured, that could be a problem in the future as well. We're partners with TCATA, students use the service a lot, sell discounted tickets to students and cut a check to TCATA once a month. Wish TCATA the best.

Ms. Nyasha asks concerning information on bid packets (quotes) for insurance. Thought should be answered because it's public information. Asks for copies when available. Board member advised cannot answer question because we may not readily have answers to your question. Understood.

Mr. Sav Sacala, a blind individual in the community who has used Dial-a-Ride before. Advised, TCATA needed more transparency. Questioned whether insurance process was underway; would like to know how Abyssinian Insurance Company was chosen and the calculus for it. Questions why cutting staff overtime to maximize efficiency would be necessary given the financial report surplus indicated. Questions whether insurance issue will reoccur, or has it been resolved permanently. Stated that safety should be addressed in more detail. Glad to hear ADA training is happening. Optimistic concerning Dial-a-Ride in the future, but past experience have taught him to be a little pessimistic about outcomes. But hopes that this will be good going forward.

Deputy Director Greschak gives an indirect response: Any major changes in service, including a raise in cost, or changing or adding a line would require a public event to receive public opinion discussions about what works better for the public; anything that affects riders.

Ms. Rhonda McKinney, Dial-a-Ride employee. A lot has not been told. Staff, drivers, are the last to know. There's a lot we need to know. Training was nice. But in reality, we stood in the cold garage for about an hour, then upstairs in a crowded breakroom about an hour and half watching videos. Back and forth instead of all being in one room. So, there are some things that should be known. The previous young man who spoke raised very important questions. Will you get back to him and answer the questions?

Board member Hatcher makes a statement referencing public bids for contracts that TCATA do. He's certain it's documented somewhere in terms of policy and practice when seeking contracts, how that's done. There may be answers forthcoming as to how that's done.

Ms. Laverne Shaw, Dial-a-Ride employee for 2 years. Unfortunately, have seen lots of things come and go. The present Director is the fourth in her 2 years. There's a breakdown in how Dial-a-Ride has been running. Been trying to figure out how we got to where we are. Not placing blame on anyone here. We all can share in this blame. From the bottom to the top. Regarding insurance, negligence on the part of the drivers/employees. But employees are vetted and trained by admin., admin. get their direction from E.D., the E.D. is selected by the Board, the Board is appointed by the mayor. Questions where's our major? Why isn't he here? This is a very important meeting concerning the City of Benton Harbor. Putting partial blame on him, but also blaming all of us. I answer the phone, and how I answer affects Dial-a-Ride. I do have questions, but you're not answering questions. We gotta do better. Dial-a-Ride was established by Mr. Brown, a resident of Benton Harbor. Other cities are watching us, observing how we progress, or not progress. This is important. I'm a proud citizen of Benton Harbor.

Board Member Jackson appreciated commenter's statement about this being her fourth Director. This present Board hired Director Shurn to straighten up what previous board members did.

- VIII. Adjournment:** With no further business, Member Hatcher made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Member Jackson. Roll call: Member Jackson (yes), Member Hatcher (yes), Vice Chair Nesbitt (yes), Secretary Robinson (yes). The meeting was adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

Attested:

Spencer Nesbitt
Board Vice Chair

Cora Robinson
Board Secretary