

PARTA
PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

Held Remotely Via Zoom

May 27, 2021

Board Members Participating:

Karen Beck	David Gynn, President	Morgan Tipton
Marge Bjerregaard	Virginia Harris	Frank Vitale
Jeff Childers	R. T. Mansfield	Karen Wise, TPO (participated but was not able to unmute)
Debbie Davison	Jack Murphy	Marvin Woods

Staff Participating:

Claudia Amrhein	Kelly Jurisch	Rebecca Schrader
Denise Baba	Michelle Reese, Legal Counsel	Brian Trautman
Marcia Fletcher	Clayton Popik	

Board Members Not Participating:

Richard Brockett (1 st excused absence)	Mike Lewis (2 nd excused absence)
--	--

Guests Participating:

Curtis Baker, AMATS

CALL TO ORDER

President David Gynn called the May 27 PARTA Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7 p.m. He asked Ms. Marcia Fletcher to call the roll.

Ms. Fletcher then called the roll, and a **quorum was participating**.

Mr. Gynn thanked everyone for coming and Ms. Michelle Reese for stepping in and representing Mr. Justin Markey, who had another commitment. He asked everyone to mute their computers and then unmute for voting. He said the first item of business was the minutes from the April 22, 2021, meeting. He asked for a motion for approval. Ms. Marge Bjerregaard made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, which was seconded by Ms. Morgan Tipton. Mr. Gynn asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, he asked all those who approved to say aye. He asked those who were opposed to say no. Hearing no opposition, he said the **motion to approve the minutes, as presented, passed unanimously.**

GUEST COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Gynn said there were no Guest Communications because of COVID-19.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Gynn asked Ms. Claudia Amrhein if she had anything to add to the General Manager's Report that she sent out.

Ms. Amrhein welcomed everybody, as well as Ms. Reese who she has been working with on the RLB Phoenix matter for several months. She noted that Mr. Curtis Baker was having internet problems and that the agenda may need to be adjusted depending on how long it will take for him to get back on. She said there was not a whole lot to report this month other than the new development last week with the City of Kent deciding to move forward with the Cutler space. She said she would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Gynn thanked Ms. Amrhein for sending the obituaries for the two (2) PARTA employees: Mr. Daryl Frazier and Ms. Michelle Laston.

Ms. Amrhein said Mr. Frazier passed shortly after a recent surgery. He was a foreman and worked dayshift as a bus mechanic. He worked for PARTA for about 20 years. Ms. Laston was a bus driver and had battled cancer for some time. She asked if there were any other questions. Hearing none, she noted that Mr. Baker was able to reconnect.

Mr. Gynn then moved on to the committee reports.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Gynn said the Administration Committee did not meet.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Gynn said the Finance Committee met and Mr. Jeff Childers will give the report.

Mr. Childers thanked Mr. Gynn and said the committee met Tuesday and went over the reports that were submitted by Ms. Rebecca Schrader. PARTA is tracking smoothly with a surplus. There were no drawdowns from the state and federal capital maintenance assistance funds. Expenses were as expected. The Kent Central Gateway (KCG) had a \$174 surplus for the year. Parking in the deck is catching up slowly. It seems to be tracking almost identically for the last four (4) years and this year is no exception. Rent from the City of Kent and RLB Phoenix is being collected and should total \$32,000 this year. The three (3) resolutions were also discussed and recommended to the Board for approval.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any questions for the Finance Committee.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Hearing none, Mr. Gynn said the Operations Committee did not have a need to meet this month.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Gynn said the Personnel Committee did not have a need to meet this month.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Gynn said there was no Old Business and moved on to New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Gynn said AMATS is talked about all the time, and it is good for Board members to know more about what it is, what it does, and meet the head of it all, Mr. Baker. He asked Ms. Amrhein to introduce Mr. Baker.

Ms. Amrhein said Mr. Baker is the Director of the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study, known as AMATS. He was named Director in December of 2016. He served as the AMATS Planning Administrator prior to that for five (5) years and has been with AMATS for 15 years. As the Director of AMATS, he is responsible for overseeing the administration of the agency, which includes a budget of \$1.8 million for planning and a \$13 million a year infrastructure program budget. He also serves as the Vice Chair of the Summit County Transportation Improvement District. He holds a Master of City and Regional Planning degree from The Ohio State University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Leadership from Miami University. In a non-pandemic world, Mr. Baker would attend the annual breakfast PARTA hosts for the AMATS Portage County partners. Since that was not able to be held in 2020 and 2021, this Board meeting provides a great way for him to give an overview of AMATS. Hopefully, next year everyone will be able to attend the breakfast. She thanked Mr. Baker for coming and turned the meeting over to him for his presentation.

Mr. Baker thanked Ms. Amrhein, her team, and the Board for taking time for him. He said AMATS believes that PARTA is in great hands. This has been a challenging time for everyone. Sometimes AMATS is the agency in the background, which is fine, but AMATS plays a critical role in planning, transportation funding, and looking at long range trends and demographics. He then shared his screen and provided his presentation, which is attached.

Mr. Baker concluded his presentation and said he hoped it gave a little bit of a primer on what AMATS does from more of a process perspective, the way AMATS thinks about its work, and how it works with agencies like PARTA. He said he would be happy to answer any questions.

Ms. Morgan Tipton commented that Mr. Baker has a cool inspirational job to always be thinking and wrestling with how to help humans be well in all spaces, get from one place to another, and keep life moving.

Mr. Baker said it can be very fun, but the federal government does oversee AMATS. There are interesting things to talk about and an infinite number of challenges when facing pedestrian, bike, and transit safety, the way people get from buses to storefronts, and making parking lots and sidewalks easier to access, especially for the disabled and elderly. In a planner's eye, there is always something to be critical of.

Mr. Gynn noted that the Transportation Outlook 2045 plan was in the *Record Courier* and *Beacon Journal*. He asked if the plan was available on AMATS' website if anybody wanted to read all the details.

Mr. Baker said yes, the whole plan is on the website, as well as the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for funding projects over the next four (4) years.

Mr. R. T. Mansfield asked how AMATS looked at the infrastructure needs for electric cars and potential for revenue since they do not use gas.

Mr. Baker said there is a big debate going on right now about who should be responsible for putting in electrical charging stations. One side says the private sector knows best and should determine where the best place is to put charging stations and then there is another frame of thought that says the government needs to make it easier to make EVs more marketable and get rid of range anxiety, which is the idea of only going 200 miles before needing a charge. AMATS is more in the camp of having the private sector take the lead. Tesla has tried to eliminate range anxiety by putting their own charging stations up across the United States. The challenge is that when agencies like AMATS indicate a charging station is needed, there are federal right of way requirements, environmental concerns, delays, and difficulties that are not faced when a charging station is on private property. On the fuel side, Governor DeWine increased the gas tax. Drivers of electric vehicles and hybrids have to pay \$100 to \$200 with their yearly registration. At the federal level, it will eventually get to a miles traveled model. The push behind it has always been that people do not want a black box in their car indicating where they are going but the reality is they are all carrying black boxes in their pockets, and they already know where everyone is going all the time. There is more concern on the federal side where they tend to borrow infrastructure

dollars. The gas tax is making up less and less of the revenue stream for federal infrastructure. EVs have an impact but when 70% of a bill is from tax increases or cuts not related to usage, there is less of an impact than if relying solely on a gas tax. Sadly, over the last 20 years, since purchasing prices eroded because they are not tied to inflation, more and more general revenue is going into that highway trust fund to keep it afloat. The state side of getting more money for transit is a constant battle, as well as trying to get some of the general revenue funding.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any other comments or questions. Hearing none, he thanked Mr. Baker for his interesting presentation and said he is looking forward to next year when the breakfast is held with local county and city officials.

Mr. Baker said he misses the food and hospitality at the PARTA breakfast. It is one of his favorite events of the year.

Moving on, Mr. Gynn said the resolutions would be presented the same way as they were with the Finance Committee. The first resolution will be introduced and discussed. Much of the discussion will be the same as for the second and third resolutions.

Resolutions

Mr. Gynn introduced Resolution #2021-05-01.

#2021-05-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, ENTER INTO, AND SIGN A CONTRACT FOR THE PRODUCTION AND PURCHASE OF URBAN TRANSIT BUSES, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SPARE PARTS WITH GILLIG FOR FIVE (5) YEARS BEGINNING IN 2021 THROUGH 2026.

Mr. Gynn asked for a motion to accept the resolution.

Motion: Jeff Childers

Second: Morgan Tipton

Mr. Gynn said it has been moved and seconded. He then asked Ms. Amrhein to discuss.

Ms. Amrhein said PARTA conducted an RFP process to establish a new five-year large transit bus contract. The plan last year was to order new buses off the last contract. Due to COVID-19 and other disruptions, buses that were expected to be received by the end of last year, have not yet been received. It was determined that establishing a new contract would be the best way to go. Two (2) responsive proposals were received: GILLIG and TESCO. The evaluation process determines the best value. The result was that since the RFP was put together a little differently than prior years because of adding trolley buses to the fleet, TESCO (the vendor for Hometown Trolley) provided the best value and most responsive proposal for trolley buses and GILLIG provided the best value and most responsive proposal for urban transit buses. That represents resolutions 1 and 2. Resolution 3 authorizes the purchase of three (3) trolley buses from TESCO. She then turned the meeting over to Mr. Brian Trautman for any specific questions about the buses themselves and Ms. Rebecca Schrader for any questions on the finance side.

Mr. Jack Murphy asked if the trolleys would replace current bus routes or if they were going to have special routes throughout Portage County; and where the funding was coming from (i.e., federal dollars, a blend of dollars).

Mr. Trautman said he would answer the first question and let Ms. Schrader answer the second. It is not as cut and dried as putting them out on regular routes. A final decision has not been made about how to operate them when it comes to application. For instance, the downtown Kent area has changed with the

Downtown Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) and the ability of PARTA to operate buses through that downtown area, specifically on the weekends. A lot of the planning will be left up to Mr. Clayton Popik and what he comes up with for surveys but there is an opportunity to draw people to park in the deck and use the trolleys as a resource to get to, from, and around the downtown area specifically during the times that would be most lucrative for that kind of a transit operation. He does not know exact times and where they are going to run but they are built in such a way that they can be put on the Interurban and switched over to a specific route to target choice ridership. The goal is to use that revenue stream by making it attractive for people to park at the deck, ride the trolley to dinner, and go back to the deck. Transit across the board is struggling to get back to where it was so choice ridership is a big deal right now. He talked to quite a few people who are operating trolleys and none of them had a bad experience and all of them expressed that the trolleys brought a lot of interest. Coral Reef, which is an island off South Carolina, said it has turned things around for them and they love it. It is without a doubt something to target and maneuver, but it is not going to be limited to any one aspect. Anytime it will add flavor and character, it will be put out there and used. He then asked Ms. Schrader to answer the question about grant funding.

Ms. Schrader said the grant funding is from federal funds awarded through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and the 5339(b) Bus and Bus Facilities Program. Match funds have also been applied for through the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Ohio Transit Partnership Program (OTP2), which will be awarded in July.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any other questions.

Mr. Mansfield asked what these trolleys used for fuel.

Mr. Trautman said the three (3) trolleys being ordered will be Compressed Natural Gas (CNG). Right now, that is a good fit for the buses being replaced, working in the direction of getting a 50/50 composite on the fleet. The buses that are seven (7) months overdue, should arrive by the end of July. He will be going to California on June 21, 22, and 23 to inspect those buses, which are clean diesels. This procurement also offers hybrid electric, which is new for PARTA. Electric is a hot topic right now. Since PARTA does not have the infrastructure for it, the hybrid electric and the BAE System is probably the best thing going. It is proven and has been out there for about 15 to 20 years. PARTA has not made that leap yet. It will be dependent on grant funding. Every one of these grants that Ms. Schrader and her crew go after are scored with points based on the requested propulsion systems. If hybrid electric pulls more points and provides a better opportunity for replacement money than CNG or clean diesel, then the opportunity for hybrid electric is now. That was the angle on this whole thing.

Mr. Gynn thanked Mr. Mansfield for his good question and asked if there were any others. Hearing none, he asked Ms. Fletcher to call the roll.

Roll Call:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Debbie Davison	<u>X</u>	___	Karen Beck	<u>X</u>	___
Jeff Childers	<u>X</u>	___	Frank Vitale	(visually replied Yes)	___
Richard Brockett	EXCUSED	___	Morgan Tipton	(visually replied Yes)	___
Marge Bjerregaard	<u>X</u>	___	Jack Murphy	<u>X</u>	___
Karen Wise (participated but was not able to unmute)		___	Mike Lewis	EXCUSED	___
R. T. Mansfield	<u>X</u>	___	Virginia Harris	<u>X</u>	___
Marvin Woods	<u>X</u>	___	David Gynn	<u>X</u>	___

Mr. Gynn said the motion passed. He then introduced Resolution #2021-05-02.

#2021-05-02: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, ENTER INTO, AND SIGN A CONTRACT FOR THE PRODUCTION AND PURCHASE OF TROLLEY BUSES, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SPARE PARTS WITH TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT SALES CORPORATION (TESCO) FOR FIVE (5) YEARS BEGINNING IN 2021 THROUGH 2026.

Mr. Gynn asked for a motion for approval.

Motion: Marge Bjerregaard

Second: R. T. Mansfield

Mr. Gynn said this resolution was the same as the other one but for different buses and with a different company. He asked if there was any discussion.

Hearing none, Mr. Gynn asked Ms. Fletcher to call the roll.

Roll Call:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Frank Vitale	(visually replied Yes)		Richard Brockett	EXCUSED	
Morgan Tipton	<u>X</u>	___	Marge Bjerregaard	<u>X</u>	___
Jack Murphy	<u>X</u>	___	Karen Beck	<u>X</u>	___
Mike Lewis	EXCUSED		R. T. Mansfield	(muted)	___
Virginia Harris	<u>X</u>	___	Marvin Woods	<u>X</u>	___
Debbie Davison	<u>X</u>	___	Karen Wise (participated but was not able to unmute)		
Jeff Childers	<u>X</u>	___	David Gynn	<u>X</u>	___

Mr. Gynn said the motion passed. He then introduced the third resolution - Resolution #2021-05-03.

#2021-05-03: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO NEGOTIATE, ENTER INTO, AND SIGN A CONTRACT FOR THE PRODUCTION AND PURCHASE OF THREE (3) CNG TROLLEY BUSES, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SPARE PARTS WITH TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT SALES CORPORATION (TESCO).

Motion: Debbie Davison

Second: Marge Bjerregaard

Mr. Gynn asked if anybody needed any additional information. Hearing none, he asked Ms. Fletcher to call the roll.

Roll Call:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Karen Wise (participated but was not able to unmute)			Jeff Childers	<u>X</u>	___
Frank Vitale	(visually replied Yes)		Richard Brockett	EXCUSED	
Morgan Tipton	<u>X</u>	___	Marge Bjerregaard	<u>X</u>	___
Jack Murphy	<u>X</u>	___	Karen Beck	<u>X</u>	___
Mike Lewis	EXCUSED		R. T. Mansfield	(muted)	___
Virginia Harris	<u>X</u>	___	Marvin Woods	<u>X</u>	___
Debbie Davison	<u>X</u>	___	David Gynn	<u>X</u>	___

Mr. Gynn said that motion passed.

Moving on, Mr. Gynn said there was no need for an Executive Session, but he had three (3) announcements. The first one was regarding the Administration Committee, which did not meet. Ms. Karen Wise had an announcement, but since she could not unmute, she will have that announcement at the next meeting. The second announcement was a request. The Portage Public Transportation Assistance Foundation, Inc. (PPTAFI) is not one of the popular foundations that everyone knows about, but it is very useful. Because there is not a golf outing this year, this would be a great opportunity for Board members to donate and help provide bus transportation for people who need it and cannot afford it. He urged Board members to look at that again. The third announcement was to have a brief discussion about the Board meeting in June. As of June 2, things will change unless the Governor makes some unexpected changes. The Board will be able to meet in person again. He asked if Board members felt comfortable meeting in person. Several Board members replied that they felt comfortable meetings in person. He said if anybody felt uncomfortable at all before the meeting, they should contact Ms. Amrhein so arrangements can be made. Holding voting and discussions remotely over the last year were not smooth, but they were done extremely well. He looks forward to getting back together and meeting in person in June. Some new Board members have not even met in person yet. He asked Ms. Amrhein and her staff to plan for the next meeting to be in person. He asked if there was any other business that needed to come before the Board.

Mr. Murphy asked if there was anything new Board members needed to know about in person meetings.

Mr. Gynn said there is a main entrance to the PARTA offices, and the Board room is straight ahead.

Ms. Amrhein said some updated guidance will be put in the Board packet next month; and if there are any special conditions, the Board will be informed as to how it will work once it is figured out.

Mr. Gynn said he knows everyone likes to visit and start and end the meetings on time. He asked those individuals who wanted to socialize to come early to the meeting. He thanked Ms. Reese for joining the meeting and asked if she had anything to add from the attorney's office.

Ms. Reese said she did not have anything to add. She wished the Board good luck moving forward with in-person meetings. She said it is an exciting time to be feeling a little bit more normal.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing nothing further, Mr. Gynn asked for a motion for adjournment. Ms. Marge Bjerregaard made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Jeff Childers. Mr. Gynn asked all in favor to say aye or wave. He asked any opposed to signify by the same sign. Hearing no opposition, the motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Marcia Fletcher
Executive Assistant



Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study
PARTA Board Meeting Presentation

5/27/21

- What is AMATS
- Overview of the AMATS Planning Process
- Transportation Outlook 2045

What is AMATS?

- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) serving Greater Akron
- Responsibilities include:
 - Develop regional transportation plan
 - Oversee the expenditure of federal transportation funds
 - Coordinate transportation improvements with federal, state, and local officials
 - Serve as a forum for elected officials to discuss regional transportation policy



What is AMATS?

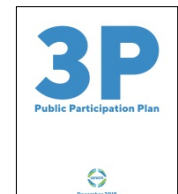
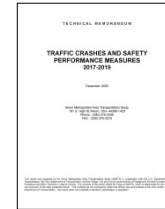
- Conduit for Federal transportation funds (gas tax)
 - Over \$14 million a year
- Structure
 - Policy Committee
 - Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
 - Citizens Involvement Committee (CIC)
 - Staff
- Studies/Programs
 - Safety, congestion, bicycle, pedestrian, public transportation, etc.

AMATS Planning Process

- AMATS 4 year planning process begins and ends with the adoption of a new Long Range Transportation Plan
- During that 4 year period AMATS analyzes the transportation system, regional demographics and trends that shape the future
- AMATS engages with the public through multiple initiatives throughout the planning process

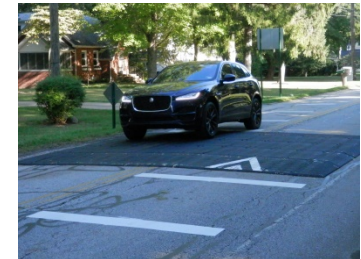
AMATS Analysis and Planning

- 2045 Planning Data Forecast
- Congestion Management Plan
- Traffic Crash Report
- Active Transportation Plan
- Freight Plan
- Transit Plan
- Transportation Preservation Plan
- AMATS 3P Public Participation Plan



AMATS Engagement

- 6 Standing CIC meetings per year
- Better Block
- 8 Bike N Brainstorms
- Move with the Mayor
- Jane's Walk
- Akron Temporary Speed Table Pilot Program



AMATS Long Range Plan

- Completed every 4 years
- Contains fiscally constrained project recommendations
- Projects identified in the Plan or consistent with the Plan are eligible for AMATS federal funds

- \$7.7 billion in recommendations between now and 2045
- Recommendations for highway, bike & pedestrian, and transit
- Financially constrained



Transit Recommendations

\$2.4 Billion in Investment

- Fix it First
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Microtransit
- Coordination
- Transit Oriented Development / Joint Development



METRO	
Operating Expenses - Base Service (per year)	\$57,000,000
Microtransit - Demand Response	
Capital Costs - Base Service (per year)	\$8,625,000
Annual Bus Fleet Expenditures	
Bus Shelter and Stop Enhancements	
Operating Expenses - Additional Service (per year)	\$500,000
BRT Service Priority Corridor	
Capital Expenses - Additional Service (one time expense)	\$53,000,000
BRT Buses	
Maintenance Facility	
Administration Facility	
BRT Capital Expenses	

PARTA	
Operating Expenses - Base Service (per year)	\$9,800,000
Microtransit - Demand Response	
Capital Costs - Base Service (per year)	\$1,205,000
Annual Bus Fleet Expenditures	
Bus Shelter and Stop Enhancements	
Capital Expenses - Additional Service (one time expense)	\$1,300,000
Fare Collection - Pay on Foot EZ Fare	
Ravenna Hub	

Planning in/after a Pandemic

- Obvious challenges planning during the pandemic, but a greater challenge to understand what comes next
 - Will traffic continue to be below normal levels?
 - Will freight traffic continue to grow?
 - Will transit ridership return?
 - What will happen to our downtowns or suburban office spaces?
 - How much impact can 15 months of changed behavior have over the next 20 years?

Curtis Baker

Director, AMATS

cbaker@akronohio.gov

www.amatsplanning.org