PARTA
PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

Held Remotely Via Zoom

June 25, 2020

Board Members Participating:

Rick Bissler, President
Marge Bjerregaard
Richard Brockett
Jeff Childers
Debbie Davison
Dave Gynn, Vice President
Virginia Harris
Michael Lewis
Jeremy Moldvay, TPO
Morgan Tipton (not connected at roll call)
Frank Vitale
Karen Wise

Board Members Not Participating:

Brian Gray (2nd unexcused absence)
Tim Lassan (3rd unexcused absence)

Staff Participating:

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

Guests Participating:

None.

CALL TO ORDER

President Rick Bissler welcomed everyone to the June 25, 2020, PARTA Board of Trustees meeting and called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. An oral roll call followed, and a quorum was participating.

Mr. Bissler said the meeting minutes for the May 28, 2020, Board meeting were distributed, and he entertained a motion to accept. Mr. Mike Lewis made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Marge Bjerregaard seconded the motion. Motion to approve the minutes, as presented, passed unanimously.

GUEST COMMUNICATIONS

None.

GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT

Mr. Bissler said the General Manager’s report was distributed and he asked Ms. Claudia Amrhein if she had anything to clarify or go over.

Ms. Amrhein said she did not but noted that there are three (3) resolutions tonight. She also noted that she put in her report an Update on 2020 Priorities, and the status of each in regard to being interrupted due to the pandemic.

Mr. Bissler asked if there were any questions for Ms. Amrhein regarding her report.
Mr. Frank Vitale asked if the IT companies interviewed specialized in the transportation industry or if that was a requirement.

Ms. Amrhein said the companies were considered more for their experience with managing complex IT systems that are operating 24/7/365 services dependent on technology.

Mr. Dave Gynn noted that Ms. Amrhein’s report included a sheet called Transit Trends, which is a great way of keeping up with priorities for this year. He said when he read it, he forgot there are some priorities that aren’t highlighted right now but are being worked on. He asked if this was a new thing she was adding.

Ms. Amrhein said she started doing this last year for several months when she was able. Last year, she updated the Board on ADA and vehicle maintenance numbers. She is trying to place a little bit more focus on the things that aren’t talked about a lot. She thanked Mr. Gynn and said it keeps her on track too.

Mr. Bissler noted that Ms. Morgan Tipton joined the meeting.

Moving on to the committee reports, Mr. Bissler asked Ms. Karen Wise to provide a report on the Administration Committee.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Wise said the Administration Committee met this evening and discussed Old Business and the consideration of nominations for Board officers. Mr. Bissler sent an email to her with nominations of Dave Gynn for President, Mike Lewis for Vice President, and Karen Wise for Temporary Presiding Officer. She said no decisions have been made and nominations remain open until the July Board meeting. If anyone has other nominations for those positions, she asked that they reach out to her, Ms. Amrhein, or Ms. Marcia Fletcher between now and the next meeting. She said the committee also had one (1) resolution (#2020-06-03) that allows for pursuing grants with AMATS for future projects, which was recommended.

Mr. Bissler asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, he asked Mr. Lewis to give a report on the Finance Committee.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Lewis thanked Mr. Bissler and said the Finance Committee met Tuesday by Zoom. Some things will be repetitive of last month’s report. PARTA looks pretty good, but the Kent Central Gateway (KCG) is having some issues as most would expect. Some of the highlights: A little bit over $1.1 million in CARES money was received for March and April and another $600,000 will be coming in May. Overall, Fuel and Lubricants is down considerably because of less travel. For May, there is a surplus of $827,662 with a year-to-date surplus of $1,686,141, which is good. On to KCG, traffic is down considerably at 1,535 cars, which will affect year-to-date. Year-to-date, there is a loss of $31,622. Receivables are behind about $135,000 but that hopefully will start turning around as things start to re-open. Other than that, two (2) resolutions were reviewed and recommended to the Board for approval: 2020-06-01 and 2020-06-02.

Mr. Bissler thanked Mr. Lewis and asked if there were any questions for him. Hearing none, he moved on to Old Business.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

This committee did not meet.
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

This committee did not meet.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Bissler said the only item under Old Business is opening the floor for nominations for Board officers. Hearing no further nominations, he suggested that if anyone had nominations, they should contact Ms. Wise directly.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Bissler then moved on to the resolutions.

Resolutions

Mr. Bissler said the first resolution is 2020-06-01.

#2020-06-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE LOWEST, MOST RESPONSIVE BIDDER FOR THE PURCHASE OF DIESEL AND GASOLINE FUEL. THIS IS A JOINT PURCHASING VENTURE WITH AKRON METRO RTA, WESTERN RESERVE RTA, AND STARK AREA RTA, ET AL.

Mr. Bissler entertained a motion.

Motion: Marge Bjerregaard Second: Dave Gynn

Mr. Bissler asked Ms. Amrhein to talk about this resolution.

Ms. Amrhein said this is the annual fuel purchase resolution that is being brought forward early. State law and PARTA's procurement policies require that the Board award contracts for any amounts over $100,000. The fuel contract is bid annually through a joint process with other RTAs, the lowest bidder is identified on the day the bids are opened, and the contract is entered into that same day, which occurs in December. The Board has traditionally passed a pre-authorization resolution to go through that process, identify the bidder, and then execute the contract with the Board ratifying it. This year, it is being brought forward as continuing for years after this using the same kind of procurement. The bids are publicly opened, the low bid is selected, there's no negotiation, and it's for fuel, diesel and gasoline, which is needed to continue to operate beginning January 1 of each year. The Finance Committee discussed this, and, in the end, it was determined that because of the nature of the purchase and the fact that fuel is an essential part of functioning, doing this presented no downside. If a decision is made in the future to change the process of procurement, this resolution would no longer apply. This resolution eliminates the need to bring this forward every year in the event there isn't a quorum. It becomes a problem to wait until the end of the year. The only change made to the resolution was brought up by Mr. William Nome. He mentioned that the Akron Beacon Journal might be problematic if they change their name or become extinct so that language was broadened to be inclusive of different kinds of publications throughout the wide area that transits cover.

Mr. Bissler asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, a roll call vote was taken.
Mr. Bissler then moved on to Resolution #2020-06-02.

#2020-06-02: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AWARDING A CONTRACT TO QUALITY IP, THE MOST RESPONSIVE AND RESPONSIBLE PROPOSER FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) MANAGED SERVICES.

Mr. Bissler entertained a motion.

**Motion:** Debbie Davison  
**Second:** Karen Wise

Mr. Bissler asked Ms. Amrhein to talk about this resolution.

Ms. Amrhein said an RFP for IT Managed Services was issued in March this year. This followed last year’s process of studying what PARTA has and doing an inventory and planning process for all the IT infrastructure and communication equipment. A multi-tiered replacement schedule was put together that included how old the equipment was and when it needed to be replaced. Everything PARTA does is basically supported by technology. The RFP was held up by COVID. Now, that process has moved forward and six (6) responsive proposals were received in response to the published RFP. After interviewing and scoring the top two (2), Quality IP presented the best value for PARTA. She then asked Mr. Brian Trautman to say a little bit more.

Mr. Trautman said the biggest learning curve this year has been studying and learning the dynamics of IT. PARTA has so many diverse systems that diving into it determined that there is nothing that PARTA does, from fare collection, radio systems, to payroll systems, that doesn’t run through some type of an IT conduit and that’s only getting more and more complex. Mr. Vitale asked a question earlier that is relevant. One of the things looked at was the experience of the companies when it comes to the specific technologies that PARTA uses, one being mobile routers in all the buses, which is being implemented now. This will allow the camera systems and the Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) that are in the buses and any other technology, including mobile Wi-Fi, if pursued, to go through those mobile routers that only need one (1) conduit to communicate with all those different packets of information. Quality IP was the only IT firm that had experience with Cradlepoint and the MDT application in that they do similar services for the 911 component of Kent and Ravenna Police Departments. The experience that each one of the IT proposers had in relationship with the technology being used was taken into consideration. It’s the beginning of a long-term partnership, which was the goal. PARTA outgrew the IT firm that was used last year. Quality IP brings a much larger panoramic skillset to the table and they’re located close by, which is important. He was involved in the interview process, as well as Ms. Amrhein, Ms. Jurisch, Ms. Rebecca Schrader, Ms. Ashley Boyd, and Mr. Mike Huang. There were a lot of different perspectives in this interview process, so he feels confident that a good firm was selected through a solid process.

Mr. Bissler asked if there were any questions or comments.

Mr. Vitale asked if Quality IP serviced transit authorities of a similar size to PARTA and if any of the six (6) firms had a similar experience with transit authorities of PARTA’s size.
Mr. Trautman said Quality IP has no transit authority background but they do have similar IT technology/equipment in that they service 911 call centers and MDTs that are in the police department and cars that are out on the road. None of the six (6) firms gave any transit authorities as references.

Mr. Vitale asked if Quality IP specialized in government agencies as opposed to corporations.

Mr. Trautman said he wouldn’t use the word specialized. They were the only one that submitted a proposal that had municipal relationships.

Mr. Bissler asked if there was anything else. Hearing nothing further, a roll call vote was taken.

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Mr. Bissler then moved on to the last resolution.


Mr. Bissler entertained a motion.

Motion: Marge Bjerregaard Second: Virginia Harris

Mr. Bissler asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, he asked Ms. Amrhein to comment.

Ms. Amrhein said this is an authorization to seek grant funding through AMATS for specialized enhanced transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities, which is made every other year. The application will be for three (3) Light Transit Vehicles (LTVs) to replace three (3) LTVs that are going out of their useful life cycle. The application requires that it be accompanied by a resolution.

Mr. Bissler asked if there were any questions for Ms. Amrhein.

Mr. Vitale asked how much money could be awarded through this grant.

Ms. Amrhein said it’s a limited amount of money but, as mentioned in her Board report, it’s calculated at about $270,000 for three (3) LTVs.

Mr. Bissler asked if there was anything else. Hearing nothing further, a roll call vote was taken.
Mr. Bissler said he is not aware of any need for an Executive Session and asked Ms. Jurisch if she had any comments.

Ms. Jurisch said there is no fair this year so PARTA will not be asking for volunteers. It’s going to be a very different summer.

Mr. Bissler said that is a disappointment for a lot of folks and asked if anybody else had any comments.

Mr. Gynn thanked Mr. Jeremy Moldvay for his service these past years and asked him if this was his last meeting.

Mr. Moldvay thanked Mr. Gynn and said he will not be at the next meeting. He said he has been on the Board for six (6) years.

Mr. Bissler then asked if there was a lead-in to the video being shown.

Mr. Trautman said Ms. Denise Baba did all the work on this video. He just gave her a couple links.

Ms. Amrhein said she asked for a walkthrough of the new building. What the Board is getting is something produced.

Ms. Baba then shared her screen and launched the video. After the video, she said she will put the two-minute video on PARTA’s YouTube feed so anyone can go back later and get a closer look.

Mr. Bissler said it seems like just the other day when the footers were put in so it’s nice to see it coming along. He asked Mr. Trautman if it would be finished sometime in early July.

Mr. Trautman said his goal on that building is for it to be completed by the end of July.

Mr. Bissler asked if there was anything else.

Ms. Tipton said she just wanted to pass on a moment of encouragement to everyone who is working full time. She is really impressed with all the communications and it shows in all the PARTA interactions that she’s seen, such as when she’s at the grocery store and sees a PARTA LTV waiting for a senior citizen with a mask on and helping them get in and out; or when she sees the bus that was stuck behind the railroad gate that was down and there’s no train but the driver is sticking to the policy and keeping people safe until he gets the OK from the railroad folks. All the things that she has seen PARTA do, especially in these last few months, has been stellar. She is grateful for what everyone is doing and the ways that people and the community are being kept in motion. She is honored and privileged to serve alongside everyone, even in just a small capacity. She thanked everyone for all the things they’re doing and said to keep up the good work.

Ms. Amrhein thanked Ms. Tipton for the nice comments. She said everyone has pulled together, and it really shows. She is grateful for that as well.
ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Bissler thanked Ms. Baba for the video and said it was amazing that it was produced in an afternoon. He thanked the Board for their nice job of conducting the second Zoom meeting online. He said it looks like the Board has been doing this for years. Hearing nothing else, he entertained a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Frank Vitale made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Marge Bjerregaard seconded the motion. Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Fletcher
Executive Assistant