BOARD APPROVED 5/28/2020

PARTA
PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

PARTA ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
2000 SUMMIT ROAD
KENT, OHIO 44240

February 27, 2020

Board Members Present:
Rick Bissler, President
Marge Bjerregaard
Jeff Childers
Debbie Davison

Brian Gray
David Gynn, Vice President
Virginia Harris
Timothy Lassan (arrived at 7:15)

Mike Lewis
Jeremy Moldvay, TPO
Morgan Tipton
Karen Wise

Board Members Not Present:
Richard Brockett (2nd excused absence)
Frank Vitale (3rd excused absence)

Staff Present:
Claudia Amrhein
Denise Baba
Marcia Fletcher

Kelly Jurisch
William Nome, Legal Counsel
Clayton Popik

Rebecca Schrader
Brian Trautman

Guests Present:
None.

CALL TO ORDER

President Rick Bissler welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. An oral roll call followed, and a quorum was present.

Moving on, Mr. Bissler said the meeting minutes for the January 23, 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 asked Ms. Claudia Amrhein to comment on the General Manager’s report.

Ms. Amrhein thanked Mr. Bissler and the Board for coming out on this blustery winter night. She said there will be a presentation tonight on PARTA’s role in the 2020 Census and generally what Portage County is doing and why all that is very important, as well as some highlights of plans to mark PARTA’s 45th Anniversary this year. Nothing large and party-wise but there will be some
messaging and getting the word out about the importance of PARTA's services for the community. Last month, Ms. Morgan Tipton asked about the Easy Street rollout, so she included a little bit in her Board report but Mr. Brian Trautman is here if there are any specific questions. A few people have gone through the process now.

Mr. Trautman said there is one lady right now who is pushing back very hard. She is a retired emergency room nurse who wants a guarantee that Easy Street is not going to sell her personal information to anybody. He guaranteed her that would not happen.

Ms. Amrhein asked if there were any other questions. Hearing none, she said she also provided a very brief overview in her Board report about some of the priorities that are being worked on this year as short-term projects and goals. Added to this list will be carrying out the Connecting Communities grant, if awarded, which will occur in May.

Mr. Bissler thanked Ms. Amrhein and said the Administration Committee met tonight. He asked Ms. Karen Wise to give an overview.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Wise said the committee talked about two (2) things mostly. The first was the proposed revisions to the Procurement Policy, specifically credit card usage. Ms. Amrhein explained it, presented it, and the committee made a motion to amend the policy, which will be presented to the Board in March. The second was Resolution 2020-02-01, which was discussed. The committee made a motion to present it at tonight's meeting.

Mr. Bissler asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, he said the Finance Committee met on Tuesday and he asked Mr. Dave Gynn to provide a report.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Gynn said the Finance Committee did meet on Tuesday and had an exciting meeting reviewing everything from last year. Not all Board members could attend this meeting, but hopefully more will attend the next one. Even though it was only a day ago, there's a seven (7) page single spaced copy of the minutes provided. He then gave a couple highlights from last year. He said income was slightly higher than expenses, which is a good thing. Sales tax was up, which is a major source of funding. A little more than half of revenue comes from sales tax. Expenses and wages were at 91% of the budget, which is very good. The gross operating surplus (income over expenses) was $857,000. That sounds like a lot of money but on an almost $10 million budget, it's not that much. That's about one (1) months' worth of operations. The committee reviewed the capital report, grant funding, and local projects. For Kent Central Gateway (KCG), the gross operating surplus was $55,777, which is a nice surplus. With that, Ms. Rebecca Schrader transferred money from KCG to PARTA to repay the loan for the ticketing equipment that was needed for the parking deck. He noted that the average revenue per car entering the deck was $4.94 and the average expense per car was $4.77. There is not a lot of difference but considering there were 115,000 cars, that adds up. He concluded by saying Ms. Schrader could answer any specific questions.

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

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

This committee did not meet.
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

This committee did not meet.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Bissler asked Ms. Amrhein to present the Census Overview under New Business.

Ms. Amrhein said the census is this year and the official Census Day is April 1. There’s a large scale effort to get the word out about the importance of being counted in the census and Portage County is one of a number of Complete Count Committees that have been established across Ohio and the country to make sure that key leaders within the community and organizations step up and engage their constituencies with the information about how important it is to be counted and that it is a safe process. The census will determine the number of seats in the House of Representatives, out of 435, that will represent the State of Ohio. Losing or gaining seats trickles down into funding that is received for essential programs such as transit and other services. She has been a part of the Complete Count Committee, along with Ms. Baba, who will present a short video. Ms. Baba will be engaging more directly now and will be carrying out the message for PARTA.

The video reported that every 10 years the census records everyone living in this country. It’s written in the Constitution. And comes in a questionnaire that counts everyone who lives at your address on April 1. The data can be used to inform funding for services like fire stations, schools, clinics, and representation that affect your community. How will 2020 Census data be used? Where there are more people, there are more needs for public services. That’s why the census is used by the government to inform funding decisions each year. But that’s not all. It’s also used by nonprofits to inform services by businesses to create jobs and even by students for school projects. Understanding how the population changes, helps us shape communities across the country for the better. How does the 2020 Census affect representation? There are 435 seats in the House of Representatives. These get distributed to the 50 states by population, and an accurate census response helps your state get the right number of seats. States with smaller populations get at least one. While states with larger populations might get more. How do I take the 2020 Census? In March 2020, every address in the country will receive an invitation to complete a simple questionnaire and there are three (3) ways to respond. Number 1: Do it online. Number 2: Call by phone. Number 3: Send it by mail. For those who don’t respond, a census taker from your community will follow up and assist you. Is my 2020 Census data safe? After sending your census response, your personal information is kept safe. By law, it can’t be shared with any other government agency, law enforcement, or landlord. No one. So, take your 2020 Census with peace of mind. Shape your future. Start here. Visit 2020census.gov.

After the video concluded, Ms. Amrhein said a few weeks ago, the census contacted PARTA about having a table at KCG to recruit census workers. PARTA agreed if they didn’t recruit employees. They are doing this at different transit centers to try to get enough workers. She then asked Ms. Baba to say a few more words about putting it on the website or any other plans.

Ms. Baba said she distributed the employee newsletter, which includes some information about the census. The point of the Complete Count Committee is that it’s everybody’s responsibility to make sure not only that they are counted individually, but that they talk it up with their neighbors and people who are skeptical because each person counted means additional dollars for the state of Ohio. It’s important that every man, woman, and child in Portage County gets counted because that will affect the billions of dollars that are distributed from the federal government, specifically
what comes to Portage County. Portage County gets federal tax dollars through grants so it’s important that everyone is counted. The video mentioned that it’s safe. It is very safe and it’s very secure. Nobody is going to come to someone’s house and drag them out. They’re not going to get a hold of banking information. The purpose of the census is to enumerate how many people there are in the United States. Some of the things that PARTA is doing as part of the Complete Count Committee is helping spread that word.

Mr. Timothy Lassan arrived at the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Ms. Baba continued by saying information will be put on PARTA’s website and she will get information out as well when she is out in the community. She said one of the keys to the Complete Count Committee is it’s staffed by people who are well known in the community. Hopefully that will create a sense of security among people and let them know that if this person is on the committee and is promoting the census, the census can be trusted because they’re a person who is trusted. She encouraged everyone, if they’re trusted in their community, to mention it casually in conversation and make folks aware of the census and how truly important it is not only to the nation but more specifically right here in Portage County to every person who lives here.

Ms. Amrhein thanked Ms. Baba and said Ms. Baba will now provide a brief overview of PARTA’s 45-year milestone.

Ms. Baba said this year is PARTA’s 45th Anniversary. The back of the employee newsletter has a little bit of historical information about PARTA. Some information about the history will be included every month. It’s important to let employees know about PARTA’s history as well as anybody who will pick up the newsletter or read it in the lobby. In addition, a spot will appear on WKSU sometime this year to promote that PARTA has been around for 45 years. Additionally, the timeline on the Board room wall will be updated to reflect 45 years. Also, in the lobby there is a blank wall, which will be used to commemorate the 45th Anniversary. The concept right now is to do a collage but instead of just focusing on buses, the focus will be on the people who use PARTA: the elderly, the disabled, the regular worker. In addition, some information will appear on the website. There is currently a video on the website of a woman whose name is Elizabeth. She’s 100 years old. It is branded under Ohio Loves Transit, which was celebrated about a week ago, but it will be rebranded for the 45th Anniversary. Additional videos will be added from ordinary people who use PARTA’s services. She then played the video of Elizabeth.

The video showed Elizabeth talking about how her eyes went bad when she was in her early 80s and she had to give up driving. She said she was 100 years old on July 7 and is aiming to be 101. She must depend on somebody else to take her places and do things for her. She doesn’t always have somebody to do that. When asked how her first ride was with PARTA, she said the driver was very good, very nice. The driver came and got her. She asked Elizabeth if she could walk up the steps and Elizabeth said she didn’t want to take a chance. The driver said she would leave the ramp down for her then. Elizabeth said the driver took her up on the ramp and let her down. She was very nice.

At the conclusion of the video, Ms. Baba noted that the entire video was shot on an iPhone and was edited in house by Travel Trainer Carolel Howard. She said Elizabeth came in because she needed to sign up for the elderly and disabled fare and have her picture taken. She met Elizabeth in the lobby and talked to her. She got Mr. Howard to shoot the video and follow her on the bus for some additional shots. That’s the concept that will be used for other videos, perhaps somebody going to work or going shopping or going to a medical appointment. Going with them on their trip provides an opportunity to talk to them about how they use PARTA, how important it is in their life, and show how PARTA impacts Portage County. Those videos will run on the web site. The iPhone will be fine for the videos, but the quality will be worked on a little more. That’s what is planned to let the community know that PARTA has been around for 45 years and hopes to be around for another 45, 145, 245 years.

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February 27, 2020
Mr. Bissler thanked Ms. Baba and said he drove for Mr. Joe Fiala the year before he started PARTA. He asked Board members to thank Mr. Fiala for forming PARTA as an RTA as they walk by his picture tonight. He said when he first went on the Board, they went to a training session and there were all kinds of different transit operations represented at that conference and there are lots of ways to do transit. In the recent past, Lorain County was run out of the county commissioners. At some point, they just decided they didn't want to fund it anymore and they parked the buses. PARTA is very, very fortunate that it is an RTA.

Resolution

Mr. Bissler then moved on to Resolution #2020-02-01.

#2020-02-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH KENT STATE UNIVERSITY (KSU) AND THE CITY OF KENT, OHIO, TO CONTINUE JOINT EFFORTS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EAST MAIN STREET GENERALLY LOCATED FROM WILLOW STREET TO HORNING ROAD.

Mr. Bissler entertained a motion.

Motion: Debbie Davison Second: Brian Gray

Ms. Amrhein said this is a cooperative agreement between the City of Kent, Kent State University (KSU), and PARTA. The three (3) groups have already been working together to plan changes for East Main Street. The City and KSU will be mostly impacted. They have agreed to split the local match cost of the funding that's required. They invited PARTA to join in this agreement to ensure that PARTA is at the table for any discussions about transit amenities or pedestrian safety. PARTA is already at the table but this formalizes it and brings to the attention of both KSU trustees and the City of Kent Council that the three (3) entities pledge to work together to produce the best, safest thoroughfare along East Main Street through the road improvements and as KSU works to improve their facilities on front campus. There is also a Citizens Advisory Committee supported by the City of Kent and KSU that has been meeting for a couple of years now to hear residents' ideas and input during the planning stages. She has been at those meetings, along with Mr. Popik and Mr. Trautman. PARTA applied for the Connecting Communities grant, which was submitted yesterday. Hopefully, if PARTA gets that grant, it will be able to do that study from Horning Road east to 261 which will then create plans in funding mechanisms for the improvement of those areas. Again, PARTA is not obligated to provide funding by contract but what is in the agreement is that PARTA will apply transit enhancement or improvement funds that are available if it helps to improve facilities along that corridor.

Mr. Bissler asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, a roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call:

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Moving on, Mr. Bissler said March 1 is Sunday. It’s a big day in his book because there is still snow in March, but it will only last a day or two so that means winter is on its way out. He thanked everyone for coming out tonight and said he just checked the satellite weather and it seems as though the snow has passed. He asked everyone to be safe traveling home.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Bissler concluded by entertaining a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Mike Lewis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Marge Bjerregaard seconded the motion. **Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Fletcher
Executive Assistant