PARTA
PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

Held Remotely Via Zoom

August 27, 2020

Board Members Participating:
Karen Beck                Debbie Davison                Jack Murphy
Marge Bjerregaard         David Gynn, President         Morgan Tipton
Richard Brockett          Virginia Harris                Frank Vitale
Jeff Childers             Michael Lewis, Vice President  Marvin Woods

Board Members Not Participating:
Karen Wise, TPO (1st excused absence)

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

Guests Participating:
None.

CALL TO ORDER

President Dave Gynn called the August 27, 2020, PARTA Board of Trustees meeting to order at 6:59 p.m. He welcomed two (2) new members who have already been through training: Ms. Karen Beck, who was appointed by the City of Kent to fill the place of Mr. Brian Gray, with one (1) more year on that term; and Mr. Jack Murphy, who is filling the position vacated by Mr. Rick Bissler. He said the Board is happy to have them. He suggested that everybody mute their phones or computers after the roll call because outside noises interfere with the sound. He then asked Ms. Marcia Fletcher to call the roll.

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

Mr. Gynn said the next item on the agenda is the minutes, which were sent out ahead of time, but may not have been received until yesterday or today. They were, however, online so hopefully everybody has the minutes from the July 23 meeting. He entertained a motion to accept the minutes. Ms. Morgan Tipton made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Michael Lewis seconded the motion. Mr. Gynn asked if there were any questions or changes. Hearing none, he asked all those in favor to say aye. Opposed same sign. The motion to approve the minutes, as presented, passed unanimously.

GUEST COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Gynn said there are no guests because of COVID-19 and moved on to the General Manager’s report.
GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT

Mr. Gynn said the General Manager’s report was highlighted in the Board packet and asked Ms. Amrhein to comment.

Ms. Amrhein thanked Mr. Gynn and apologized for the delay in the mail delivery of the Board packets. For those Board members who receive a packet by mail, they were not delivered in the normal timely manner, she said. The Board packets were mailed out early on Friday. She then welcomed Ms. Beck and Mr. Murphy as the new Board members. She said they had great orientation sessions this week. A little blurb was included in her report about their backgrounds. Ms. Beck is a retired educator, working in the City of Ravenna. Mr. Murphy is currently employed with KAPCO, a Kent State University (KSU) graduate, and a chemist. She thanked them for their willingness to volunteer, step up, and be a part of the community and the people PARTA serves through its services. The only other thing to highlight is the Kent Health Department moved into the Kent Central Gateway (KCG) this week and are now officially located on the second floor of the facility downtown. Within the next week or so, a large green sign will be placed above the other signs on the first level that will say Kent Health Department 2nd Floor. It’s taking longer than anticipated working through the planning commission and zoning issues with the City of Kent for a City of Kent sign. It’s taken about three (3) years to find a suitable tenant. She concluded by asking if there were any questions.

Mr. Gynn asked Ms. Amrhein to mention the FTA award because that really is a big deal for PARTA.

Ms. Amrhein said about two (2) weeks ago, PARTA received notice that it had been selected for FTA Buses and Bus Facilities grant funding providing 80% of the needed funds to purchase one (1) CNG transit bus. It’s a highly competitive federal award process and PARTA was one (1) of only three (3) from Ohio that were awarded out of 96 total applications from around the country. Nearly 300 applications requested $1.8 billion in funding but only $484 million was available, which shows the need to keep up transit fleets across the country in a state of good repair. Hopefully, funding will continue to be provided for replacements and keeping the safest and most efficient running buses on the road.

Ms. Morgan Tipton congratulated PARTA on such a great feat.

Ms. Amrhein thanked Ms. Tipton and said she was really surprised because it is so highly competitive, and PARTA only applied for one (1) bus and received funding.

Mr. Gynn said PARTA does a good job of applying for every grant that it can.

Ms. Amrhein said Ms. Ashley Boyd, who works in Ms. Rebecca Schrader’s department, has evolved into a very good grant writer for PARTA. It’s a lot of fun when PARTA gets an award because a great deal of work goes into it not just from Ms. Boyd but it is a team effort because there are components of the grant and the narrative that need to be put together by just about every department. The grants are very thorough and ask precisely what PARTA does, how the money will be used, and how it will benefit service.

Mr. Gynn expressed his thanks to Ms. Boyd, Ms. Schrader, and the whole team. During COVID-19, he said, it’s amazing that the buses keep running and PARTA is able to continue to operate on a limited schedule and provide the kind of service that is needed.

Ms. Amrhein said she included in the Board packet some information about the buses and how they’ve been prepared for social distancing. KSU started up today so that service is running again, and the buses are marked with visual cues and signage to keep folks from sitting or standing too closely together.

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 on Tuesday. Mr. Lewis wasn’t there so Mr. Jeff Childers chaired the meeting in his absence. He asked Mr. Childers for his report.

Mr. Childers said the Finance Committee met Tuesday, August 25, on Zoom. He thanked Mr. Gynn for sitting in as a committee member on that meeting and Mr. Marvin Woods for also taking the time to share in the meeting. He said KSU Revenues for July were $41,451, with a monthly budget of $194,979. It’s what was expected so there was a large hit there of $153,528 under budget. KSU income for the year may be down as much as $500,000. Year-to-Date Actual was $823,292 compared to the Year-to-Date Budget of $1,364,856. Also troubling was Farebox & Ticket Sales and Agency Cash Grants and Reimbursements. The revenue for these two (2) categories was about $28,000 below the monthly budget. Sales Tax Revenues also lagged by $50,742 for the month. On the bright side, the federal government did come through by providing PARTA with $1,032,383 in CARES grant money, which allowed PARTA to have about an $832,000 surplus for the reporting period. It should be noted that county sales tax revenues are right on budget for the year, which is surprising and good. Overall, expenses for July were under budget by $113,233. Operators Salaries and Wages were under budget by $30,648. Admin Salaries and Wages were under budget by $20,452. Other Fringe Benefits was under budget by $24,318. Due to less bus usage, Fuel and Lubricants was down by $13,119.

Ms. Marge Bjerringaard entered the Zoom meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Moving on, Mr. Childers said $3,083 was saved in Travel and Meetings because there was no travel. The budget for PARTA and the actual financial standing of the organization is doing very well considering COVID-19. Not as much money is being spent on the Bus Storage Facility as awarded in the grant so there’s going to be about $450,000 to $500,000 extra money for build outs in the building, which is still in the planning stages. There is about $1.4 million set aside for local match of capital projects. The KCG budget has some good news and bad news. There was a 26% increase in parked cars between June and July, but still down 57% from July 2019 to July 2020. It does show improvement so things are getting better at KCG. Revenues were still down for July. Hotel Overnight Parking fell under budget by $9,430. Monthly Parking Passes was down $3,492 and Daily Parking Revenue was under budget by $15,191. The total net loss for July was $16,193. The Kent Health Department will start paying $1,500 a month for use of the conference room and they’re also going to be purchasing some parking passes, which is good as well. Expenses for the parking deck and monthly budget for July were right on budget. The Finance Committee reviewed the same resolution that the Operations Committee did concerning the purchase of three (3) CNG buses from TESCO and voted unanimously to recommend to the Board that this resolution be approved.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any questions.

Ms. Tipton asked if the surplus for the new Bus Storage Facility was earmarked specifically for that building or if it was movable cash.

Mr. Childers said the committee was told by Ms. Schrader that it comes as a grant and must be spent on that facility. Therefore, anything that PARTA wants to do to enhance the building can come out of that money but it can’t be moved over to payroll or something like that.
Ms. Schrader said Mr. Childers is correct. Two (2) years ago, PARTA received a 5339(b) Buses and Bus Facilities grant. It was a competitive grant and awarded to build a storage facility. At the time, the cost was expected to be more because of the type of foundation that is typically used but it turns out it didn't have to be built that way and there is a surplus. Planning has started to determine the best use for that surplus and intends to build out the inside of the storage facility. PARTA is looking at requesting bids for a new architectural and engineering firm since the current one has reached its term.

Mr. Trautman said at first, the expectation was that driven piles were required because almost every one of the projects that PARTA has done required driven piles; but a split footing foundation was put in that facility, which was discovered early so the footprint of the building was restructured. PARTA has file storage and interior space issues so a floor section of the building closest to the east side was built thicker in that area so a mezzanine section could be added down the road. Electric was moved and it basically was set up ahead of time so there is less cost in the project when the interior part of that footprint is built out.

Ms. Tipton asked if there were term limits on using that cash within a certain amount of time.

Ms. Schrader said it is in an active grant and if it shows active use, then it's fine but it's not going to sit there for multiple years. There isn't a timeline since it's already been executed into a grant, but milestones have to be reported and the FTA is informed about how that money is going to be spent. PARTA does need to stay within the milestones that it has established.

Mr. Gynn said now is a good time for Board members, who haven't been to the facility, to take a look at it. It's nearly complete and there are no buses in it. He asked if there were any other questions for Mr. Childers or Ms. Schrader. He said Ms. Marcia Fletcher did a fantastic job getting the minutes out. Hearing no further discussion, he moved on to the Operations Committee.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Gynn said the Operations Committee met this evening and he asked Ms. Debbie Davison to give her report.

Ms. Davison said tonight was the first night that the new members of the Operations Committee met. The committee includes Mr. Woods, Ms. Tipton, and herself. Also participating were Mr. Richard Brockett, Mr. Childers, Ms. Beck, and Mr. Gynn. The committee discussed the resolution to approve the three (3) CNG buses that are in great need. One (1) of the buses is from a grant for $446,742, which covers 80%, and the other two (2) are from CMAQ funding of $832,000, which also covers 80% of the cost. The committee recommended that the Board approve this purchase.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any questions for Ms. Davison on her report.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

Hearing none, Mr. Gynn said the Personnel Committee did not meet but will be meeting in the future.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Gynn asked if there was any Old Business. Hearing none, he moved on to New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Gynn asked if there was anything under New Business. Hearing none, he moved on to the resolutions. He said he will read the resolution, ask for a motion to approve and second it, discuss it, and then vote by roll call.
Resolutions

Mr. Gynn said the first resolution is #2020-08-01.

#2020-08-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PURCHASE UP TO THREE (3) TRANSIT BUSES, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT, AND SPARE PARTS FROM TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT SALES CORPORATION (TESCO).

Mr. Gynn asked for a motion to approve this resolution.

Motion: Morgan Tipton       Second: Debbie Davison

Mr. Gynn then opened it up for discussion. He said this has been recommended by both the Operations and Finance committees for approval by the Board. He asked if anybody from PARTA wanted to add anything.

Ms. Amrhein said this will keep PARTA on its fleet replacement schedule that will provide 80% funding for all three (3) buses, which will be ordered in September with an expected delivery in October 2021. Three (3) aging diesel buses will be retired that have already exhausted their useful life.

Mr. Gynn asked if there was any other discussion or questions. Hearing none, he asked Ms. Fletcher to call the roll.

Ms. Fletcher then called the roll.

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Mr. Gynn said the motion passes. He then moved on to Resolution #2020-08-02.

#2020-08-02: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES HONORING RICK BISSLER, BOARD MEMBER, IN APPRECIATION FOR HIS DEDICATION AND SERVICE.

Mr. Gynn entertained a motion.

Motion: Marge Bjerregaard       Second: Mike Lewis

Ms. Amrhein said as everyone knows, Mr. Bissler served on the Board for 17 years and for the last 14 he served as President. He is owed a deep amount of gratitude and thanks for his leadership over the last 17 years. He determined that he did not want to re-up for another three (3) year term. She expressed her sadness because he has been a great partner but appreciates his desire to go in a different direction. He informed her that he wouldn't be here tonight, but he enjoyed his time on the Board and is leaving with good thoughts for everyone. Traditionally, she said, a resolution is passed for Board members to thank them for their service.
Mr. Gynn said Mr. Bissler started his interest in *PARTA* when he was a college student driving a bus. *PARTA* certainly is a different organization now from when it was 17 years ago, which credit goes to Mr. Bissler's leadership. He asked if there were any other comments. Hearing none, he asked Ms. Fletcher to call the roll.

Ms. Fletcher then called the roll.

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Mr. Gynn said the motion passes. He then moved on to Resolution #2020-08-03.

**#2020-08-03: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (**PARTA**) BOARD OF TRUSTEES HONORING WILLIAM A. Nome, *PARTA* LEGAL COUNSEL, IN APPRECIATION FOR HIS DEDICATION AND SERVICE.**

Mr. Gynn entertained a motion.

**Motion: Marge Bjerregaard**

**Second: Marvin Woods**

Ms. Amrhein said earlier this summer a determination was made to look for a law firm that could offer some deeper services. As Mr. Gynn mentioned, *PARTA* has changed a lot over the last several years with service and now COVID. Mr. William Nome has been faithful and dedicated legal counsel for more than 30 years. She thanked him for his time and service and wished him all the best. She said next month, Mr. Justin Markey from Roetzel & Andress will be brought on. She included a little bit of information in the Board packet but said that firm has a depth of knowledge of *PARTA*’s service through working with OTRP and current transportation issues. They also have a pretty impressive emergency response team that is available 24/7/365. All those things weighed together with COVID, made this the right time to make a change. She thanked Mr. Nome again and said his service was appreciated. A proper gathering would have certainly taken place if possible.

Mr. Gynn thanked Mr. Nome and said if a lot has changed in the last 17 years, think about what *PARTA* was like 30 years ago when it was Campus Bus Service. He said Mr. Nome has been there every meeting all along the way and his loyal service is appreciated.

Mr. Nome thanked Mr. Gynn and the Board.

Mr. Gynn asked if there were any other comments. Hearing none, he asked Ms. Fletcher to call the roll.

Ms. Fletcher then called the roll.
Mr. Gynn said the motion passes. Moving on, he said there is no need for an Executive Session and asked if there were any comments from any of the PARTA staff.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Hearing nothing further, Mr. Gynn entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. Karen Beck made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Marvin Woods seconded the motion. Mr. Gynn asked all those in favor to say aye and opposed the same sign. The **motion to adjourn passed unanimously**.

Mr. Gynn said the next meeting is September 24 and he would appreciate it if everybody signed on as early as they could and mute their connection. Under the circumstances, this was a successful meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Fletcher
Executive Assistant