



OPTA Executive Committee Meeting Minutes May 9, 2023

OFFICERS

Claudia Amrhein, <u>PARTA</u>	President
Howard Stewart, SEAT	Vice President
Dawn Distler, METRO RTA	Secretary Treasurer
Chasilyn Carter, Lancaster Fairfield Transit	Vice President Small Urban/Rural Systems
Shannon Webster, Greene CATS	Vice President Mobility Manager Members
Blair Taseff, TESCO	Vice President Associate Members
Kevin Hardesty, GILLIG	Vice President Associate Members

Emeritus Representatives

India Birdsong, Greater Cleveland RTA
Kirt Conrad, Stark Area RTA
Darryl Haley, Southwest Ohio RTA
Patrick Harris, Central Ohio TA
Laura Koprowski, Toledo Area RTA
Bob Ruzinsky, Greater Dayton RTA
Ben Capelle, LAKETRAN

OPTA Staff

Matt Carle, Executive Director
Elle Crader, Executive Administrator

Presenter Attendees

Andy Bowers, Park Street Consulting
Chuck Dyer, Ohio Department of Transportation

Administrative Attendees

Denise Baba, PARTA
Marcia Fletcher, PARTA

Claudia Amrhein, PARTA, OPTA

Ms. Claudia Amrhein called the meeting of the OPTA Executive Committee to order at 1:35 p.m. on May 9, 2023. She motioned to have the minutes from the February 2023 Executive Committee meeting accepted. Chasilyn Carter made the motion, which was seconded by Jose Feliciano. All attendees then voted in favor by saying "aye." She then turned the meeting over to Mr. Matt Carle.

Matt Carle, OPTA

Mr. Matt Carle began by stating he would give an Executive Director update and then a Government Relations update.

Mr. Carle started his remarks by reminding everyone the Ohio Needs Transit Conference & OPTA Expo 2023 was well underway. He stated that OPTA was currently soliciting sponsorships for the conference. Sponsorship packages from \$20,000 to \$1,500 are available to accommodate every budget. Additionally, OPTA is looking for presenters to submit presentation proposals on all topics. Presentation proposals should be submitted to OPTA by June 2. Additionally, Mr. Carle stated that the ticketing platform is set to go live at the end of May or early June and that people should pay attention to the email updates that OPTA sends out. Mr. Carle stated that OPTA has secured a

block of rooms at the Hilton for \$122 per night and Hyatt. Information on how to book rooms under the block is available on the OPTA website.

Next, Mr. Carle stated OPTA is transitioning from Govenda due to cost and needs of OPTA. While Govenda is a tremendous product and makes sense for larger boards, it was not necessary for the small needs of the OPTA Board. Additionally, due to the high cost of the product, it was costing OPTA on average \$1,000 a meeting to use Govenda. Instead of moving forward with a contract renewal, OPTA will be placing the necessary meeting documents under the member portal of OPTA's own website. OPTA will have access to Govenda through May 25, 2023, so Mr. Carle urged everyone to get any information they need down from Govenda prior to May 25th.

Mr. Carle then spoke about the lunch policy for OPTA committee meetings. OPTA will be implementing a lunch reimbursement policy in order to better control costs and budget for expenses. A PDF of the new policy has been posted to the OPTA website. Each committee will be capped at spending \$15 per person and at most \$350 regardless of the number of attendees meeting. For meetings that exceed \$350, OPTA encourages committees to find other sponsors, transit agencies, or a more economical choice for lunch. Additionally, OPTA requests that committee chairs notify OPTA in advance of meetings so that OPTA can anticipate reimbursement requests. Mr. Carle stated that this does not include Mobility Managers because Mobility Managers have already increased their annual fees to cover the cost of their meals.

Mr. Carle then transitioned to giving a Government Affairs update.

Mr. Carle first began by thanking everyone for their help in the enormously successful transportation budget. He stated that OPTA maintained the \$70 million in annual funding for public transportation and they were successful in securing additional revenue for a regional workforce mobility program. Mr. Carle thanked everyone for their trips to the Statehouse, calls to legislators, and conversations with local officials.

Mr. Carle stated that he did have a conversation with Casey Blazer of COTA recently about the operator assault bill. COTA has interest in reintroducing the operator assault bill in this general assembly. Mr. Carle stated he wanted this to be on everyone's radar. He stated that if this did get reintroduced, it would likely be in the House. Mr. Carle stated he would keep everyone apprised as things unfold. Mr. Carle then turned the meeting over to Mr. Bowers for a government relations update.

Andy Bowers, Park Street Consulting

Mr. Andy Bowers stated that the legislature is working on a ballot initiative that would require a 60% vote in favor rather than a majority vote to change the Ohio Constitution. This would apply to infrastructure, roads, local initiatives, etc. Mr. Bowers stated that there have been a lot of positive policy changes in the past 20 years in Ohio that would not have happened had this law been in place. He stated that it is unknown what will happen in August as this is controversial and unprecedented in Ohio. Mr. Bowers stated that he and Mr. Carle will continue to keep OPTA apprised as the situation unfolds.

Mr. Bowers then turned the meeting over to Ms. Amrhein.

Claudia Amrhein, PARTA, OPTA

Ms. Amrhein stated that Mr. Dyer from ODOT is not here for the meeting but he sent Macie Moore to present on his behalf.

Macie Moore, ODOT

Ms. Macie Moore stated that she was going to run through how ODOT intends to allocate their funding for 2024 and highlight some of the progress they've made so far on the Workforce Mobility Program. ODOT will not be making changes to the rural transit program or the specialized transportation program but there will be changes to the urban transit program. Additionally, ODOT is incorporating feedback from smaller and urban transit systems on how to better allocate funding and incorporate local funding matches. ODOT is working to further support small urban systems so that they can continue to draw federal funds that are coming to the state. Ms. Moore then stated she had a breakdown of the funding for 2024 that she would share with the group after the meeting.

Next, Ms. Moore spoke about the Workforce Mobility Program. ODOT is still putting together the parameters of the program but will be accepting proposals for projects in the state. They have created a form that transit agencies can fill out describing the project and ODOT will then make a determination.

Laura Koprowski, TARTA

Ms. Laura Koprowski mentioned that her local House Representative is under the impression that these new dollars can be used to pay for services beyond the agency's charter and to create new lines of service.

Macie Moore, ODOT

Ms. Moore agreed that they have heard this expectation from other members and understands the concern of agencies to create new lines of service when there is no guarantee that the money will be allocated again in the next budget. She stated that this is something she will continue to work through within ODOT and with transit agencies. Ms. Moore then turned the meeting back over to Ms. Amrhein.

Claudia Amrhein, PARTA, OPTA

Ms. Amrhein thanked Ms. Moore for her update and then turned the meeting over to Dawn Distler for a finance report.

Dawn Distler, Akron METRO

Ms. Dawn Distler said the finance reports show a good balance in OPTA's accounts and she does not see anything out of the ordinary. She stated that OPTA had good ratios of spending and earnings. She did state that she saw a charge of \$3,200 which was not allocated, and she was curious what it was for. OPTA stated that it was spending for Ohio Loves Transit Day, specifically catering expenses with Milo's for the legislative reception. Ms. Distler then turned the meeting back over to Ms. Amrhein.

Claudia Amrhein, PARTA, OPTA

Ms. Amrhein then thanked everyone for their help and participation in making Ohio Loves Transit Day another large success. She reiterated Mr. Carle's points of the importance of participating in proponent testimony at the Statehouse during the budget cycle. She thanked Ms. Distler for her

report and then asked if there were any committee updates, which there were not. Ms. Amrhein then stated that OPTA put a new PDF in everyone's board packet for out of state memberships, which is a new category for OPTA. She also thanked everyone for their continued follow up with legislators during the budget process as everyone's work was important in securing funding for public transit. She then stated that the next OPTA Board meeting is June 13th in person at COTA's McKinley Ave. facility.

Ms. Amrhein then adjourned the meeting at 2:24PM.