



## OPTA Board of Director Meeting Minutes

June 11, 2024

### OFFICERS

Howard Stewart, SEAT	President
Andy Volenik, Delaware Co Transit	Vice-President
Bob Ruzinsky, Dayton RTA	Secretary-Treasurer
Mary Habig, NCAT	Vice-President Small Urban/Rural Systems
Melissa Leckrone, Perry Co JFS	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  
Dawn Distler, METRO RTA  
Claudia Amrhein, PARTA

### OPTA Staff

Matt Carle, Executive Director

### Presenter Attendees

Chuck Dyer, Ohio Department of Transportation

### **Howard Stewart, SEAT**

Mr. Howard Stewart called the meeting of the OPTA Board of Directors to order on June 11, 2024. Mr. Stewart then introduced Dan Risko of Transfr, a prospective associate member of OPTA who will be sponsoring the lunch at the OPTA Board Meeting in September.

### **Dan Risko, Transfr**

Mr. Risko spoke about the products and services Transfr provides to public transit agencies, like VR training and workforce development solutions. Mr. Risko indicated he is looking forward to connecting with individuals in-person at the September board meeting in Columbus.

### **Howard Stewart, SEAT**

Mr. Stewart thanked Mr. Risko for his presentation and turned it over to Mr. Carle for an Executive Director report.

### **Matt Carle, OPTA**

Mr. Carle stated OPTA is working hard to plan the annual conference being held in Columbus, this year from Nov. 18-20, 2024. He stated the educational session committee is in the midst of

deciding which education sessions will be featured at the conference and that submissions will be accepted through June 18. He stated those looking for any further information on the conference, including the agenda, should go to the conference tab of OPTA's website at [ohioneedstransit.org](http://ohioneedstransit.org).

Next, Mr. Carle shared the results of the OPTA member survey that was taken earlier in the month to get a pulse amongst members on the idea of moving the annual conference outside of Columbus. The overall feedback of the survey was that members were open to having it outside of Columbus but that they would not drive beyond 2 hours to get to the conference. This feedback concerned OPTA given the potential negative financial impact that could come from moving the show.

Next, Mr. Carle then transitioned to a government relations update. He stated the Ohio Legislature has been plagued with infighting over leadership for the next session and that OPTA is trying to remain neutral on the issue but is keeping a close eye on what is occurring and their policy positions on public transit. He will keep OPTA members apprised of the topic as developments unfold.

#### **Howard Stewart, SEAT**

Mr. Stewart thanked Mr. Carle for his update and turned the meeting over to Jessie Schmitzer for an ODOT update.

#### **Jessie Schmitzer, ODOT**

Ms. Schmitzer stated the deadline for submissions to participate in the WMPP money is rapidly approaching and encouraged transit agencies to submit a proposal or letter of intent if they are interested.

Ms. Schmitzer then shared some personnel updates within ODOT and answered questions from OPTA members about ODOT's policy on bus testing compliance.

#### **Howard Stewart, SEAT**

Mr. Stewart thanked Ms. Schmitzer for her update and turned the meeting over to Mr. Ruzinsky for a financial report.

#### **Bob Ruzinsky, Dayton RTA**

Mr. Ruzinsky gave an update on financial reports. He stated that everything looked good, as OPTA ramped up for its anticipated conference spending and that OPTA was doing a good job of closing out outstanding invoices for membership dues.

#### **Howard Stewart, SEAT**

Mr. Stewart then asked any committee members present who wished to give an update to do so. Ms. Kristie Cox of the Marketing Committee gave an update stating that the Marketing Committee recently met after taking a hiatus and will meet quarterly. The committee is looking forward to hosting an in-person meeting at the OPTA Conference in November. There were no further committee updates.

Mr. Stewart thanked everyone for sharing and shared upcoming committee meeting dates that those present may be interested in attending. He stated future meeting dates and locations will be posted at [ohioneedstransit.org](http://ohioneedstransit.org) and the OPTA September Board meeting will take place in-person at MORPC.