



Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 23, 2025 at 9:00 AM

COTA - WG Porter Boardroom, 33 N High St, Columbus OH

1. Call to Order

Chair Sean Mentel called the July 23, 2025 regular meeting of the COTA Board of Trustees to order at 9:00 am.

2. Roll Call

Board Members Present

Sean Mentel, Chair
Trudy Bartley, Trustee
Pete Bucher, Trustee
Erika Clark Jones, Trustee
Jay Deis, Trustee
Mallory Donaldson, Trustee
Marc Reitter, Trustee
Stephen Sayre, Trustee (9:05 am)
Matt Starr, Trustee
Amy Taylor, Trustee
Heather Ulrey, Trustee

Board Member Excused

Jeff Hunley, Trustee

3. Approval of Board of Trustee Minutes

A. May 21, 2025 Board of Trustees Annual Meeting Minutes

Trustee Marc Reitter moved to approve the May 21, 2025 Board of Trustees annual meeting minutes, seconded by Trustee Erika Clark Jones. Motion carried.

B. May 21, 2025 Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes

Trustee Marc Reitter moved to approve the May 21, 2025 Board of Trustees regular meeting minutes, seconded by Trustee Heather Ulrey. Motion carried.

4. Comments or Statements from the Audience

Bobby Berryhill shared concern about conditions he has been experiencing as a vehicle maintenance worker, including air flow and access to cold water. Mr. Berryhill also shared concern about the turnaround time and getting bus preventative maintenance work completed.

Belinda Spinosi said her work with COTA to address accessibility concerns on fixed routes has been successful and would like to see that expanded to all COTA's transit. Specific concerns she noted include operators are stressed; delays with making bus stops accessible, and that the complaint system does not address the problems. Ms. Spinosi would like to see progress updates.

Walter Hardy said it is a challenge at downtown area transfer points to get from one bus to another. Mr. Hardy questioned why the levy was needed to increase service and frequency, since they were offered prior to COVID. He encouraged the board and staff to use the service to understand it from the rider's perspective.

5. President's Report

COTA President/CEO Monica Téllez-Fowler reported mid-year ridership is up nine percent, compared to the same time in 2024, and May's ridership was up 17 percent, compared with the previous year. She shared the extreme heat policy has received positive response; over six days in June more than 200,000 fare-free passenger trips were provided. President Téllez-Fowler reported that the public has been providing feedback on the proposed Line 30, which is one of 14 new or enhanced routes planned as part of the LinkUS Mobility Initiative. She highlighted the Transit Supportive Infrastructure plan, strategic planning, and summer events work. President Téllez-Fowler congratulated Tanya Salyers on her promotion to Chief of Staff and thanked former COTA Board of Trustee Kumi Walker, whose term ended this spring, for his service, noting his technology and innovation experience and knowledge has helped shape COTA's future.

6. Governance Committee Report - Sean Mentel, Chair

Governance Committee Chair Sean Mentel reported that the committee met on July 17, 2025, where they heard committee reports; an Agency Safety Plan was presented by COTA Safety Director Jeff Henderson; resolutions were reviewed, and Chief Legal Counsel Christina Wendell presented proposed amendments to COTA's Governance Guidelines and the Board of Trustees Rules and Regulations documents.

- A. Resolution 2025-71 Amending and Restating the Board Governance Guidelines
- B. Resolution 2025-72 Amending and Restating the Board of Trustees Rules and Regulations

Chief Legal Counsel Christina Wendell presented the proposed amendments to COTA's Governance Guidelines and the Board of Trustees Rules and Regulations documents to the full board. She said the State of Ohio made changes to the Ohio Revised Code related to the competitive bidding process for contracts; the change reflects the federal government standards for transit agencies. Of note are the changes added Section 9.3, subsection A, to define which contracts

require Board approval to include all contracts involving expenditures at or above the simplified acquisition threshold, which means the amount outlined in 41 U.S.C. 134. The Board also approves any expense that has not been previously appropriated and all Transit Supportive Infrastructure Program project contracts over One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00).

Ms. Wendell said other changes reflect removing duplications and consolidating guidelines into one place (instead of splitting between the two documents). She said section changes simplify and clearly delineate the internal process.

Trustee Pete Bucher moved to approve Resolution 2025-71, seconded by Trustee Reitter. Motion carried.

Trustee Ulrey moved to approve Resolution 2025-72, seconded by Trustee Mallory Donaldson. Motion carried.

7. Strategic and Operational Planning Committee Report - Trudy Bartley, Chair

Strategic Planning Committee Chair Trudy Bartley reported that this committee met on July 8, 2025 and heard four presentations: Maria Schaper from the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) presented an update on the Transit Supportive Infrastructure (TSI) 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program and COTA Interim Chief Financial Officer Michael DeWees presented the corresponding resolution; an update on LinkUS was provided by COTA Chief of External Relations Patrick Harris, who presented the governance structure—named LinkUS Delivery Alliance—and an update on the corridor work was presented by COTA Chief Engineer Andy Biesterveld, which has been focusing on traffic, stormwater detention, NEPA, schedule, and cost estimates; Mr. DeWees also provided an update on COTA's budget, sharing operating performance, financial statement through May 2025, sales tax, cash reserves, and investment summary; Jill Barnett from TransPro presented an update on COTA's strategic plan work, noting they have been gathering input from COTA staff and stakeholders, and expect that the plan will be ready to adopted by the board in December.

A. Transit Supportive Infrastructure 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program Update - Maria Schaper, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Transportation Study Director

MORPC Transportation Study Director Maria Schaper updated the full board on the TSI Capital Improvements Program by providing an overview of the 2026-2030 program and committee process to select the projects. Ms. Schaper said they checked in with project leads to find out if there were changes for 2026; that process resulted in a reduction of three projects and a corresponding reduction of budget, for a total of 37 projects ready to start in 2026. Ms. Schaper

provided projects by quadrant: the Northeast Quadrant has six projects; the Northwest Quadrant, 11; the Southeast Quadrant, nine, and the Southwest Quadrant, 11. She said the working group will begin this fall to identify projects to start in 2031, which will result in a 2027-2031 plan.

Resolution 2025-73 - Adoption of the 2026-2030 Transit Supportive
Infrastructure Grant Awards Program's Five-Year Capital Improvements
Program

Vice Chair Trudy Bartley moved to approve Resolution 2025-73, seconded by Trustee Donaldson. Trustee Stephen Sayre abstained. Motion carried.

8. External Stakeholder Relations Committee Report - Erika Clark Jones, Chair

External Stakeholder Relations Committee Chair Erika Clark Jones reported that the committee did not meet in July.

9. Performance Monitoring/Audit Committee Report - Marc Reitter, Chair

Performance Monitoring/Audit Committee (PMAC) Chair Marc Reitter reported that the committee met on July 10, 2025, where COTA Interim Chief Financial Officer Michael DeWees provided the financial update through May 31, 2025 and corresponding resolution. Mr. Reitter also reported a new operational performance update was presented by Deputy CEO Garth Weithman, noting this update will be shared at PMAC going forward. Through May, COTA fixed-route service has seen increased ridership, on-time performance, and safe operations over year-to-date 2024. PMAC Chair Reitter said there were 13 resolutions presented to the committee for discussion: one resolution was recommended for the regular agenda and 12 resolutions recommended for the consent agenda.

A. Budget Update - Michael DeWees, COTA Interim Chief Financial Officer

Mr. DeWees provided the full board with operating performance, financial statement, sales tax revenue, cash reserves, and investment summary through May 31, 2025. Mr. DeWees noted the underperformance reflected in the financial statement is due to a timing issue from changes at the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA), which resulted in a delay in drawing down federal resources. He expects the drawdowns to catch up in the coming months. He said a second factor, sales tax revenue, will catch up in the coming months. Mr. DeWees reviewed COTA's sales tax trend, pointing out its seasonal behavior. Deputy CEO Garth Weithman added that the team is reviewing this issue and will present findings to PMAC in September.

Resolution 2025-74 Authorizing an Amendment to Approve Reasonable
Financial Plan for West Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit Project

Mr. DeWees said the FTA requires the submission of a Reasonable Financial Plan, which includes projected commitments of local financial resources and debt financing; the proposed plan includes \$42.1 million of local match on federal and state grants; \$46 million of additional cash reserves, and \$75 million of debt financing.

Trustee Bucher moved to approve Resolution 2025-74, seconded by Trustee Reitter. Motion carried.

10. Consent Agenda

Chair Mentel moved to remove Resolution 2025-80 from the consent agenda, seconded by Trustee Clark Jones. Motion carried.

- A. Resolution 2025-75 Authorization to Adopt a Tax Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31 2026 and to Submit the 2026 Tax Budget to the Franklin County Auditor
- B. Resolution 2025-76 Authorizing a Contract with CNA for the Purchase of Commercial Property Insurance
- C. Resolution 2025-77 Authorizing a Contract with Amazon Web Services, Inc. for the Renewal and Co-Termination of the Amazon Web Service Subscription
- D. Resolution 2025-78 Authorizing a Contract with Compunnel Software Group, Inc. for the Continued Development of a Modern Data Warehouse Solution
- E. Resolution 2025-79 Authorizing a Contract with Paul Werth Associates Inc. for Public Relations Consulting Services
- F. Resolution 2025-80 Authorizing a Contract with Ernst and Young US LLP for the Development of a Workforce Development Readiness Assessment and Strategic Plan
- G. Resolution 2025-81 Authorizing a Contract with Development Dimensions International, Inc. for Personalized Professional Development and Leadership Training
- H. Resolution 2025-82 Authorizing Additional Expenditures for the Contract with Qualawash Holdings, LLC for the Removal and Disposal of

Sludge and Water from COTA Premises

- I. Resolution 2025-83 Authorizing Additional Expenditures for the Contract with Johnson Controls US Holdings LLC to Service and Maintain COTAs Fire Protection Systems
- J. Resolution 2025-84 Authorizing a Contract with CDW Government, LLC for Technology Assets for Mobility Center at Rickenbacker Construction
- K. Resolution 2025-85 Authorizing a Contract with Transportation Equipment Sales Corp. for the Purchase of Ten 2025 Ford Transit Vans with a Glaval (Narrow) Commute Body for COTA Mainstream
- L. Resolution 2025-86 Authorizing a Contract with Bob Maxey Ford, Inc for the Purchase of Two 2025 Ford F-150 4x4 XL SuperCrew Pick-Up Trucks
- M. Resolution 2025-87 Authorizing the Adoption of the Central Ohio Transit Authority's Updated Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan

Vice Chair Bartley moved to approve Resolutions 2025-75 through 2025-79 and Resolutions 2025-81 through 2025-87, seconded by Trustee Jay Deis. Motion carried.

11. Other Business

- A. Resolution 2025-88 Authorizing a Contract with Efeso Management Consultants, Inc. for a Vehicle Maintenance Operational Assessment

Deputy CEO Garth Weithman presented Resolution 2025-88, which authorizes a contract with EFESO Management Consultants for a Vehicle Maintenance Operational Assessment. He said COTA has been working with TWU Local 208 on this topic, and this assessment is needed due to several factors: changes in staffing; assessing training as COTA goes into negotiations with labor; reliability and availability—including parts, vendor support, and qualified techs—have impacted pull out, and fleet challenges, primarily with keeping battery electric buses in service.

Trustee Reitter moved to approve Resolution 2025-88, seconded by Trustee Clark Jones. Motion carried.

- B. Resolution 2025-89 Commending Kumi Walker

Chair Mentel presented the resolution commending Kumi Walker for his service during his second term on the COTA Board of Trustees. Chair Mentel motioned to approve Resolution 2025-89, seconded by Trustee Reitter. Motion carried.

12. Meeting Schedule

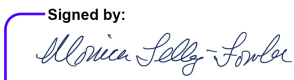
- External Stakeholder Relations Committee - 3:30 pm, Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2025
- Strategic and Operational Planning Committee - 11:30 am, Thursday, Sept. 11, 2025
- Performance Monitoring/Audit Committee - 2 pm, Thursday, Sept. 11, 2025
- Governance Committee - 4 pm, Thursday, Sept. 18, 2025
- Board of Trustees Regular Meeting - 9 am, Wednesday, Sept. 24, 2025

13. Adjournment

Trustee Clark Jones moved to adjourn the July 23, 2025 Board of Trustees meeting, seconded by Vice Chair Bartley. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:21 am.

Adopted: _____ September 24, 2025

Signed:  Signed by: _____
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Chair, Board of Trustees

Attest:  Signed by: _____
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President/CEO