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**MEETING: EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

**DATE: TUESDAY MAY 7, 2024**

**TIME: 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

**LOCATION: COTA WG PORTER BOARD ROOM | 33 N HIGH ST**

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**MEETING MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Tolliver called the May 7, 2024, meeting of the External Stakeholder Committee to order at 3:01 PM.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**Committee Members Present**

Shannon Tolliver, Chair

Craig Treneff, Trustee

Heather Ulrey, Trustee

Trudy Bartley, Trustee

**3. NEW BOARD MEMBER APPOINTMENT – OATH OF OFFICE – HEATHER ULREY, TRUSTEE**

Chair Tolliver introduced Chair Moore as he swore in Trustee Heather Ulrey to her new board member appointment with the COTA Board of Trustees.

**4. APPROVAL OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Chair Tolliver motioned to approve the March 5, 2024, External Stakeholder Relations Committee minutes. Trustee Treneff seconded the motion. Motion carries.

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

**DBE SPEND UPDATE**

Diamond Zimmerman, Contracts & DBE Program Administrator presented the DBE Spend Update. Diamond's division has been actively collaborating with Stacey Hatch from the Innovation team to address and break down the flow of information from our Infor system to B2GNow, the software integral to our DBE Program. This progress underscores our commitment



to operational excellence and strengthens our capacity to fulfill regulatory requirements while optimizing resource allocation.

Diamond showed the year-to-date diversity spend results. Our total vendor spend is \$40,367,352.00. Our total diverse spend from January to the end of March was \$4,922,863, enabling us to exceed our PIC goal of 8% and our target of 10%.

### **STRATEGIC RESPONSE SPECIALIST UPDATE**

Amanda Brooks, Sr. Manager Risk Assessment presented the Strategic Response Specialist Update. Strategic Response Specialists are change agents within our community to increase safety and security while serving vulnerable populations and proactively addressing issues including unhoused individuals, substance abuse, and mental health concerns. The award-winning group comprises dedicated professionals committed to fulfilling COTA's mission of ensuring a safe and secure transit system for all.

Amanda presented the tasks that the Strategic Response Specialists complete daily. They address vulnerable populations with compassion and dignity. Proactively monitor high ridership lines to have a visual presence and engage riders—their physical presence at park & rides, transit centers, stops, and shelters.

Amanda shared that on February 27, 2024, a Strategic Response Specialist (SRS) responded to a call regarding an unconscious passenger on a COTA bus. Upon arrival, the SRS assessed the situation and immediately administered two doses of Naloxone (Narcan). The unconscious passenger was revived due to the SRS's training and quick action. This was the fourth individual that an SRS had revived since they started carrying Narcan.

### **LINKUS UPDATE**

Patrick Harris, VP, External Relations presented an update on the LinkUS outreach efforts.

Media spend increased in March, using the new dollars on social platforms LinkedIn and TikTok. March also saw the team averaging more than one LinkUS presentation in the community per day. Helped by the great news of the NAE grant award, there was a 110% increase in website traffic and a 300% increase in our featured social channels.

Public engagement, which captures efforts to inform the community through presentations and outreach to partners, continues. The 31 presentations in March garnered 2,166 touchpoints. The CMC forum was an important opportunity. It was a sold-out event and streamed online with high engagement. There has been a concentration of engagement with the business community as well, with a series of presentations to members of the Columbus Partnership with Monica, the Mayor, Council President Hardin, and Patrick Harris in the last few weeks. These have been impactful, and another round is expected in late May or early June.



LinkUS is a regional initiative, and support from the 17 municipalities, 9 villages, and 17 townships within COTA’s service territory is critical. Kelsey Ellingsen, our Director of Local Government Affairs, has led this effort to ensure all communities are aware of the benefits of LinkUS to their communities, whether that is a current or future corridor, enhanced transit, COTA//Plus, or Transit Supportive Infrastructure. Our first tier of outreach for 2024 was to present their city councils, and with few exceptions, they are either completed or confirmed for their presentation. With these key milestones accomplished, we’ll be moving outward in each community’s sphere of influence and beginning to engage school districts, chambers of commerce, and other pillar institutions and businesses in each area. Over the summer, we will also be engaging townships and villages, although we have already engaged many of them through corridor-level work and at scale through partnerships with the County Engineer’s office and the Franklin County Township Association.

Patrick concluded his presentation with a request for our committee members to join one of our newest outreach efforts, the West Broad Augmented Reality Tour. This is an immersive experience, that lets attendees experience the future of transit through the eyes of everyday users. It uses augmented reality technology that allows users to virtually stand in a future BRT transit stop, see future transit-supportive infrastructure, and experience West Broad Street with new Equitable Transit Oriented Development. The tour begins at our McKinley facility with a 3D-printed replica of an articulated rapid transit vehicle on a dedicated, center-running BRT lane. People then board a COTA battery electric vehicle, and along the way, it makes three stops, one of which is seen here with the A/R placed transit station.

6. **OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was presented.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon a motion given by Chair Tolliver and seconded by Trustee Treneff, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM. The next External Stakeholder Relations Committee meeting is Tuesday, July 9, 2024, at 3:00 PM

Adopted:

May 7, 2024

Signed:

DocuSigned by:

Shannon Tolliver

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Chair, External Stakeholder Relations Committee

Attest:

DocuSigned by:

Monica Selby-Fowler

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President/CEO