



## OPTA Board of Director Meeting Minutes September 18, 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  
Howard Stewart, South East Area Transit

### OPTA Staff

Matt Carle, Executive Director  
Elle Crader, Executive Administrator

### Presenter Attendees

Andy Bowers, Andy Bowers & Associates  
Chuck Dyer, Ohio Department of Transportation

### Administrative Attendees

Denise Baba, PARTA  
Marcia Fletcher, PARTA

Additional: 50 In-Person Attendees and 13 Go To Meeting Attendees

### **Claudia Amrhein, PARTA**

Ms. Claudia Amrhein called the meeting of the OPTA Board of Directors to order at 3:33 p.m. on September 18, 2023. She indicated that the meeting minutes for June were posted on the OPTA Member Portal. She asked for a motion to accept the December minutes to which Mr. Kirt Conrad motioned. Mr. Darryl Haley seconded the motion to which all those in favor voted "aye." Ms. Amrhein then asked Mr. Matt Carle to deliver the Executive Director report.

### **Matt Carle, OPTA**

Mr. Carle began by thanking Ms. Amrhein and welcoming everyone in attendance at the Ohio Needs Transit Conference and OPTA Expo this year. He stated that this year was the largest year yet for the conference with 450 attendees, 70 vendors, 20 vehicles on display for the expo, and more interest than ever before. He stated that Tuesday would be the annual OPTA Excellence Awards luncheon where OPTA gets to honor the remarkable transit staff across Ohio. He

encouraged everyone in attendance to come to not only the luncheon but all the events that OPTA planned as they were sure to be fun.

Next, Mr. Carle moved on to his Government Affairs report. He stated the legislature has been out of session since the last OPTA board meeting. The legislature wrapped up the budget negotiations on June 30<sup>th</sup> and then took a break until Labor Day. He stated since Labor Day, a few committees have met, which OPTA continues to monitor. Mr. Carle stated he is also working with COTA to re-introduce transit assault legislation and talking to a few legislators to do so. He stated that the Ohio House has encouraged members to go back to their districts and work on the ballot issues that will be voted on in the fall, so not much work is occurring at the Statehouse.

The first ballot issue is a reproductive rights issue and the second is a legal marijuana issue. Mr. Carle stated that polling shows both issues will pass and that if they do, he fully expects the Ohio Legislature to reconvene and attempt to change parts of the law.

Finally, Mr. Carle stated that now is the time for transit agencies to be meeting with and talking to their legislators. He said many agencies came in to testify during budget season and that was incredibly helpful. However, the best time to build a relationship with your legislator is when you don't need anything from them. Mr. Carle suggested agencies reach out to members and invite them on a bus ride or invite them to meet with staff at transit facilities to learn more about what transit agencies do.

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

### **Claudia Amrhein, PARTA**

Ms. Amrhein then moved to the annual election of officers. She reminded the group that the OPTA Code of Regulations states voting members are the Directors of regular transit agency members that are in good standing with OPTA with one vote per organization.

Ms. Amrhein stated that 2024 is a transition year for OPTA where all board members will be transitioning out. She then read through the list of nominations: President- Howard Stewart, Vice-President- Andy Volenik, Treasurer- Bob Ruzinsky, VP Small Urban/Rural Systems- Mary Habig, VP Associate Members- Kevin Hardesty and Blair Taseff, VP Mobility Manager Members- Nicki Silver.

Ms. Amrhein stated that her 3.5-year tenure has been very satisfying and successful, despite a few rocky times and thanked everyone for their participation. She also stated that these new positions do not become effective immediately but that new officers will assume their role in January 2024 so that there is a transition period. She then called for a vote, and all voted in favor with no opposition or abstentions.

Ms. Amrhein then turned the meeting over to Ms. Sarah Walton of ODOT for an ODOT update.

### **Sarah Walton, ODOT**

Ms. Walton stated there were a few updates from ODOT. First, there is a new Director of the Division of Planning at ODOT- Jim Gates, and there is a new Coordinator of Urban Planning, Spencer Smith. Next, Ms. Walton stated that applications have closed for the latest round of funding and that announcements are expected from ODOT in December.

Ms. Walton then turned the meeting over to Ms. Amrhein, who asked Mr. Carle to give a finance report for Ms. Dawn Distler (absent).

**Matt Carle, OPTA**

Mr. Carle stated that the July, August, and September financials were posted to the OPTA Member Portal for review. He stated that OPTA remains in a strong position and encourages everyone to review the financials and reach out if they have any questions. Mr. Carle stated that OPTA continues to cut unnecessary spending and is striving to be good stewards of the OPTA budget.

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

**Claudia Amrhein, PARTA**

Ms. Amrhein then asked any committee members present to give an update.

**Shannon Webster, Greene CATS**

Ms. Shannon Webster stated that the Ohio Mobility Management Network serves 67 of the 88 counties in Ohio. During her tenure as VP Mobility Manager Members, membership grew by 50% and mobility managers were awarded by OPTA for their advocacy, innovation, and collaborative efforts. She stated that she looks forward to continuing working with her fellow mobility managers and that the most recent Mobility Scoop is accessible on the OPTA website.

Ms. Webster thanked everyone at OPTA and stated she enjoyed serving in leadership and looks forward to working with the new VP Mobility Manager Members.

**Claudia Amrhein, PARTA**

Ms. Amrhein thanked Ms. Webster and then gave the President's Report. She encouraged everyone to download the conference event app so that they could stay up to date on all of the available sessions and opportunities for conference attendees. She then encouraged everyone to join OPTA at the Welcome Reception following the board meeting, which was to be held at Barley's.

Ms. Amrhein then thanked everyone and motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:02 pm.