



## OPTA Executive Committee Meeting Minutes August 8, 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 1:33 p.m. on August 8, 2023. She motioned to have the minutes from the May 2023 Executive Committee meeting accepted. Howard Stewart made the motion, which was seconded by Dawn Distler. 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 stating OPTA was deep in the planning of the Ohio Needs Transit Conference & OPTA Expo 2023. He urged anyone who hadn't had the opportunity to purchase a ticket yet to do so as OPTA was on pace to sell out. Mr. Carle also stated that OPTA has lined up over 50 presentations for attendees to enjoy with very little overlap from the educational sessions in 2022. Additionally, Mr. Carle stated that OPTA is providing two classes that have continuing education credit issued by ODOT. Details on the classes are available on OPTA's website. Mr. Carle stated that the OPTA board meeting and annual election of officers will take place on the Monday of the conference, followed by a welcome reception at Barley's. Tuesday is full of sessions during

the day and the annual OPTA awards luncheon, followed by the after-hours party at Howl at the Moon. Finally, this year ODOT is hosting their annual vehicle fair within the conference, which is a new endeavor.

Next, Mr. Carle stated that OPTA is accepting nominations for the annual Excellence Awards through August 18<sup>th</sup> at 5PM. Nomination forms and categories can be found on OPTA's website.

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

Mr. Carle first began by saying the legislature is not currently in session and is instead doing work back in their districts. The transportation budget, which includes public transit's funding, was signed in July and included lots of policy changes.

Next, Mr. Carle urged everyone to get out and vote in the special election that was occurring in August as the issues could have an impact on possible bond issues and other initiatives impacting public transit funding.

Mr. Carle 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 Ms. Jessie Schmitzer to present.

**Jessie Schmitzer, ODOT**

Ms. Jessie Schmitzer stated that ODOT is in the thick of their rural transit program funding cycle. The applications are open for rural programs but close September 11. Additionally, the OTP funding cycle was about to wrap up so agencies should expect announcements from ODOT regarding awards soon. Next, Ms. Schmitzer stated ODOT has a new program this year to assist agencies with marketing assistance, website development, and transportation development plans. Anyone interested in applying should reach out to Ms. Schmitzer for more information.

Finally, Ms. Schmitzer stated that ODOT has hired a rural transit coordinator who previously worked at Ohio Transit Risk Pool. The individual has a lot of great experience and ODOT is excited for him to hit the ground running. Additionally, Ms. Schmitzer stated ODOT is in the midst of a procurement process with dispatching software and has received bids from ten vendors. Once the bid process has wrapped, ODOT will be sharing more information with transit agencies.

**Jose Feliciano, GCRTA**

Mr. Jose Feliciano asked when ODOT would be announcing more guidance about the Ohio Workforce Mobility Program.

**Jessie Schmitzer, ODOT**

Ms. Schmitzer stated that she was not sure of the status but would reach out to Mr. Chuck Dyer and share that information with OPTA.

**Claudia Amrhein, PARTA, OPTA**

Ms. Amrhein thanked Ms. Schmitzer for her update and then turned the meeting over to Ms. 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 the majority of the spending was coming from the 2023 conference and that overall, the finances were in good order.

**Matt Carle, OPTA**

Mr. Carle stated that he wished to add that the OPTA financials were in a strong financial position and that OPTA works very hard to keep costs low and be good stewards of OPTA's money.

**Claudia Amrhein, PARTA, OPTA**

Ms. Amrhein then thanked the OPTA nominating committee for its hard work in the 2024 transition. She stated that nearly all roles will be filled by new people as most have termed out. She then asked a member of the nominating committee to give a report.

**Darryl Haley, SORTA**

Mr. Darryl Haley stated the slate for 2024 was as follows:

President, Howard Stewart

VP, Andy Volenik

Secretary Treasurer, Bob Ruzinsky

VP Small Urban/Rural Systems, Mary Habig

VP Mobility Manager Members, Shannon Webster

VP Associate Members, Kevin Hardesty and Blair Taseff

Ms. Amrhein then adjourned the meeting at 2:01PM.