



OPTA Executive Committee Meeting Minutes February 6, 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
Nichole Silver, SEAT	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
Claudia Amrhein, PARTA
Dawn Distler, Akron METRO

OPTA Staff

Matt Carle, Executive Director
Elle Crader, Executive Administrator

Presenter Attendees

Andy Bowers, Park Street Consulting
Chuck Dyer, Ohio Department of Transportation

Howard Stewart, SEAT

Mr. Howard Stewart called the meeting of the OPTA Executive Committee to order on February 6, 2024. He motioned to have the minutes from the November 2023 Executive Committee meeting accepted. Claudia Amrhein made the motion, which was seconded by Chasilyn Carter. All attendees then voted in favor by saying "aye." He 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 Ohio Loves Transit Week will be held February 11-17, 2024 throughout the state. Like last year, OPTA sent out swag, which consisted of buttons and stickers, to agencies. OPTA reached a record this year of sending out over 4000 buttons and 4000 stickers to members across the state. Additionally, to celebrate Ohio Loves Transit, OPTA has posted a toolkit for members to use on the member portal, including social media samples, a sample press release, talking points, updated stats and figures from ODOT and our legislative reception invitation.

To celebrate Ohio Loves Transit Day, which will be held on Feb. 13, OPTA has reserved space with COTA this year at their downtown headquarters, 33 N. High Street. The room will be open from 8:30am through 5pm and OPTA will provide a light breakfast and lunch throughout the day. Mr.

Carle stated that the most important event of the day was the legislative reception to be hosted in the Museum Gallery of the Statehouse at 5:00pm-6:30pm. Mr. Carle stated that the legislature will not be in town because they will be out in the district campaigning, so he expects many offices to send staff but hopes some legislators will also come.

Finally, Mr. Carle urged any members with outstanding OPTA dues to please pay their invoices, as OPTA is a member driven association. Without the support of OPTA members, we cannot be in the Governor's Offices and meeting with legislators to discuss the importance of public transit in Ohio.

Mr. Carle then transitioned to his government affairs update. Mr. Carle stated that the legislature has been plagued by infighting and a battle for a new House Speaker, which has caused all other legislation to come to a standstill. He stated that the General Assembly was on track to be the least productive in the history of the state. Mr. Carle stated that all of this has caused issues in OPTA's efforts to pass a driver assault bill. He has attempted to find a bill sponsor for the legislation, particularly from the Republicans. He stated it is essential to have both a Republican and not just a Democrat to sponsor the bill if it should have a chance of passing.

Next, Mr. Bowers and Mr. Carle both discussed the capital budget bill that the legislature is working on which would have hundreds of millions to local communities to fund capital projects. Mr. Carle stated that it is generally frowned upon by public transit agencies to seek projects in the capital budget and was not aware of many agencies doing so this time around but still thought it pertinent to discuss the bill as some of the urban transits were interested.

Jose Feliciano of GCRTA asked if there was any update on the Ohio Workforce Mobility Partnership Program.

Chuck Dyer, ODOT

Mr. Dyer stated ODOT expects to release information next week (the week of Feb. 11) to agencies.

Howard Stewart, SEAT

Mr. Stewart thanked Mr. Carle and turned it over to Mr. Bob Ruzinsky for a finance update.

Bob Ruzinsky, Dayton RTA

Mr. Ruzinsky stated that he had looked at the financials in detail and believed that OPTA was overall in a very healthy financial position. He stated that the only question he had was what could be done with the ample reserve that OPTA was sitting on. Mr. Ruzinsky suggested moving some of the reserve into a high interest savings account which given today's rates, could theoretically net us an additional \$10,000 of interest each year.

Howard Stewart, SEAT

Mr. Stewart thanked Mr. Ruzinsky and turned it over to Mr. Dyer for any additional updates from ODOT.

Chuck Dyer, ODOT

Mr. Dyer stated that ODOT was in the process of granting 6-month extensions to current contracts given their transition from a calendar year to fiscal calendar year. He stated ODOT was also going to be hosting a procurement session for electric vehicle chargers. Finally, ODOT has several

vacancies in their office that they are attempting to fill, and he urged anyone with viable candidates to encourage them to apply.

Howard Stewart, SEAT

Mr. Stewart thanked Mr. Dyer and turned it over to committee chairs for reports.

Andy Volenik, Delaware Co Transit

Mr. Volenik stated he was excited to be a part of the OPTA board and was looking forward to working with everyone throughout the year.

Nicki Silver, SEAT

Ms. Silver stated that there has been a lot of turnover in the mobility manager world across the state over the past year and there are a lot of new faces. She is working with OPTA to get invoices paid for mobility managers and to keep the new group engaged. She stated the mobility managers were excited for Ohio Loves Transit week and are looking forward to meeting with legislators to discuss public transit.

Howard Stewart, SEAT

Mr. Stewart thanked all members for their reports. He then stated the next meeting will be held March 12 in person at COTA's McKinley Ave. location. Mr. Stewart adjourned the meeting.