



## MINUTES

### Joint Meeting of the Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Commission and the Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Consortium

March 26, 2024

Allen Cornell called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Present were:

**Commissioner Members:**

Judith Davis (Vice Chair)  
Ron Skotz  
Christine Wells  
Robert Love  
Samuel Sneed  
Crystal McGill-Belk

**Staff:**

Jason Quan, RTA  
Cole McCarren, RTA  
Gabrielle Tibbs, RTA  
Ryan Mayers, RTA  
Ronaldo Joanis, RTA  
Preston Reed, RTA  
Carrie Anderson-Watters, Howard County  
Vic Weissberg, Prince George's County

**Commissioners Not Present:**

Michael Dyer  
Claudia Barber

**1. Welcome – J. Davis**

**2. New Acting Administrator – Jason Quan**

- The county has appointed Clarence “Trey” Dickerson, III, P.E. as the acting director while they search for a permanent replacement. Trey, as he prefers to be called, won't be attending this meeting as his wife is giving birth to a newborn. In the meantime, they've designated an interim acting director to cover for Trey during his maternity leave. He is from the Howard County Office of Transportation.

**3. Open Public Comment Period – None**

**4. Commission Minutes from December 12, 2023 – J. Davis**

- Christine Wells moved to approve the minutes, mentioning a few corrections. Ron Skotz seconded the motion. Christine pointed out that there are references to the Maryland Transit Authority that should be corrected to read 'Maryland Transit Administration.' Additionally, Allen Cornell participated in part of the December meeting, despite being listed as not present.

- Minutes approved by those in attendance.

## **5. Selection of New CMTMC Chairperson – J. Davis**

- Due to Allen’s resignation and retirement, the Central Maryland Transportation & Mobility Commission (CMTMC) must address an annual requirement. The bylaws stipulate that the election of a new chair should take place during the January commission meeting. However, since the CMTMC no longer holds monthly commission meetings, we need to amend the bylaws. J. Davis proposed that the election occur annually during the first commission meeting of the year, which aligns with the current situation. J. Davis made a motion for the latter, and the committee will vote on the matter at the next meeting.
- J. Davis then initiated discussions on potential candidates for the chair position.
- J. Davis recognized Alan’s outstanding representation of the commission, including testifying before groups. Ron Skotz, skilled in running meetings and posing insightful questions, emerged as a potential candidate. J. Davis then asked Christine Wells if she would like to be the vice chair, responsible for running meetings and representing the commission when Ron is unavailable. Christine expressed interest, and J. Davis nominated her. Both Ron and Christine were subsequently voted into their positions by the committee.

## **6. GM Report – Jason Quan**

- HUMAN RESOURCES
  - ◇ RTA’s Human Resources recruitment efforts last quarter focused on driver acquisition. While RTA received a good number of applicants, completion rates for training remain a challenge. Currently, only about 32% of recruits successfully complete the program. When drivers quit or fail to pass the training, they are obligated to reimburse the company for training costs, although enforcing this in Maryland is difficult due to legal restrictions.
  - ◇ RTA has sent stern letters to recruits warning them of action should they negate from the original agreement, but pursuing costs would be more expensive. RTA hopes trainees take their commitment seriously. Since the new CBA, fewer people quit, but completion rates remain a challenge. Drivers who don’t pass the CDL exam can’t work for RTA, but RTA can’t automatically deduct training costs due to legal restrictions.
  - ◇ The RTA has quantified the fixed cost, regardless of trainee numbers. Some quit due to drug tests, background checks, or not passing training.
  - ◇ The RTA has refreshed recruitment efforts, advertised, and explored creative concepts. Wrapping buses costs around \$6,000, but RTA is getting a discount. Real

drivers may feature in the designs (male and female). RTA will strategically place the wrapped buses on high-activity routes. It's a great idea to enhance RTAs professional image.

- OPERATIONS/SERVICE

- ◇ Fixed Route Ridership Trends (through February 2024)
  - ◆ RTAs ridership trends are positive compared to previous years. RTA is aiming to hit the million-ride mark soon. Paratransit is also doing well, but RTA's focus remains on fixed routes for cost efficiency.
- ◇ On-time Performance
  - ◆ RTA's paratransit on-time performance is at 87%. RTA is aiming to reduce the 5% early arrivals by focusing on staying on time at time points. Late arrivals are sometimes due to traffic conditions, but RTA will prioritize avoiding early departures.
- ◇ Maintenance Road Calls
  - ◆ RTA's road calls this quarter are comparable to the last quarter, but they're not resulting in vehicles returning to RTA's facility. Regarding bus maintenance, RTA follows preventive maintenance schedules (PMS) for pools A, B, and C. Unfortunately, PMS doesn't cover all issues, especially transmission-related ones. El Dorado, the company RTA buys buses from, is shutting down its factory in the US. Despite some problems with the 11 buses that RTA received last year, American Truck and Bus (RTA's distributor) is still honoring warranties. Fortunately, RTA has new options—Gillig and New Flyer—for its upcoming bus contract.

- PLANNING AND OUTREACH

- ◇ RTA recently installed Samsara tracking units on all its buses (both paratransit and fixed route). These units provide real-time location information and tie in with diagnostic ports for maintenance. DriveCam monitors driver behavior, and overall, technological improvements enhance efficiency and customer experience.
- ◇ RTA is working on enhancing paratransit services by allowing customers to manage their trips electronically. Real-time tracking and automated notifications will improve their experience. Additionally, mobile ticketing is already in place and being used.
- ◇ RTA introduced mobile ticketing with validators on its transit vehicles. These validators validate mobile tickets using barcodes, eliminating the need for driver involvement. While RTA encourages alternative payment methods, RTA legally can't remove cash as an option. RTA's goal is to transition over time, but cash will remain available.
- ◇ RTA has been working with the county and downtown partnership to supply live data for the Columbia circulator. It won't be operated by RTA, but it's a small shuttle in downtown Columbia.

- ◇ RTA received positive feedback about the recent stop additions on Route 502 (from Owings Mills to Laurel) and Route 505 (from Columbia to Catonsville). RTA has added a total of five stops—three on Route 502 and two on Route 505.
  - ◇ RTA attended community events, including the Howard County open house and the Rider’s Advisory Council (RAC). The turnout was incredible, with diverse perspectives. RTA also participated in the TAM legislative reception. Funding for local transit remains a challenge, but there’s a bill addressing it. Enabling legislation for dedicated funding sources could be advantageous.
  - ◇ Local transit often faces budget cuts. Ron Skotz has proposed enabling legislation for a dedicated funding source, which could benefit Howard County and possibly Charles County. Initial attempts have garnered interest from high-ranking Senate members.
  - ◇ Upcoming events include Bike-to-Work day in May; a campaign to educate the public about validators; the Downtown Columbia Partnership’s incentives happy hour; and the TAM rodeo in April. RTA’s drivers practice skills like wheelchair securement and pre-trip inspections for the rodeo.
  - ◇ RTA will be celebrating its ten-year anniversary later this year. Invitations will be sent to everyone once a date is set.
- SAFETY
    - ◇ RTA had a spike in accidents this quarter, with 16 incidents. Most were non-preventable, including seven animal-related accidents. Fortunately, there were no injuries, only minor damage. RTA has discussed retraining and coaching to address behavior before it leads to accidents. Implementing a mystery rider program has also been considered.

## **7. FY25 Draft Budget Update – Shawn O’Meara**

- ◇ The FY 2024 forecast shows revenue remaining flat, with a slight increase due to advertising. Expenses are over budget by about \$176,000, mainly due to the impact of the CBA. If the RTA needs additional funds for FY 24, the RTA will make a formal request to Howard County by June 2024.
- ◇ Please refer to the attached FY 2025 Draft Budget for the complete financial report.

## **8. RAC Update & Minutes – Ryan Mayers**

- RTA had a good turnout for the RAC meeting, and it was refreshing to have new riders. The RAC discussed updates on technology, mobile ticket validation, GPS tracking, and the new stop. The RAC provided important feedback on transient reliability, on-site performance, and additional service locations.

## **9. Administrative Office Changes – Jason Quan**

- As RTA’s lease comes to an end on June 30th, RTA has negotiated a new lease with the landlord. The new lease means they will have less space, which aligns with its goal of having everyone at one facility in the next 2 to 3 years. RTA is considering holding

commission meetings at the Central Library or rotating among libraries in the various service areas.

**10. Next Commission Meetings**

- FY 2025 Budget Meeting (May 21, 2024, 1:00 PM)
- Commission Meeting (June 25, 2024, 1:00 PM)

**11. Adjournment**

◇ The meeting was adjourned at 1:17 pm.

Next Regular Commission Meeting – Tuesday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 PM  
RAC Meeting – ([meetings.transitRTA.com/RAC](https://meetings.transitRTA.com/RAC))

Acronyms & Meanings

PMS	Preventive Maintenance Schedules
RAC	Riders Advisory Council
RTA	Regional Transportation Agency
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement
TAM	Transportation Association of Maryland