

SORTA BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SOUTHWEST OHIO REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
SORTA/METRO AT HUNTINGTON CENTER  
SORTA BOARD ROOM-6<sup>th</sup> FLOOR  
525 VINE STREET, CINCINNATI OHIO 45202

MINUTES OF: Regular Meeting of the SORTA Board of Trustees

DATE: Tuesday, February 24<sup>th</sup> 2026, 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Tianay Amat, Tony Brice, Chelsea Clark, Dan Driehaus, Blake Ethridge, Kala Gibson, Pete Metz, Briana Moss, Sara Sheets, Greg Simpson, Rickell Smith and Sonja Taylor

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Jay Bedi, Trent Emeneker, Neil Kelly and KZ Smith

STAFF MEMBERS: Andy Aiello, Patrick Giblin, Adriene Hairston, Brandy Jones, Natalie Krusling, Alyssa Lasheid, Brad Mason, Bre Rahe, John Ravasio, Jason Roe, Khaled Shammout, Bill Spraul, Tim Walker and Mike Weil

LEGAL COUNSEL: Kim Schaefer (Vory's)

GUEST/PUBLIC PRESENT: Ern Tan, Rowan Grisez, Tony Johnson, Rox Raley, Mackenzie Mason, Jacob Hutson, Tamar Sella, Lauralee Thatch, Leif Benner, Bekal Sadler, Anshul Sukhlecka and Ryan Watson (Better Bus Initiative) and Matt Smeal CTSD

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Ethridge SORTA Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **HEARING FROM CITIZENS**

Ern Tan, Better Bus Initiative asked for benches at each bus stop by 2030. Invited board members and Mr. Aiello to meet at Governance Square B on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

Rowan Grisez, Better Bus Initiative asked for benches at each bus stop by 2030. Invited board members and Mr. Aiello to meet at Governance Square B on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

Tony Johnson, Better Bus Initiative asked for benches at each bus stop by 2030. Invited board members and Mr. Aiello to meet at Governance Square B on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

Rox Raley, Better Bus Initiative asked for benches at each bus stop by 2030. Invited board members and Mr. Aiello to meet at Governance Square B on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

Jacob Hutson, Better Bus Initiative asked for benches at each bus stop by 2030. Invited board members and Mr. Aiello to meet at Governance Square B on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

Tamar Sella, Better Bus Initiative asked for benches at each bus stop by 2030. Invited board members and Mr. Aiello to meet at Governance Square B on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

Lauralee Thatch, Better Bus Initiative asked for benches at each bus stop by 2030. Invited board members and Mr. Aiello to meet at Governance Square B on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

Leif Benner, Better Bus Initiative asked for benches at each bus stop by 2030. Invited board members and Mr. Aiello to meet at Governance Square B on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

Anshul Sukhlecka, Better Bus Initiative asked for benches at each bus stop by 2030. Invited board members and Mr. Aiello to meet at Governance Square B on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

Ryan Watson, Better Bus Initiative asked for benches at each bus stop by 2030. Invited board members and Mr. Aiello to meet at Governance Square B on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

Matt Smeal, CTSD thanked Steve Anderson for bus route 52x. Asked SORTA staff to stop selling rail assets.

**CHAIR UPDATE**

Mr. Ethridge asked everyone to take a moment of silence to remember previous Gwen Robinson, previous SORTA Board Vice Chair.

**MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Ethridge made a motion that the minutes of the January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, board meeting be approved as previously mailed and Ms. Clark seconded the motion. Ms. Smith abstained.

By voice vote, the SORTA Board approved the minutes.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Ms. Clark reported on the Finance Committee meeting held on February 17<sup>th</sup> 2026, and there were items(s) to present for Board Approval.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS AS OF JANUARY 31<sup>ST</sup>, 2026**

Mr. Walker presented the January financial results. Total revenues were \$13.4 million, which was unfavorable to budget by \$129K. Total expenses were \$14.4 million, which is favorable to budget by \$492k. Operating Capital Contribution was \$1.1 million, which was favorable to budget by \$363k. Ridership was 1,020k, which was unfavorable to budget by 3k. Mr. Walker then reviewed the contributing factors to these variances.

The SORTA Board accepted the report as presented.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO: 66: APPROVAL OF UPDATED FUEL HEDGING POLICY**

Ms. Clark moved for adoption and Mr. Metz seconded the motion. The approval is to the updated fuel hedging policy.

By roll call, the Board approved the resolution.

**PLANNING AND OPS COMMITTEE**

Mr. Metz reported on the Planning and Ops Committee meeting held on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2026, and there were items(s) to present for Board Approval.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO: 67: APPROVAL OF CONTRACT AWARD FOR 099-2024-SS RIDER REWARDS PROGRAM**

Mr. Metz moved for adoption and Ms. Clark seconded the motion. The contract will approve contract no. 099-2024-SS on behalf of Metro and Velocia, Inc., with a not to exceed value increasing the total not to exceed value from \$314,500 to \$614,500, an increase of \$300,000.

By roll call, the Board approved the resolution.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO: 68: APPROVAL OF 005-2026-SS SERVICE VEHICLE & CELL SERVICE**

Mr. Metz moved for adoption and Ms. Clark seconded the motion. The contract will approve contract no. 055-2026-SS on behalf of Metro and Verizon Wireless, with a total not to exceed value of \$785,044.

By roll call, the Board approved the resolution.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO: 69: APPROVAL OF 006-2026-SS KINGS ISLAND FAMILY DAY**

Mr. Metz moved for adoption and Ms. Clark seconded the motion. The contract will approve contract no. 006-2026-SS on behalf of Metro and Kings Island Company, with a not to exceed value of \$354,000.

By roll call, the Board approved the resolution.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO: 70: APPROVAL OF 135-2025-RFP BRT INDEPENDENT COST ESTIMATING SERVICE**

Mr. Metz moved for adoption and Ms. Clark seconded the motion. The contract will approve contract no. 135-2025-RFP on behalf of Metro and SRF Consulting Group. with a not to exceed value of \$1,597,138.

By roll call, the Board approved the resolution.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Mr. Ethridge reported on the Executive Committee meeting held on February 24<sup>th</sup> 2026, and there were no items(s) to present for Board Approval.

**STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE**

Mr. Ethridge, Mr. Ravasio, Mr. Shammout and Mr. Aiello presented the Strategic Plan Update. They reviewed the process, values, mission, vision, strategic priorities, KPI's and 5-year financial plan.

The SORTA Board accepted the report as presented.

**PROGRESS AND PRIORITIES**

Mr. Aiello presented the progress and priorities report and reviewed the Federal Legislative Updates, Ohio Loves Transit, Partnering for Growth, Building a Highly Informed Workforce and Advancing our AI Strategy.

The SORTA Board accepted the report as presented.

**NEW BUSINESS**

N/A

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting of the SORTA Board of Trustees has been scheduled for **March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 9:00 A.M.** the SORTA/Metro Board Room, at 525 Vine Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.

APPROVED:



Blake Ethridge  
Chair, SORTA Board

ATTESTED:



Andy Aiello  
CEO/General Manager/Secretary-

Treasurer