

# RCTB RICHLAND COUNTY TRANSIT BOARD

19 N. Main St. Mansfield, Ohio 44902 419-774-5684 fax 419-774-5685

MINUTES of the December 15, 2025 RCT Board meeting

**PRESENT:**

Board: Scott Heimann, Ed Pickens, Trae Turner, Crystal Davis-Weese (attended virtually)

Absent: Todd Blankenship, Donna Hight, Carl Neutzling

Regional Planning: Jean Taddie, Carol Covert, Jason Werner

Transdev/First Transit: Chris Terry, Tara Burchett

**Call to Order**

Board Chair Scott Heimann called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**Recommended Actions: Routine Matters – CONSENT AGENDA**

The November RCTB meeting minutes, bills to pay, TMR and RCTB financial reports, GM report, status of grant programs, ridership and advertising reports were provided in advance for review.

Jean noted on the TMR budget, they are still about \$300,000 under budget for 2025. On the RCTB finance report, we made catch-up draws for ODOT so all of the draws are up to date now. We have replenished any funds that we had to use out of our reserve funds with these draws.

On the grant report, FTA gave us approval to move the money we had left from the windows project into the paint project and also the money left from the HVAC engineering to the architect for the painting project. Jean will be doing a grant revision this week to close this out. We also had some 80/20 money left in the grant and we will move this to operating and use it for preventive maintenance. This will take care of the super grant #1 so we can spend this money down.

In the bills to pay, we have given TMR a \$75,000 advance to cover payroll while the county MUNIS (bank) is shut down for the rest of the year until mid-Jan.

We found an error in our ridership spreadsheet in the revenue miles showing them lower than they really were. We have gone back and retroactively corrected the ridership reports for the year. We cannot go back and change our previous NTD reporting.

*Ed Pickens made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Trae Turner seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion to approve the consent agenda carried.*

**Old Business**

Procurement updates:

EZfare soft launch update – We have soft-launched the EZfare system. We have had a few people using it so far and everything is running smoothly. We are planning to do a hard launch in January and let the agencies know about it. The Mansfield Municipal court has offered to be the

first to try out the new system with our agencies. Trae suggested we do some training with the seniors on the ETA app and the EZfare system at the same time. Area Agency on Aging would be willing to host the training. The customers seem to be doing well with it and are happy to not have to come to the RCT office to get their passes. We discussed giving some incentives to help people get set up, possible during Ohio Loves Transit week.

Gillig tariffs – We received an email from the state of Washington, whose state contract we utilized for the Gillig bus contract that totaled \$606,352. Gillig is requesting a 3% tariff increase for HD buses with diesel engines. The State of Washington noted that the other HD bus manufacturer, New Flyer, is requesting a 15% increase. The WA contract managers are hosting 2 meetings with agencies that are utilizing their contract to get input and prepare a response, including a request of documentation justifying the increase. Gillig will reach out to each contracting agency directly to update the contract terms. For our bus, the extra cost would potentially be around \$18,000. We should have enough left in our grant to cover this amount.

**JFS Contract Services follow up:**

Jason Werner, Planner II at RCRPC has done all of the maps and written analysis for us for JFS. 74% of the people that JFS picked up lived in our service area and 88% of the destinations were in our service area. 96% of the trips in Richland County were in our service area. We would be able to cover a majority of their trips for them.

The board would like Jean to meet with Lori Bedson at JFS to present this data to her and find out how much their cost is now for their trips and how we can help them save money. Are they billing Medicaid for these rides? Are they monitoring their costs?

**MATI Phase 2 update:**

All of the committees are up and running. NECIC and the research committee is working with University of Minnesota on the required pre-test/post-test study. The operations committee drivers have driven both routes and have found we have extra time on the routes to add additional locations to reach more apartment buildings. We went out with the drivers on the route for them to show us the suggestions they think will work on the routes. We had the stakeholder committee meeting last week and had 36 attendees including Mayor Jodie Perry and Commissioner Tony Vero. Barrett Thomas and Clint Knight have been asked to be on the employer evaluation committee, to meet 3 times to make sure we are asking the employers the right questions. Jean reviewed the proposed route map changes with the board.

**Fare-free holiday service update:**

Chris shared the numbers from the holiday service. This past Saturday was lower because the weather was bad. The small Saturday free fare day had a good amount of ridership. There was a lot going on downtown that day so that brought people out. A lot of people also benefited from the free Friday service. There is one more fare-free Friday on December 19.

**SFY27 Ohio Transit Partnership Program (OTPP) grant application projects:**

Capital requests – We asked for some buses, a service truck, security cameras for 19 buses, replacing all of the man doors at the bus garage and transit center, and a restroom remodel. The

total federal and state request was for \$779,000, which would leave a match due of \$41,000. We should know if we receive the grants by April of 2026.

Operating requests – We are using more money for operations than we are receiving from the FTA. Jean asked for an additional \$750,000 of operating money for SFY27 from the FTA and \$150,000 from the State to help with operating expenses and \$190,814 match for preventive maintenance. The request for extra funds came with a pledge to conduct a top-to-bottom route review in SFY27. This route realignment will allow us to bring RCT's services in line with funding once the new Federal transportation bill announces funding amounts for the next 5 years

We would like to try to get a levy on the ballot at some point, but that is up in the air at this time. Scott suggested sharing this information with our representatives on Ohio Loves Transit week so they are aware of the struggles we are facing.

2026 budget:

Capital – The capital budget is for items not completed in 2025 plus additional grants awarded for 2026 capital projects. We have ordered the 4 cutaway buses and have requested a quote for a Gillig bus. We do have \$50,000 of local money committed to these projects.

Operating – for the operating budget we took out about \$18,000 in MATI expenses for the cleaners and mechanics that will be reimbursed by the University of MN. We also did not budget fringe benefits for open positions at full family rates, we did a combination of plans. We took one person's benefits out of the budget at full coverage, which represents the expectation that we will, on average, have a position vacant. The finance committee reviewed 3 different budget options and this is the one they have recommended for approval.

*Crystal Davis-Weese made a motion to approve the 2026 operating and capital budgets. Ed Pickens seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried.*

### **New Business**

RCT Board nominating committee 2026:

The nominating committee met and have made a recommendation to add Emily Adams to the board, replacing Carl Neutzling's board seat. Jean will reach out to Emily and let her know. We need to check with Emily on her availability for the January meeting. We will let the other candidates know that they will be considered for any future openings on the board. Scott suggested maybe trying to schedule the meeting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday afternoon each month instead of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday. We will try to schedule the January annual meeting for Wednesday January 14 at 8:30 a.m. if Emily is available. If not, we will try to schedule it for Monday, January 12 at 3:00 p.m.

*Ed Pickens made a motion to approve the recommendation of Emily Adams for the open Democratic term starting in January 2025. Trae Turner seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried.*

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Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan required update:

We have to have our updated PTASP to ODOT before the end of the year. We originally developed the plan in 2022 using ODOT's template. We need to review our safety targets and update them if needed. ODOT sent us two sets of our actual safety numbers that we recorded in the NTD report. Most of our targets were in line with the targets we set previously for safety events, fatalities and injuries. RCT management has recommended that we show zero for our safety events for demand response and one for fixed route, with mileage intervals in line with safety numbers from ODOT.

*Crystal Davis-Weese made a motion to approve the PTASP pending final safety committee review and approval. Ed Pickens seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried.*

Approval for facility repair over \$2,000:

When the contractor came and looked at the doors for our grant request he noticed that we have a crack at the Transit Center in between the wall and the sidewalk that needs repaired. We have an estimate from Four Meadows Construction for \$2,200. They can do the repair as soon as the weather breaks.

*Trae Turner made a motion to approve the facility repair. Ed Pickens seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried.*

2026 Meeting dates:

We will schedule the January annual meeting on either 14<sup>th</sup> or January 12<sup>th</sup> when we know Emily's availability. We will schedule/approve the meetings for the rest of the year at the January meeting.

*Crystal Davis-Weese made a motion to give Carol & Jean approval to schedule the January meeting. Ed Pickens seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried.*

#### **Other Business from the Floor**

There was no other business from the floor.

#### **Executive Session**

There was no executive session.

#### **Adjourn**

*There being no further business, Ed Pickens made a motion to adjourn. Trae Turner seconded the motion. With no further discussion the motion carried.*

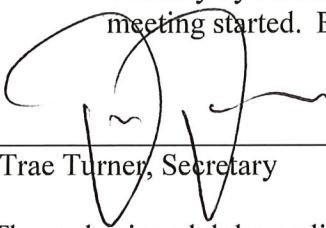
The meeting adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

#### **Next Meeting**

The next RCTB meeting is Wednesday, January 14 at 8:30 a.m.

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\*Note: The RCT Board meeting was held in person, with an option to attend virtually in accordance with RCTB's virtual meetings policy. Community members could attend virtually by contacting [rctadmin@rcrpc.org](mailto:rctadmin@rcrpc.org) to request the link at least 1 hour before the meeting started. Board members could attend virtually with 48 hours' notice.



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Trae Turner, Secretary

1-14-26

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Date

The undersigned duly qualified and acting chairman of the Richland County Transit Board certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes, approved at a legally convened meeting of the Board, of the RCTB meeting held on Monday, December 15, 2025.



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Scott Heimann, Chairman

114-7026

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Date