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MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

The Board of Directors of the Regional Transportation Authority met in virtual session on Thursday, November 18, 2021, pursuant to notice. Chairman Dillard called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. He then recited the pledge of allegiance.

Roll call – [watch video](#)

Board members present (16): Andalcio, Canty, Carey, Coulson, Fuentes, Gathing, Gorman, Groven, Holt, Lewis, Melvin, Pang, Ross, Sager, Kotel, Chairman Dillard

Approval of minutes from the meetings held on October 21, November 3, and November 5, 2021 – [watch video](#)

No questions or comments from RTA Board members.

Director Andalcio moved, and Director Gathing seconded that the minutes from the public meetings held on October 21, November 3, and November 5, 2021, be approved as submitted. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

16 Ayes: Andalcio, Canty, Carey, Coulson, Fuentes, Gathing, Gorman, Groven, Holt, Kotel, Lewis, Melvin, Pang, Ross, Sager, Kotel, Chairman Dillard

Public Comment – [watch video](#)

Mr. Jeremy LaMarche the RTA's Director, Intergovernmental Policy and Board Secretary, read public comments that were submitted. The comments were in response to the proposed 2022 RTA and Service Board budgets and requested that the CTA and Pace purchase electric buses.

Executive Director's Report – [watch video](#)

Executive Director Leanne Redden provided a report on the following: She provided updates on legislative matters, the 2022 Community Planning Program – Call for Projects, the Regional Transit Strategic Plan, the public forum with the Urban Transportation Center, and an overview of the proposed 2022 RTA Operating Budget and Capital Program.

**APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DECEMBER 16, 2021**

Presentations and discussions of the 2022 agency budgets with Metra, Pace, CTA, and RTA – [watch video](#)

President Dorval Carter, Mr. Jeremy Fine, Chief Financial Officer, and Ms. Michele Curran, Vice President of Budget and Capital Finance, CTA; Mr. Jim Derwinski, CEO and Executive Director of Metra; and Mr. Rocky Donahue, Executive Director, and Melanie Castle, Department Manager, Budget, Pace presented the budgets for the CTA, Metra, and Pace respectively. Ms. Bea Reyna-Hickey, Chief Financial Officer, and Senior Deputy Executive Director, Finance, Innovation, and Technology, RTA, presented the proposed 2022 RTA Budget.

Directors Andalcio, Carey, Lewis, Coulson, Gathing, Sager, Canty, Gorman, Melvin, and Chairman Dillard asked questions and provided comments following the presentation.

Resolution honoring Rocky Donahue – [watch video](#)

Mr. LaMarche presented a resolution honoring Rocky Donahue for his service and congratulating him on his retirement from Pace.

16 Ayes: Andalcio, Canty, Carey, Coulson, Fuentes, Gathing, Gorman, Groven, Holt, Kotel, Lewis, Melvin, Pang, Ross, Sager, Chairman Dillard

Update on the activities of the RTA Transit Access Citizens' Advisory Board – [watch video](#)

Ms. Jackie Forbes, Chairperson of the RTA Citizens' Advisory Board, provided an update on the committee.

Ordinance authorizing a contract with Deft.com for managed hosting services – [watch video](#)

Mr. George Coleman, Director of Information Technology, presented an ordinance that authorizes a three-year contract with Deft.com to provide managed hosting services for an amount not to exceed \$98,368.

No questions or comments were asked following the presentation.

Director Gathing moved, and Director Carey seconded that the proposed ordinance be approved as submitted. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

15 Ayes: Andalcio, Canty, Carey, Coulson, Fuentes, Gathing, Gorman, Groven, Holt, Lewis, Melvin, Pang, Sager, Kotel, Chairman Dillard

1 Absent: Ross

Approval of Travel Expense Reimbursement – [watch video](#)

Director Andalcio moved, and Director Groven seconded that the expense reports be approved as submitted. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

15 Ayes: Andalcio, Canty, Carey, Coulson, Fuentes, Gathing, Gorman, Groven, Holt, Kotel, Lewis, Melvin, Pang, Sager, Chairman Dillard

1 Absent: Ross

New Business – [watch video](#)

Chairman Dillard announced the next RTA Board of Directors meeting is Thursday, December 16, at 9:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT – [watch video](#)

There being no further business to come before the public portion of Board of Directors Meeting, Director Groven moved and Director Lewis seconded that the meeting adjourn.

The motion carried on the following voice vote:

15 Ayes: Andalcio, Canty, Carey, Coulson, Fuentes, Gathing, Gorman, Groven, Holt, Kotel, Lewis, Melvin, Pang, Sager, Chairman Dillard

1 Absent: Ross

The Board meeting ended at 12:53 p.m.

Jeremy R. LaMarche
Secretary of the Authority

From: [JOHN KAVALUNAS](#)
To: [communications](#)
Subject: Public Comment to be read at the November 18, 2021 RTA Board of Directors Meeting
Date: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 10:22:31 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the RTA. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear RTA,
This email is being submitted for the public comment portion of the November 18, 2021, Board Meeting.

Comments by John Kavalunas.

My name is John Kavalunas from Lakewood, Illinois. I am a former Chair of the Sustainability Committee of the City of Crystal Lake and current member of the Task Force on Electrifying Public Transit with the Climate Reality Project: Chicago Metro Chapter.

I am pleased that Pace has an electric bus pilot in their F22 Budget and a zero emission commitment by 2040. They have clearly made a shift to lower emissions and the impact on climate change by stopping the purchase of any more diesel buses. I am, however, still concerned about the continued expansion of Compressed Natural Gas buses. For a “well to wheels” pollution grade, CNG is no better than diesel. As we learn more about methane leaks during extraction and transmission, natural gas is no longer a climate friendly option. Additionally, with natural gas prices on the rise, I see CNG as a poor choice financially, given the much lower ongoing maintenance costs of Electric Buses and credits available in the new CEJA legislation.

In the proposed 2022 capital budget, Pace is seeking to fund an additional 51 CNG buses, and in later years an additional 37 CNG buses. **We urge you to abandon this expansion of the CNG fleet that is planned in the 2022 Pace budget and later years. Please replace those orders with electric buses.**

Likewise, I am also very surprised to see that the CTA continues to project extensive purchasing of and reliance on diesel buses. This is harmful from a local neighborhood pollution standpoint, as well as damaging to our climate overall. With the preponderance of diesel vs. electric purchases in their FY 22 Five Year Plan, the achievement of a zero emission fleet by 2040 does not at all seem realistic.

I call on the RTA to work with Pace and CTA to significantly modify their Five Year Plans to electrify more aggressively, in line with the new landmark Illinois CEJA legislation and the Infrastructure Bill at the Federal level.

John Kavalunas

Lakewood IL [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [Bruce Mainzer](#)
To: [communications](#)
Subject: Fwd: Fw: Public Comment to be read at the November 18, 2021 RTA Board of Directors Meeting
Date: Thursday, November 18, 2021 9:23:25 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the RTA. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I had submitted this email to be read at today's Nov 18 RTA Board Meeting but it obviously was not received, probably because it was sent into a spam folder. Here is the email I sent, as I am now sending it from my gmail account which hopefully will not be blocked by the RTA email server. Please make sure this email is provided to all RTA board members.

Best regards

Bruce Mainzer

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bruce W. Mainzer** <[REDACTED]>
Date: Thu, Nov 18, 2021 at 9:19 AM
Subject: Fw: Public Comment to be read at the November 18, 2021 RTA Board of Directors Meeting
To: [REDACTED] >

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Bruce W. Mainzer <[REDACTED]>
To: communications@rtachicago.org <communications@rtachicago.org>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021, 02:29:06 PM CST
Subject: Public Comment to be read at the November 18, 2021 RTA Board of Directors Meeting

Dear RTA: This email is submitted so it can be read during the public comment portion of the Board Meeting on Nov. 18, 2021.

Comments by Bruce W. Mainzer at RTA Board Meeting 11/18/21

Thank you for this opportunity to submit comments. My name is Bruce Mainzer and I live in Highland Park and I am a former transit official, having worked for RTA of Illinois, Metro North Commuter Railroad in NY as a Transportation Planner and also as a Manager of Capital Grants in the IDOT Public Transportation Section. I later moved on to work for United Airlines and held other executive posts in the travel industry, but I always have maintained my interest in public transportation. I am now retired, and I am a member of the Chicago Chapter of the Climate Reality project and I also serve as Chairman of the Transportation Advisory Group of the City of Highland Park.

Over the past few months, members of Climate Reality, Sierra Club and other concerned individuals have submitted comments to both the CTA and Pace boards to urge them to transition to Electric Buses as a high priority. As many of you know, we are at an inflection point with respect to warming of the planet, and RTA needs to meet this challenge of

addressing the very real impacts of climate change.

We are appreciative of Pace's responsiveness to our comments. As late as this past summer, Pace had no plans to order any electric buses. In their current FY22 Capital Plan, they have now committed to end all diesel bus purchases, and to begin a six bus electric bus demo project for their Waukegan service and to order 57 electric buses in the five year plan. Pace has now committed to a zero emission fleet by 2040. We applaud Pace's decision to end diesel bus purchases, but Pace still needs to be doing more to meet Governor Pritzker's vision of placing 1 million electric vehicles in service by 2030. Pace is still programming 88 new fossil fuel Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses in the FY22 Capital Plan and is going forward with a bid to manufacture 40 CNG buses this year. CNG buses emit as much or more greenhouse gases as diesel buses when taking into account the production, transmission and finally tailpipe emissions of CNG. Any bus programmed in the budget now will be operating well into the decade of the 2030's and contributing to global warming.

We are also appreciative of CTA's initial testing of electric buses. 2 CTA electric buses have been operating since 2014. Another 9 buses were received in 2021, and CTA is awaiting 14 more electric buses in 2022. CTA also has a commitment to an emission free bus fleet by 2040. However, with this FY22 five year plan, we were shocked to see that CTA is only planning to procure 70 more electric buses, while continuing to replace the majority of its fleet with diesel buses. The 600 new diesel buses in the FY22 capital plan will continue to spew dangerous nitrogen oxide, particulate matter, and greenhouse gases well into the 2030's decade. CTA's 2040 commitment to an emission free fleet does not seem achievable given this capital plan.

Failure of the CTA and Pace to make reasonable progress to an emission free fleet must be addressed by the RTA. Although the capital cost of an electric bus is typically \$200,000 to \$300,000 more than a diesel or CNG bus, there is no real issue with availability of funds to aggressively transition to an all electric fleet now. For example, the Illinois EPA fund has allocated \$39.9 million to Illinois transit operators to fund the purchase of electric buses (from the VW Settlement funds). So far, not one IL state transit agency has made use of these funds. I had a discussion with Director John Kim of the Illinois EPA and I suggested that instead of purchasing an entire electric bus, Illinois EPA could just fund the capital acquisition of the bus batteries, thereby making the capital acquisition cost of an electric bus the same as a fossil fuel powered bus. Assuming each battery would be a cost of \$250,000, this could fund the acquisition of 156 electric bus batteries this year. The recently passed federal infrastructure bill will also allow more funds to replace existing diesel fleets with electric buses. Finally, since electric buses save on average \$400,000 in fuel and maintenance costs over the 12 year life of a bus, the batteries can be leased and paid for out of these operating cost savings. Several electric bus manufacturers offer these incentives to keep the cost of an electric bus the same as a fossil fuel powered bus and the leasing cost easily fits within the operating cost budget of transit operators. So there is really no barrier any more to aggressively transitioning to electric bus fleets.

This year we are seeing the tragic consequences of climate change. It's time for RTA to join other responsible transit agencies and get on the electric bus.

Bruce W. Mainzer
Highland Park, IL.



From: [Kim Stone](#)
To: [communications](#)
Subject: Public Comment for November 18, 2021 RTA Board meeting
Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 11:13:39 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the RTA. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Please read the following public comment into the official record at your November 18, 2021 Board meeting. Thank you.

Public Comment for November 18, 2021 RTA Board Meeting

Kim Stone, Co-Chair, Task Force on Transit Electrification Climate Reality Project: Chicago Metro Chapter

My name is Kim Stone and I am a resident of Highland Park and a member of the Climate Reality Project: Chicago Metro Chapter. Thank you for the opportunity to comment at today's meeting.

As you know, climate change is an urgent issue that must be addressed, and our window of opportunity to avoid the worst impacts is closing quickly—within the next nine years. Transportation is currently the top source of greenhouse gas emissions in the US^[1]. Decarbonization of public transit is a critical step in preserving public health and the livability of the planet.

Many public transit authorities of all sizes have already begun the transition to electric fleets and the time is right for the RTA to take the leadership to put us on a fast track to zero emissions in the Chicagoland region.

Pace and CTA have both committed to zero-emission fleets by 2040, which is commendable, but it's time to act on those commitments. If Pace and CTA proceed with their planned purchases of diesel and CNG buses in 2022 and beyond, these fossil-fuel powered vehicles will be on Illinois roads for the next 12 or more years, well beyond the time frame in which scientists say we must take action to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Our transit agencies should purchase only electric buses beginning immediately.

Electric buses are a fiscally responsible choice. Grant funds and battery leasing programs make the purchase price of electric buses cost-competitive with diesel. Battery leasing programs, for example, would enable the purchase of an electric bus (without the battery) for about the same price as a diesel bus, and operational savings would pay for the battery lease. Electric buses with batteries would save approximately \$400,000 in fuel and maintenance costs over 12 years. Additionally, new federal funding and available money in Illinois' VW Settlement Trust can help offset the costs of fleet electrification.

To meet our climate goals, we need more people riding public transit, and transit

vehicles must be as clean as possible to limit further harm to the air quality and health of our communities, particularly in the most polluted, highest-need areas. Now that electric bus technology has improved and become cost competitive, electrification is the better solution for our environment and public health, as well as the more fiscally responsible choice.

Thank you.

[1] <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

From: [Pamela Tate](#)
To: [communications](#)
Cc: [Kim Stone](#); [Bruce W. Mainzer](#)
Subject: RE: Public Comment for November 18, 2021 RTA Board meeting
Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 12:14:48 PM
Attachments: [RTA Public Comment for November 18.docx](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the RTA. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear RTA:

Please read the following public comment into the official record at your November 18, 2021 Board meeting.

Best regards,
Pam

Pamela Tate
Certified Climate Reality Leader
Climate Reality Project: Chicago Metro Chapter

Public Comment for November 18, 2021 RTA Board Meeting

Pamela Tate, Co-Chair, Task Force on Electrification of Public Transit Climate Reality Project: Chicago Metro Chapter

My name is Pamela Tate and I am a resident of Oak Park. I am also representing the Climate Reality Project: Chicago Metro Chapter. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments at your board meeting.

When I spoke to you last Spring about the urgency of the climate crisis, I noted that transportation is currently the top source of greenhouse gas emissions in the US^[1]. We are running out of time to prevent even worse impacts of global warming than we have been experiencing recently—fewer than nine years. Decarbonization of public transit is a critical step in stopping and reversing global warming, and you can make a difference by ensuring that the transit agencies here are making the right budget decisions to put Chicagoland on the path to quickly reaching zero emissions.

What I did not emphasize when I presented to you is the fact that **electric buses are also a more fiscally responsible choice**. Federal grant funds that will be available through the new infrastructure bill, and battery leasing programs, make the purchase price of electric buses cost-competitive with diesel. Battery leasing programs, for example, would enable the purchase of an electric bus (without the battery) for about the same price as a diesel bus, and operational savings on fuel and maintenance would more than pay for the cost of the annual battery lease. But even if the agencies bought the buses with the batteries included, they would save approximately \$400,000 in fuel and maintenance costs over 12 years.

One of my colleagues on the Task Force, Bruce Mainzer, talked with Director John

Kim of the Illinois EPA to suggest a creative solution for use of the state funds that are available through the Illinois' VW Settlement Trust: instead of purchasing an entire electric bus, **Illinois EPA could just fund the capital cost of acquiring the bus batteries, which would make the capital acquisition cost of an electric bus the same as a fossil fuel powered bus. Assuming each battery would be a cost of approximately \$250,000, this could fund the acquisition of 156 electric bus batteries this year.**

Although both Pace and CTA have committed to zero-emission fleets by 2040, I was dismayed to see that the CTA budget is calling for purchasing up to 1,280 diesel buses over the next four years, while only purchasing 70 electric buses. This is 18 diesel buses for every electric bus!!! These diesel buses will be on our roads for the next 12-15 years and we do not have that window of time to decarbonize. This is totally unacceptable.

Pace's budget is also problematic. It is calling for Pace to purchase 88 new fossil fuel Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses in the FY22 Capital Plan—and Pace also wants to go forward with a bid to manufacture 40 CNG buses this year. We know that CNG buses are even more damaging to the environment because they emit as much or more greenhouse gases as diesel buses when taking into account the methane leakage during production and transmission as well as tailpipe emissions. Clearly, these agency budgets do not reflect a meaningful commitment to zero emissions; in fact, they are going in the wrong direction. If you approve these budgets, the buses will be on Chicagoland roads for the next 12 or more years. The climate crisis is, in fact, an emergency, and our transit agencies must respond accordingly if we want to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. **This means that our transit agencies must purchase only electric buses beginning immediately.**

Many transit agencies in other cities across the U.S. are transitioning to electric fleets successfully—in both big cities and smaller ones. It is time for the RTA to stand up as a leader in protecting our climate and making good financial decisions. We need more people riding public transit, but we also need the buses to run as cleanly as possible to limit further harm to the air quality and health of our communities, particularly in the most polluted, highest-need areas. **Please take action now to say no to these purchases of diesel and compressed natural gas buses.** We need to be on a fast track to zero emissions and we can get federal and state assistance to get there.

Thank you for your consideration.

[1] <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>