



BCRTA Board of Trustees Minutes

Butler County Regional Transit Authority

1/15/2025 8:00 AMEST

@ BCRTA Board Room: 3045 Moser Court, Hamilton, OH 45011

Attendance

Present:

Members: Nick Bauer, Ryan Spitzer, Yasmen Brown-Jones, David Fehr, James Foster, Perry Gordon, Dannel Shepard, Corey Watt, Kathy Wyenandt

Guests: Whitney Harris

BCRTA Staff: Russell Auwae (remote), Shawn Cowan, Matthew Dutkevicz, Mary Jane Leveline, Luke Morgan, Sarah Schwartz, Alicia Shotwell (remote), Delene Weidner, Paul Williams, Christine Yannitty (remote)

Absent:

Members: Christopher Lawson

I. Call to Order & Roll

Vice President Gordon called the meeting to order at 8:04 AM. Ms. Schwartz took a call of the roll. A quorum of the Board was present.

 [BCRTA Notice of Public Meeting 01-15-25.docx](#)

A. Consideration of Absences

Mr. Dutkevicz announced that President Lawson was currently in London and requested to be excused. In addition, Mr. Dutkevicz stated that Trustee Brown-Jones had an engagement that prevented her from attending the November 2024 meeting. However, an oversight on Mr. Dutkevicz' part, an excused absence was not sought at that meeting. Mr. Dutkevicz requested the absence be excused. Trustee Wyenandt made a motion to excuse President Lawson and Trustee Brown-Jones. Trustee Foster second. The absences were excused.

 [Board Attendance History.xlsx](#)

II. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of the Agenda

B. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes

 [BCRTA Board Meeting Minutes 11-20-24.docx](#)

Motion:

Motion moved by James Foster and motion seconded by Dannel Shepard. All others voted in favor of approval of the Consent Agenda.

III. Comments from Citizens

Ms. Harris provided comments to the Board. Written comments are provided as Appendix A to these minutes.

IV. Treasurer's Report

Financials for both October and November 2024, compared to the Annual Budget were included in the board packet. Ms. Weidner presented the financials as of the end of November. Revenues and expenses primarily continue to follow their year-long trends. Revenues are all either at or over budgeted amounts as of the end of November. Passenger Fares are at 135.2% of budget due to the increase of driving staff allowing for more BGo service hours on the road and Agency Funding is now at 105.4% of budget due to all Community Development Block Grant awards being recorded. Overall Revenues of \$11.4M are at 102.3% of budgeted amounts.

Expenses of \$8.9M primarily remain under budget except for Wages. Wages finally surpassed the budget due to the increase in vehicle operators following the starting wage increase. Wages, at 99.7% of budget are expected to end the year over budget. Fringes at 83.4% of budget saw an increase due to the annual sale of PTO, but is still expected to end the year under-budget. Ms. Weidner pointed out a change to the reporting of Interest Expense that was added with the implementation of GASB 96 (accounting for Subscription Based Information Technology Arrangements). The interest paid is now being reported under Contingency to allow for better reporting of the usual Misc. Items compared to budget. The Gain/Loss before Depr, NP & OPEB Exp is just under \$2.4.

The Transaction logs for the months of October and November were included in the packet presenting all cash transactions for the period. No unusual transactions occurred during this timeframe.

The balance sheet for November 2024 was presented with normal balances for assets, as well as liabilities and equity. Ms. Weidner pointed out that the STAR account is now being used to ensure the checking account balance can support the payments for construction. The high balances in both Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable were due to the timing of a payment to our construction contractor and the Federal draw against the same amount. WIP-Chestnut Fields is now over \$15M. A new account on the balance sheet, Deferred Inflows-OBM, reflects the receipt of the \$1M award from Ohio's Office of Budget and Management for our One-time Strategic Community Investment Grant. Ms. Weidner intends to further clarify the proper accounting for the receipt of these funds in advance of their usage.

At the end of November, Available Funds were approximately \$11.7M. Ms. Wiedner explained that the receipt of the OBM \$1M award held in the STAR account (a current asset) and in the Deferred Inflow-OBM (a long-term liability) causes a slight 'mismatch' that inflates the Available Funds. This then leaves Non-Restricted Funds \$5.9M - a higher amount than would normally be reported. Non-restricted funds will be used for both future operational needs and future projects. Ms. Weidner will further investigate the Deferred Inflow-OBM to ensure proper reporting. The Cash Reserves report may need adjusted and will be done, if needed, for year-end reporting.

 [10 Oct 24.pdf](#)

 [11 Nov 24.pdf](#)

Motion:

Motion moved by Kathy Wyenandt and motion seconded by Corey Watt. All others voted in favor of approval.

V. Governance

A. Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee met prior to the BCRTA Board of Trustees meeting. Trustee Foster reported that the Nominating Committee has recommended Christopher Lawson, President,

Perry Gordon, Vice President, Matthew Dutkevicz, Secretary and Delene Weidner, Treasurer for reappointment. In addition, Mr. Dutkevicz stated he spoke with President Lawson to set up a meeting in the late spring and then again in the fall to have some time for conversation and succession planning of officers.

B. Conflict of Interest Forms

Mr. Dutkevicz stated that Ms. Schwartz has distributed Conflict of Interest forms. Trustees were instructed to read, complete and sign the forms.

VI. Action Items

A. Resolution 2025-01-01 (Presenters: Dee Weidner)

Authorizing the filing of (an) SFY 2026 application(s) with the Ohio Department of Transportation by the Butler County Regional Transit Authority (BCRTA) for grants through the US DOT Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the State of Ohio, as authorized under Federal Transit Laws and State of Ohio laws and executing a contract with the Ohio Department of Transportation upon project approval.

 [Resolution 25-01-01 ODOT Grants FY 2026.docx](#)

Mr. Dutkevicz stated that this Resolution is a standard resolution used every year to apply for grants. Ms. Weidner added this resolution is for Ohio grants. However, it does list FTA, as the funds are funneled through FTA.

Motion:

Motion moved by Corey Watt and motion seconded by James Foster. Upon a call of the roll, the votes resulted as follows: Trustee Bauer-Yes, Trustee Brown-Jones-Yes, Trustee Fehr-Yes, Trustee Foster-Yes, Trustee Gordon-Yes, Trustee Lawson-Absent, Trustee Shepard-Yes, Trustee Watt-Yes, Trustee Wyenandt-Yes. The Resolution was adopted.

B. Resolution 2025-01-02 (Presenters: Meagan Varney)

Authorizing the Purchase of Maintenance Parts.

 [Board Resolution Cover Letter - KOI.docx](#)

 [Board Resolution 25-01-02- KOI.docx](#)

Ms. Varney explained this Resolution is to condense the purchasing of maintenance parts. In analyzing the types and quantities of parts BCRTA orders, it was determined that KOI was the most reliable. Mr. Dutkevicz added that Ms. Varney and Mr. Williams are working with the Maintenance Department and will be looking at everything that is being purchased to better negotiate prices and funnel purchasing using solid data.

Motion:

Motion moved by Corey Watt and motion seconded by James Foster. Upon a call of the roll, the votes resulted as follows: Trustee Bauer-Yes, Trustee Brown-Jones-Yes, Trustee Fehr-Yes, Trustee Foster-Yes, Trustee Gordon-Yes, Trustee Lawson-Absent, Trustee Shepard-Yes, Trustee Watt-Yes, Trustee Wyenandt-Yes. The Resolution was adopted.

C. Resolution 2025-01-03 (Presenters: Shawn Cowan)

Removing and Appointing the Transit Alliance of Butler County (TABC) Board of Directors.

 [BCRTA Resolution 25-01-03 TABC.docx](#)

Ms. Cowan explained that the BCRTA Board of Trustees removes and appoints all of the Directors for the Transit Alliance of Butler County (TABC). Ms. Brein Everhart, with the Butler County General Health District has received a promotion. Ms. Everhart has requested that she be removed from the TABC Board and Ms. Trina Flowers, who is replacing Ms. Everhart at the General Health District, is asking to be appointed.

Motion:


Motion moved by Corey Watt and motion seconded by James Foster. Upon a call of the roll, the votes resulted as follows: Trustee Bauer-Yes, Trustee Brown-Jones-Yes, Trustee Fehr-Yes, Trustee Foster-Yes, Trustee Gordon-Yes, Trustee Lawson-Absent, Trustee Shepard-Yes, Trustee Watt-Yes, Trustee Wyenandt-Yes. The Resolution was adopted.

D. Resolution 2025-01-04 (Presenters: Matthew Dutkevicz)

Authorizing the BCRTA Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Lease for Office Space.

 [Cover Memo - Lease Agreement.docx](#)

 [BCRTA Resolution 25-01-04 - Office Lease.docx](#)

 [Rentschler Lease Agreement - BCRTA Suite 600 Proposed 1-10-2024 clean AE executed.pdf](#)

Mr. Dutkevicz explained that this resolution is pertaining to executing a lease agreement for office space. The lease was emailed to all trustees for review. Mr. Dutkevicz stated that this agreement has been adjusted several times in order to achieve the optimal use of resources. The new leased space will allow for some of BCRTAs shared services to move out of the Moser Court property to accommodate a larger more efficient training center. The Moser Court property will become exclusively an Operations and Training Center. Mr. Dutkevicz continued that the lease is a gross lease, meaning BCRTA does not pay for any

additional expenses. The landlord is paying for all capital improvements and monthly utilities. BCRTA will have to bring furniture. The price for the lease is remarkable. BCRTA has budgeted enough to acquire furniture and other necessities for the space. The space is getting a complete overhaul by the landlord. The timeline for completion is March 2025. However, it seems more probable that relocation will occur in April 2025. The new offices will include a new, somewhat larger meeting space. The lease does contain many provisions in the event that BCRTA is not satisfied. Although breaking the lease is an option, simply not paying rent has been written into the lease in the event that the landlord is not meeting obligations. The total square footage of the new space is roughly 5600 square feet. The location, at 6 S. Second Street is one block from the Market Street Station. This gives BCRTA a presence in downtown Hamilton and customers can easily find the offices.

Mr. Dutkevicz added that the Middletown Hub is in need of renovation. When these repairs begin, Customer Service will need to be relocated. There is space already allotted for Customer Service within the new office space.

Trustee Watt asked about parking. Mr. Dutkevicz shared that there are paid parking spaces included in the lease. Mr. Dutkevicz stated that 19 parking spaces will be available, located on property at 2nd Street and Court Streets as well as spaces in the McDulin Parking Garage. BCRTA will be the largest tenant in the building, and the owners are eager to have BCRTA occupy space there.

Motion:

Motion moved by Kathy Wyenandt and motion seconded by Dannel Shepard. Upon a call of the roll, the votes resulted as follows: Trustee Bauer-Yes, Trustee Brown-Jones-Yes, Trustee Fehr-Yes, Trustee Foster-Yes, Trustee Gordon-Yes, Trustee Lawson-Absent, Trustee Shepard-Yes, Trustee Watt-Yes, Trustee Wyenandt-Yes. The Resolution was adopted.

E. Resolution 2025-01-05 (Presenters: Matthew Dutkevicz, Meagan Varney)

**Amending Resolutions 22-09-02, 23-09-01, and 24-11-07
Authorizing the Butler County Regional Transit Authority
(BCRTA) Executive Director to Execute a Task Order for Parking
Lot Expansion Designs.**

 [Cover Letter Bowen CSA.docx](#)

 [Resolution 25-01-05 Bowen CSA.docx](#)

 [250103 BCRTA Hamilton Parking \(CSA #3\) Project Completion.pdf](#)

Mr. Dutkevicz stated that this resolution is amending three prior resolutions giving authority to execute the parking lot expansion plans at Moser Court. Mr. Williams continued that anyone visiting BCRTA can witness cars parking all along the street overflow from the parking lot. Moser Court houses the MCI buses, the propane buses that will be arriving shortly, and the Middletown equipment in the near future. Packing 40 buses into the tight space is difficult and produces safety issues. Mr. Williams presented the Board with three architect renderings of the current building and surrounding space. Phase I of the parking lot expansion includes a propane fueling station, dual security gates, added staff and revenue vehicle parking and a training pad for drivers. A Phase II rendering was also included, although not yet approved. This includes additional parking lot changes and office construction. Phase II is 5-10 years away, if funding is secured. Phase I is funded, as BCRTA received a \$2.5M grant to expand and improve the outdoor space.

Trustee Watt asked if the plans have already been approved by the Planning Commission. Mr. Williams stated that the plans are in the review process now with the Hamilton Planning Commission. Trustee Watt expressed concern for the retention basin and right of way, if a road were to be constructed in the future. Mr. Dutkevicz stated that the retention basin is off the property line enough that any concern of a through way is unwarranted.

Motion:

Motion moved by Dannel Shepard and motion seconded by Yasmen Brown-Jones. Upon a call of the roll, the votes resulted as follows: Trustee Bauer-Yes, Trustee Brown-Jones-Yes, Trustee Fehr-Yes, Trustee Foster-Yes, Trustee Gordon-Yes, Trustee Lawson-Absent, Trustee Shepard-Yes, Trustee Watt-Yes, Trustee Wyenandt-Yes. The Resolution was adopted.

VII. Committee & Staff Reports

- A. Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (Presenters: Chris Lawson, Matthew Dutkevicz)

There is no OKI report this month. President Lawson has been out of town and Mr. Dutkevicz had a scheduling conflict.

- B. Maintenance & Infrastructure (Presenters: Paul Williams)

Hamilton "FASST" Project Update

 [BCRTA - MOSER COURT SITE PLANS.pdf](#)

Mr. Williams covered this in the detailed discussion for Resolution 25-01-05.

C. Service & Metrics (Presenters: Luke Morgan)

 [Metrics Dashboard 10.23-11.24.pdf](#)

 [Metrics Report November 2024.docx](#)

Mr. Morgan provided comments regarding the attached November Metrics Report.

D. Marketing & Outreach (Presenters: Shawn Cowan)

 [BCRTA 2024 EOY Report V1.pdf](#)

Ms. Cowan presented the 2024 Marketing Report. The report highlighted the marketing impact in 2024, as well as what is upcoming in 2025. Social Performance delivered 2.2 million impressions, that is up 200% from 2023. The majority of marketing dollars in 2024 was toward hiring initiatives. Now BCRTA can shift to a new model. In 2025 BCRTA will educate the public about the resources that BCRTA offers. The BCRTA audience grew 15% based on video views, this largely had to do with the hiring campaign and the BLINK event that was very successful. BCRTA increased its social media presence with a 30% increase in posts. The 30th Anniversary campaign was also very successful. Ms. Cowan continued that for 2025, although subject to change, the marketing year will be broken into quarters: Focusing on community testimonials, telling the BCRTA story, celebrating the ribbon cutting for the Chestnut Street Multimodal Facility, and a client survey.

Mr. Dutkevicz added that education about BCRTA services on the Miami University Oxford campus is planned as well. Conversations with Miami University are already underway to educate students and parents of the services available on and off campus. Trustee Watt expressed concern over the SafeRide app and confusion over its use. Mr. Dutkevicz added that the apps, routes and other information about BCRTA will be available to parents and students during orientation.

Ms. Cowan introduced Ms. Katie McKnight, Mobility Manager.

E. Talent, Benefits, & Recruitment (Presenters: Mary Jane Leveline)

Ms. Leveline once again thanked the Board for approving the wage increase. The increase is being reflected in every department. In 2024 there were 198 new applications with 128 employees still retained. Trainee retention has been incredible.

There is currently only one job posting. BCRTA has once again partnered with Miami University with the WorkPlus program and hired a senior student. Mr. Charles Castle is working with Mr. Auwae as a Planning Technician. Performance reviews are in progress but are on time. The new benefits have been implemented and are successful with employees not having any issues. The current HRIS system UKG did have a hard time implementing the new benefits. Ms. Leveline continued that BCRTA is currently looking at three new HRIS systems and will be attending demonstrations of these systems. The Workplace Strength Survey went out and the response was positive. One hundred twelve (112) responses were received. A special report on these responses will be presented next month. With this, BCRTA will be participating in Cincinnati Enquirer Top Workplaces. This will boost BCRTA's public awareness and allow insight into how BCRTA ranks among other employers. The survey begins February 3 and will be available to all BCRTA employees. The Training Department is doing wonderful things. A fixed schedule has been created for 2025 that includes Refresher Training, Driver Orientation and Training, Professional Development and CDL classes.

F. Procurement (Presenters: Meagan Varney)

Ms. Varney spoke about the furniture procurement for Chestnut Street Multimodal Station. Ms. Varney stated she has reached out to contacts on the State of Ohio Cooperative Purchasing Program, seeking furniture under BCRTA's specifications and pricing guidelines. The Chestnut Street bus wash is about to be put out as two separate bids, equipment, as well as the construction. This was originally one large project; however, it was decided that splitting it would achieve better results. Large and small tires procurements are currently also being formed. Evaluations for the new HRIS system are underway. Three HRIS vendors are visiting BCRTA to demonstrate their products. This allows for hands on testing and in person inquiry, leading to a much better understanding of the product. Uniform contracts are coming up for renewal.

G. Executive Director's Report (Presenters: Matthew Dutkevicz)

- OnBoard 101: <https://vimeo.com/774328796>
- Conflict: IW / BCRTA / NeoRide

 [Director's Notes.docx](#)

 [BCRTA Strategic Work Plan Jan 2025.xlsx](#)

VIII. Executive Session

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code §121.22 G(1) to consider the employment and compensation of a public employee and
Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code §121.22 G(3) to conference with an attorney for the public body concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or imminent court action.

Motion:

Trustee Foster move to enter executive session for the purpose of consideration of the employment and compensation of a public employee pursuant to ORC 121.22 G(1) and to conference with an attorney for the public body concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or imminent court action.

Motion moved by James Foster and motion seconded by Dannel Shepard. Upon a call of the roll, the votes resulted as follows: Trustee Bauer-Yes, Trustee Brown-Jones-Yes, Trustee Fehr-Yes, Trustee Foster-Yes, Trustee Gordon-Yes, Trustee Lawson-Absent, Trustee Shepard-Yes, Trustee Watt-Yes, Trustee Wyenandt-Yes

Executive Session commenced at 9:41 AM. Legal Counsel Mr. Spitzer was retained in Executive Session. Mr. Dutkevicz and Ms. Leveline were also present.
Executive Session concluded at 9:56 and a quorum of the Board was present.

IX. Adjourn

Motion:

Trustee Watt moved to adjourn; Trustee Shepard seconded. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 AM.

Appendix A- Comments from Citizens

Cleared snow preventing ADA-compliant access to bus stops in Oxford

I understand the recent snowstorm was one that we hadn't seen in over a decade. I understand that when the "second wind" came through, that it was hard to keep up and keep everything clear. I understand that everyone was doing the best they possibly could. But, what I don't understand, is why all the snow that was cleared off the roads was piled up in front of the bus stops. Yes, the sidewalks were clear, but I couldn't get there with my chair because of where and how the snow was piled up. One day, the U4 had no choice but to stop in the middle of the road (blocking a crosswalk) to board me, and by the time I was on the bus, there was a line of cars behind the bus about 20 deep. The driver called into dispatch (Oxford) and told her what he had to do to get me on board, and she said she was making a call about it. The day after that, I was waiting for the R3 at one of the stops by my work on Oak Street, and someone yelled at me from their car to "GET OUT OF THE ROAD." Well, 1 I wasn't in the road: I was off to the side where parking spots would be if there wasn't snow over them, and 2, I had no place else

to go where the bus could still stop so I still could get on it. I tried doing a BGo/paratransit ride one time, but there was no place for THAT bus to go either that worked for the lift without having to block traffic...

I understand the bus stops in Hamilton and elsewhere as some of those are on private property, and others, there just isn't anywhere else to put the snow, but I would've expected a college campus to do better (I'm otherwise very happy with how accessible Miami is and how they take actions to solve any accessibility issues). Last Thursday, I couldn't transfer from the R3 to the U4 at Miami Station without BOTH buses pulling up to the crosswalk (one at a time), and blocking it while I got on/off. Once again, the U4 called into dispatch and said we had to get something done about mobility device users not being able to access the bus stops because of the snow, and the dispatcher said she'd keep trying. Fed up, the driver asked me if there's anyone I knew that I could talk to about the issue. I told him yes, and I would try later that afternoon. Lo and behold, when I got off work, the snow was cleared away enough so that I could access all the bus stops down Oak Street, plus the main one the next block over at Miami Station. It's pathetic that it took officials from the bus company AND a passenger going through someone else they knew at the university before the message finally got through. This should've never happened to begin with. I suggest, if possible, having a meeting with Miami University officials about the importance of keeping the bus stops ADA compliant even in the snow, and it not taking multiple tries to make them that way after a snowfall. Yes, I'm the one who rides the buses the most with a mobility device, but I'm not the ONLY one. And even if you don't use a mobility device, waiting for the bus in the middle of the road is just plain dangerous.

This is the Farmer School bus stop on 01/06/2025. I stayed up in Oxford at the Marcum from Saturday night-Tuesday because of this storm. At the time this picture was taken, the "second wave" had just come through, so everyone was still trying to keep up and get the roads cleared. That still isn't any excuse to plow in the bus stop. I couldn't take my chair out given the conditions, and I didn't want to stand out smack dab in the middle of the street (even though there wasn't much traffic), in case someone who didn't know how to drive in the snow spun off or something. I had allowed myself extra time to get to work, knowing the bus would probably be running behind. Instead, I used that extra time to PHYSICALLY walk to work, something that isn't easy for me on a normal day, and this was roughly 6/10 mile walk. All the benches were covered, as well were the curbs. If I can't sit down to rest, I have to lean on something. Thus, every time I came to stop sign, I would rest against the pole for a minute or two, and continue on my way. (I should note that I SOMEHOW made it to work only 4 minutes late).

Ditmer Parking lot. Picture taken on 01.11.2025. I get to Oxford and take the U4 to work from here. I understand why this lot wasn't completely plowed given the time of year,

but that doesn't mean that the bus stop should be completely snowed in. The bus actually had to park on the WRONG side of the road to board me. This was all unfolding right in front of the Miami University Police Department...

View of the bus stop actually being accessible from the sidewalk after I yelled at someone at the university over not having a safe place to wait for it... taken 01.07.2025

Thank you for your time, and I'm sorry for my rant.