

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF  
ROCHESTER-GENESEE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES  
September 7, 2021**

**A. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum**

The meeting was called to order at 12:04pm by Chairman Donald Jeffries who determined that a quorum was present in person. Commissioners Carlock, Jankowski and Young attended via Zoom.

**Present on Roll Call:**

➤ County of Monroe	Don Jeffries	=	5 votes
➤ County of Monroe	Terrence Rice	=	5 votes
➤ County of Monroe	Judith Ahlfeld Seil	=	5 votes
➤ City of Rochester	William Ansbro	=	2 votes
➤ City of Rochester	Jerdine Johnson	=	2 votes
➤ City of Rochester	William McDonald	=	2 votes
County of Livingston	Susanne Carlock	=	2 votes
County of Ontario	Brian H. Young	=	3 votes
➤ County of Orleans	James R. Bensley	=	1 vote
➤ County of Seneca	Edward W. White	=	1 vote
County of Wayne	Michael P. Jankowski	=	3 votes
➤ County of Wyoming	Rich Kosmerl	=	1 vote
Amalgamated Transit Union	Jacques Chapman	=	<u>0 votes</u>

<b>Total Votes Possible</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Total Votes Present</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Votes Needed for Quorum</b>	<b>17</b>

**Others Present:**

Scott Adair, Chief Financial Officer  
 LeMar Barnes, Supervisor of Paratransit Scheduling & Dispatch  
 Jason Barnett, Manager of Technical Systems Support  
 David Belaskas, Director of Engineering & Facilities Management  
 Kirk Bethel, Manager of Customer Service  
 Julie Boasi, Director of Service Planning  
 Ken Boasi, Director of Regional Operations  
 Tom Brede, Public Information Officer  
 Mike Burns, Director of Accounting Services  
 Bill Carpenter, Chief Executive Officer  
 Jay Corey, Director of Service Delivery  
 Daniel DeLaus, Chief Legal Counsel  
 Chris Dobson, VP of Transportation Services

Chris Doran, Client Relationship Manager  
Renee Elwood, Director of Well-Being & Inclusion  
Justin Feasel, Manager of Purchasing & Project Management  
Amy Gould, Chief People Officer  
Krystle Hall, Director of People Performance & Development  
Brandon Hettler, Technical Support Administrator II  
Reggie Hill, Manager of Service Delivery  
Laura Kenyon, Director of Communications & Customer Engagement  
Rusty Korth, VP of Maintenance  
Ryan Lokken, Manager of Maintenance Support Operations  
Bonnie Maguire, Director of Business Development  
Chris Mahood, Director of Information Technology  
Jamie Mott, Director of Paratransit Services  
Sharon Muir-Eddy, Director of Budget  
Kelly Parisi, Executive Assistant to the CEO  
Aracelis Perez-Diaz, Customer Relationship Marketing Specialist  
Janet Snyder, Labor Relations Director  
Jim Stack, Executive Director GTC  
Dawn Sywulski, Manager of Contract Administration  
Miguel Velazquez, Chief Operating Officer

## **B. Adoption of the Agenda**

On motion of Commissioner McDonald, seconded by Commissioner Rice, the Agenda was unanimously adopted.

## **C. CEO Report**

Bill Carpenter, Chief Executive Officer, presented the CEO Report, the power point presentation is attached to these Minutes.

### Questions/Comments on the CEO Report:

- *Chairman Jeffries made a few comments, thanking Bill Carpenter and the staff for working over the holiday weekend. The upside is that RTS continues to be a community partner in making sure students are able to get to school. There are some down sides, we are now moving the school district's transportation problem to RTS customers, we were talking about how pleased customers were with the 15 minute service and now it is being changed to 30 minutes and our customers are not going to understand this sudden change. I hope we are able to go back to that service as soon as possible.*
- *Commissioner Johnson stated that she appreciates everything that we have done to help the school district. She asked if this has affected paratransit service. Bill Carpenter, CEO stated that he is pleased to report that the On Demand and Paratransit service will have no changes.*

- *Commissioner McDonald stated that we have made lots of advances in our service and part of that was the 15 minute service and that this change in frequency was not due to a mistake on our part. This is something that is being done for the betterment of the school children. Commissioner McDonald asked if we have a sense of what the impact is going to be to the public? Bill Carpenter, CEO stated that as part of our outreach we are going to be asking employers to be sensitive to the new service. The system was designed as an interconnected system, and we are going to have some holes and we are aware of this.*
- *Commissioner Kosmerl commended the management staff and the Union for their hard work to make all this happen in such a short timeframe. He then asked if the buses that are taking these students to school are they yellow school buses? Bill Carpenter, CEO responded that they will be our 40' transit buses. Commissioner Kosmerl then asked how are we being paid and how long are we anticipating running this service. Bill Carpenter, CEO stated that he would like to be sensitive to any negotiations that are on-going. We are asking the school district for start up costs, such as bus stop signs and schedule changes. Our hourly rate will be consistent with our existing agreement. We want to be very fair with the school district. The school district is asking for a four-month contract with the option to renew. Commissioner Kosmerl stated that we also have a bus operator shortage and I hope that they are sensitive to that.*
- *Commissioner Rice stated that he too would like to echo the thanks to staff for their work this weekend. It is unfortunate that the lack of planning on others part is now our problem and so that is what we are reacting to. In May we put out our new service with the 15 minutes frequency, how do we plan to inform our customers. Bill Carpenter, CEO stated that with the approval of the resolution we will make changes to the monitors in the Transit Center and schedules will be printed, social media outlets will be updated, and we will be asking the media to also get this information out. We will have all of this information in English and Spanish.*
- *Commissioner White also thanked Bill Carpenter and the staff for all the work. He then asked, would the start time and stop time be the same for our service. Bill Carpenter, CEO stated 5AM Monday thru Friday and 6AM Saturday and Sunday and last buses leave at Midnight so no changes. Commissioner White then asked if this have any effect on any of our other contracts? Bill Carpenter, CEO stated that those commitments will remain unchanged.*
- *Commissioner Carlock stated that the resolution states that this is a temporary change. Bill Carpenter, CEO stated that yes this is temporary at this time. The school district is asking for a four-month contract with the option to renew. For the October board meeting we will be updating you on the fleet size needed to continue with the school service and restoration of the 15-minute service, if this continues all school year, we will also be looking at Bus Operator capacity and updating you.*
- *Commissioner Jankowski stated that you were first contacted by the school district to transport these additional students on Friday, is that correct? Bill Carpenter, CEO stated that we received calls earlier in the week asking if we could take on any other school buildings and we were not looking to cut our own service to the public, so we did tell them no. We did get a call on Friday afternoon where the priority was what would it take to transport these additional buildings and please consider doing that and that is why we are here today. Commissioner Jankowski then asked if there are any other school districts in the area or in Upstate NY that are going through this same issue and are*

having to push back their times because of the same issue? Bill Carpenter, CEO stated that he is not an expert on all school districts but some that I have read about have gone to a third tier in their start times. Also, I think it was in Delaware where they were going to pay parents to bring students to school. The shortage in Operators is Nationwide. Commissioner Jankowski asked about the financial impacts and when are we looking to getting back to the Board on the financial impact. Bill Carpenter, CEO stated that he will have a report for the Board at the October 7<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting. Commissioner Jankowski stated that it says temporary, and four months are we looking to get back to our 15 minute frequency in four months or is this a wait and see? Bill Carpenter, CEO stated we want to get the school district up and running and how many operators can we hire, and the school district will let us know at the end of October if they think they will need us to extend beyond December 31<sup>st</sup>. At that point in time if they want us to continue, do we have the resources to have it as is and if we can put more of the 15-minute service out on the road. At a future board meeting probably in November we would as the Board to consider us continuing the service and how it will impact the 15-minute service. Commissioner Jankowski stated that he is very impressed with the staff on working through the Holiday weekend and cleaning up a mess that they did not create.

- Commissioner Ansbrow stated that I saw news reports from the school district stating that their vendors said they could not perform the service. Did we ever tell the school district we could not perform the work. Bill Carpenter, CEO stated that we do have openings for bus operator positions, but nothing that would limit us from doing the work that we promised. We told the school district that we were ready to perform at the beginning of the school year. Commissioner Ansbrow stated that it is almost certain that some of our riders are going to be late to work and that we should have community support and that businesses be sensitive to the fact that we are helping the school district. Commissioner Ansbrow stated that we have been put in a tough situation, is it the greater good to get the school students to school or our customers to work on time. I appreciate all of your public service and the work that was put in.
- Commissioner Kosmerl asked if the school district and other vendors are able to hire operators and can peel back let's say 25% of the service to another vendor is that something that they will do. Bill Carpenter, CEO stated that all of our focus is to get this stood up. Commissioner Kosmerl stated that he would like that question brought to the school district and maybe you can report on it at the October meeting.
- Commissioner Ansbrow stated that he wants to let the Board know that there is risk with taking this on.
- Commissioner McDonald stated that he is very disappointed that we have to take away a key component of our new system.
- Commissioner Seil stated that we need to be kept abreast of what is going on with our ridership, maybe at the next meeting how are they handling it and what is being said. That is very important to us, the Board, on what our ridership is saying. Commissioner Seil also thanked Bill Carpenter and his staff for the great work putting this together.

On motion of Commissioner McDonald, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, the CEO Report was accepted by unanimous vote.

**D. Consent Resolution**

**Resolution Authorizing a Temporary Change to the RTS Connect System, RGRTA 38-2021**

Resolution RGRTA 38-2021 was moved on motion of Commissioner Ansbro, seconded by Commissioner Seil, the aforementioned Resolutions, a copy of which are attached to these minutes, was unanimously approved.

**E. Adjournment**

There being no further matters on the adopted Agenda, the quarterly meeting was adjourned on motion of Commissioner Rice, seconded by Commissioner McDonald at 12:48pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jerdine Johnson, Secretary

Posted Date: September 21, 2021

**RGRTA**

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# CEO Report

*Presented by: Bill Carpenter, CEO*



## Background

- In May 2019 – RCSD Board of Education authorized a new agreement with RTS for September 2020 to June 2025, but the contract was never executed by the district
- Our last contract expired at the end of the 2019-20 school year. The pandemic caused schools to be closed and RTS received no payment for the final three months of the contract
- RTS used CARES Act funds to be “at the ready” in case students returned to in-classroom learning
- The success of our partnership depends on having a contract in place that provides funding to support customized service to meet their specific needs

## Background of Current Agreement

- In November 2020, RCSD solicited proposals for the 2021-22 school year based on a similar level of the student transportation RTS provided the previous school year.
- Responses were due in early January 2021; our response included service for 5 schools
- Based on the schedule in the RFP, the School Board would make their decision sometime in February
- For the spring 2021 semester, the only student transportation we provided was for Urban-Suburban and Private/Parochial students



## Background of RTS Priority

- **The Launch of Reimagine RTS on May 17, 2021, Included:**
  - Negotiations with the ATU to prepare for launch
    - Included temporary transfer of 40-foot bus operators to Small Vehicle Operator (SVO) positions
  - Recruiting, hiring, and training in a challenging environment
    - 28 new hires
    - Trained 33 Bus Operators as SVOs
    - 19 new SVOs put in service on 8/23
    - Currently training new class of 15 SVOs
    - Recruitment is a priority and is ongoing
- All the preparations to serve schools under the new RCSD contract

## Current School Year Details

- **Contract executed on June 24, 2021, to provide service to the following schools:**
  - RCSD High Schools: (3,243 Students)
    - Monroe, Franklin, Wilson Commencement, School of the Arts, All City, School Without Walls
  - Private/Parochial Schools: (274 Students)
    - Aquinas Institute, Bishop Kearney, McQuaid Jesuit, Our Lady of Mercy
  - Urban-Suburban Program Schools: (360 Students)
    - Brighton Middle & High Schools, Dake Junior High School, East Rochester High School, Irondequoit High School, Pittsford Sutherland High School
- **Contract Cost:**
  - \$5,480,874 for the full school year
- **RTS is fully prepared to provide these services September 8**

# Preparation Efforts for School Year

- **Began working with RCSD on afterschool activities in July**
- **Developed all the schedules for the schoolwork**
  - This is a two-month process that includes a three-week process where Bus Operators choose their work for the Fall
- **Operational logistics:**
  - Order and install new bus stop signs for school routes
  - Finalize and print updated bus schedules
  - Orientation materials for each school we serve

# RCSD Crisis: Bus Driver Shortage

- **National bus driver shortage crisis is real**
- **RCSD requests for additional service early last week could not be accommodated**
- **Sept. 3: Emergency School Board meeting on impact of the bus driver shortage crisis**
- **My Conversations Following School Board meeting:**
  - RCSD staff
  - NYS Department of Education
  - NYS Department of Transportation
  - NYS Legislators
  - Federal, State, Local Elected Officials & Government Agencies
  - School district parents
- **Consensus received was the highest priority for RTS resources is to help get RCSD students into the classroom**

## RTS Solution

- **To ensure we have the buses and bus operators to serve five additional high schools we are changing 8 of our 15-minute routes to 30-minute routes. These routes are:**
  - 3 Joseph
  - 4 Hudson
  - 5 Portland
  - 8 E. Main
  - 11 Monroe
  - 16 Genesee
  - 22 Lake
- **We are able to maintain the 30 minute frequency on these routes during the evening and weekend hours**

# RTS Impact on Performance Metrics

- **Financial Performance**
  - Variance at year-end to our budget
- **Customer Satisfaction**
  - Disruption to life activities due to change in route frequency/service levels
- **Service Quality**
  - Unanticipated additional school service
  - Ride fulfillment for On Demand service
- **Employee Engagement**
  - Sudden change in workforce assignments

## Summary

- **Across the country there is a shortage of bus operators**
- **We are ready to fulfill our commitments of the June 2021 agreement with RCSD for 3,877 students**
- **We are not able to provide additional student transportation without a significant change to the foundational routes of our new transit system**
- **We have identified a plan that allows all our current customers to continue to have service and meet the request from RCSD to serve an additional 3,500 students**
- **With approval of Resolution 38-2021 we will begin transportation for the new schools on September 13<sup>th</sup>**
- **We will work to identify resources to restore frequent service**



**ROCHESTER  
GENESEE REGIONAL  
TRANSPORTATION  
AUTHORITY**

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET**

Board Meeting Date:	September 7, 2021
Presenter:	Bill Carpenter
Subject:	Resolution Authorizing Temporary Changes to the RTS Connect System
Background:	<p>On June 27, 2019, the Board of Commissioners approved the final report for Reimagine RTS, RGRTA 33-2019, unanimously. Reimagine RTS was expected to be launched on June 27, 2020, however then the Pandemic hit, and the launch was delayed until a more appropriate launch date could be scheduled.</p> <p>Once delayed, the focus of RTS turned toward the safety of our customers and employees while continuing to provide the essential service of Public Transportation during a Pandemic. The end of 2020 brought about a Request for Proposal (RFP) from the Rochester City School District (RCSD) to provide Student Transportation. After much analysis and discussion internally and with our Board of Commissioners it was concluded to submit a service plan to the RCSD RFP for Student Transportation reducing the number of buildings we could provide service to based upon financial and operational risks that RTS has identified during the Pandemic. The service plan response to the RCSD RFP was also critical in our determination of when Reimagine RTS could be launched in our community.</p> <p>In February 2021 RTS announced the launch of Reimagine RTS on May 17, 2021. The launch of Reimagine RTS was balanced operationally and financially with the plan of transportation services that RCSD had awarded to us. We postponed the purchase of fifteen (15) 40' buses to reduce our fleet size in response to the reduced work with RCSD. The launch of Reimagine RTS required the movement of existing operators to small vehicle operators for a period of time until the schoolwork was anticipated to start in the Fall. At that time, our second recruiting class of small vehicle operators would be available to perform the work that the transferred operators were performing in on-demand zones. This was determined to be the most efficient use of our resources during the Pandemic to balance operational and financial issues.</p> <p>As we approached the start of our contracted schoolwork all of our operators were in place to provide our services in the RTS Connect System, On-Demand Zones and RCSD contracted transportation.</p>



Our Promise: RTS makes it easy to enjoy your journey.



	<p>On Friday September 3<sup>rd</sup> we became aware that the RCSD Driver Shortage Crisis would require high school students to start the school year with remote learning only. RCSD requested that we engage to determine resources we may have to assist in their crisis so that students could have in person learning. Our scheduling department went to work almost immediately to determine of any resources. We were also contacted by various other local and State leaders to inquire of our ability to expand the service provided to RCSD. We have worked through the weekend to offer a possible solution to the RCSD Driver Shortage that will have a significant temporary impact to our RTS Connect System</p> <p>The solution entails RTS increasing the number of school buildings served by five (5). This will not require a change in fleet size or operator headcount. This is accomplished by reducing the foundational tenant of the RTS Connect System's fifteen (15) minute headways on all but one of our frequent routes. The temporary change to headways allows RTS to exchange the service being provided in the RTS Connect System to provide service to the additional requested RCSD school buildings.</p>
Financial Impact:	<p>The Authority projects that the costs associated with these proposed temporary changes are within the available resources of the 2021-2022 Authority Operating Budget. The revenue lost based on the temporary changes to the RTS Connect System are anticipated to be replaced with the contracted fee with the Rochester City School District.</p>
Recommendation:	<p>That the RGRTA Board of Commissioners approve a temporary change to the RTS Connect System and that the Chief Executive Officer and Authority staff are hereby authorized to take all necessary steps to implement it with appropriate and reasonable modifications, all within available resources.</p>

## **Resolution: RGRTA 38-2021**

### **AUTHORIZING TEMPORARY CHANGES TO THE RTS CONNECT SYSTEM**

WHEREAS, in June of 2019, the Board of Commissioners passed unanimously RGRTA 33-2019 Authorizing RTS Monroe Service Plan as Detailed in the Final Recommendation Report. The Final Recommendation Report is the culmination of the formal process known as Reimagine RTS; and

WHEREAS, the launch of Reimagine RTS was originally scheduled for June 27, 2020 had to be delayed as a result of the Pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the Rochester City School District (RCSD) in late 2020 issued a Request for Proposal for Student Transportation Services which we received. We provided a service plan to RCSD that reduced the number of buildings for which we could effectively provide service to and minimize our operational and financial risks; and

WHEREAS, after we provided RCSD with our service plan for the 2021-2022 school year, in February we were then able to announce the revised launch date of Reimagine RTS; and

WHEREAS, Reimagine RTS created the RTS Connect System that provided, as a foundational tenant, fifteen (15) minute headways on ten (10) of our most highly accessed routes; and

WHEREAS, on September 3, 2021, we were notified of RCSD's Driver Shortage Crisis and were asked to assist in providing additional service to reduce or eliminate the issue faced by RCSD and their ability to get students into buildings for in person learning; and

WHEREAS, our review has provided a potential solution for the RCSD Driver Shortage Crisis but will impact temporarily the RTS Connect System and it's fifteen (15) minute headways on most of the frequent routes to our customers; and

WHEREAS, this solution requires temporarily increasing the headway on all but one of the frequent routes in the RTS Connect System by an additional fifteen (15) minutes to thirty (30) minute headways; and

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners approves a temporary change to the RTS Connect System and that the Chief Executive Officer and Authority staff are hereby authorized to take all necessary steps to implement these temporary changes with appropriate and reasonable modifications, all within available resources; and it is

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Executive Officer or his designee are hereby authorized, empowered and directed, for and on behalf of the Authority, to perform any and all actions and to execute any and all documents on behalf of the Authority as they may deem necessary, appropriate or advisable to carry out the intent and purposes of the foregoing resolutions.

## **CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned hereby certifies that the above is an excerpt from the Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Rochester Genesee Regional Transportation Authority, which was held on September 7, 2021, and that the Resolution is still in full force and effect.

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Donald Jeffries, Chairman

Date: September 7, 2021  
Rochester, New York