

CAPITAL AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2026
4:00 P.M. – DISABILITY NETWORK CAPITAL AREA
901 EAST MOUNT HOPE AVENUE, LANSING, MI 48910

PRESENT: Nathan Triplett, Chair
Phil Deschaine, Secretary/Treasurer
Kellie Blackwell
Mark Grebner
Steve Vagnozzi
Jack Schmitt
Derek Melot
Eric Tans
Ed Rodgers
John Prush
Chelsea Dowler

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Triplett called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Kellie Blackwell, Phil Deschaine, Mark Grebner, Derek Melot, John Prush, Ed Rodgers, Eric Tans, Nathan Triplett and Steve Vagnozzi were all present.

ABSENT: Shanna Draheim, Vice Chair

LATE: Chelsea Dowler and Jack Schmitt

Chelsea Dowler arrived at 4:02 p.m.

Chair Triplett welcomed everyone to the Board meeting. He also mentioned that the meeting is being held on Zoom for those who wish to view the Board meeting virtually.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

CHAIR'S COMMENTS:

Chair Triplett requested a motion to excuse Shanna Draheim.

MOTION:

Eric Tans motioned to excuse Shanna Draheim and Chelsea Dowler supported the motion.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA)

Bradley Funkhouser stated that the first public meeting for the COA took place earlier today at the East Lansing Public Library and a second public meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 12, at the Foster Community Center. He shared that it was a good meeting with a lot of participants. Mr. Funkhouser noted that there will be a summary shared with the Board in the near future.

CATA's Downtown Building

Bradley Funkhouser stated that the May Board meeting will take place at CATA's new downtown building, located at 511 S. Washington. Mr. Funkhouser noted that new furniture for the Board room will be delivered on Monday, May 11. He also shared that some of the IT staff have already relocated there and others will follow soon.

Contactless Payment

Bradley Funkhouser stated that many riders have been using CATA's contactless payment methods for paying their fares. Mr. Funkhouser explained that currently CATA is averaging approximately \$6,000 in revenue per week, which is about 1,300 riders during the week and 1,200 on the weekends. He also stated that CATA will have vending machines for riders to reload their cards in public places by the end of June or beginning of July 2026.

State and Federal Budgets

Bradley Funkhouser stated that this past week the first draft of the federal budget was released. He explained that in the draft it was noted that Capital Investment Grants (CIG), which include a large part of the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) budget, are going to be cut. Mr. Funkhouser also stated that he is particularly interested in competitive grants, specifically formula grants, which are based on population and ridership, both of which have slightly increased since last year. He noted that CATA will continue to push with our partners at the state and federal level for additional funding, including approximately \$330 million in local bus operating (LBO) funds.

Phil Deschaine inquired about whether CATA has budgeted for the increase in fuel.

Jack Schmitt arrived at 4:08 p.m.

Bradley Funkhouser explained that CATA budget is based on a range for fuel costs. He then deferred to Jim Frenndt, Director of Finance, and Dan Hodges, Director of Maintenance, for further details.

Jim Frenndt explained that his department is watching fuel prices closely. He also noted that CATA's year-to-date is well below budget; however, if fuel prices remain the same or increase, CATA will be over budget by the end of the year.

Dan Hodges noted that CATA's two (2) new electric buses along with the 13 hybrid buses that are on order will help reduce fuel expenses.

Chair Triplett reminded Board members that transit agencies throughout the nation are facing funding issues. He noted that CATA will remain cautious and continue to share updates.

Bradley Funkhouser confirmed that CATA has been cautious with spending and will continue to do so. He stated that CATA will need to plan to ensure that the funds will last over a certain period of time.

ACTION ITEMS – PROPOSED CONSENT AGENDA

- A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 2026, BOARD MEETING
- B. APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2026
 - 1. Interim Income Statement
 - 2. Cash Summary
 - 3. Investments
 - 4. Fifth Third Investment Account Reconciliation
- C. PROCUREMENT SOFTWARE

PROPOSED MOTION: That the CATA Board of Directors authorizes Board Chair, Nathan Triplett, and Chief Executive Officer, Bradley T. Funkhouser, to execute a contract with OpenGov Inc., at a cost not to exceed \$214,754, for a five-year period on such other terms and conditions as the Board Chair and the Chief Executive Officer deem necessary.

MOTION:

Steve Vagnozzi motioned to approve the Consent Agenda and Jack Schmitt supported the motion.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS – PROPOSED DISCUSSION AGENDA

None

PRESENTATION – SOLAR FEASIBILITY STUDY

- John A. Kinch, PhD, Executive Director, Michigan Energy Options

Chair Triplett welcomed and thanked Dr. Kinch for attending CATA's Board meeting.

Bradley Funkhouser also welcomed Dr. Kinch and deferred to Dustin Hagfors, Director of Planning and Development.

Dustin Hagfors introduced Dr. John Kinch, Executive Director, Michigan Energy Options, to discuss solar energy and its benefits.

Dr. John Kinch gave his presentation.

Steve Vagnozzi inquired about a power purchase agreement (PPA) and requested a comparison.

Dr. John Kinch stated that when looking into a PPA, the vendor should be able to beat the client's electricity usage rate, and the agreement should be for 20 to 25 years.

Eric Tans inquired whether batteries were included in the study.

Dr. John Kinch explained that batteries were not included in the study; however, it is ideal to also have electric vehicles in order for CATA to become more energy efficient.

Mark Grebner commented on the solar panel system only producing energy during peak times of the day; therefore, CATA would still need to have a deal with Board Water and Light (BWL).

Dr. John Kinch confirmed that CATA will still need to have a deal with BWL. He explained that the model will track weather patterns for Michigan and use utility bills to create a profile that reflects CATA's electrical usage. Dr. Kinch also shared that it is important to make sure that BWL's policies are in line.

Phil Deschaine commented on solar panels used in Michigan compared to Arizona.

Dr. John Kinch stated that solar panels in Michigan have about 15% to 18% efficiency rate while solar panels in Arizona and the warmer states use about 25% to 30%. He noted that solar panels' efficiency rates are improving.

Phil Deschaine inquired whether the solar panels have useful life after 20 years.

Dr. John Kinch stated that Michigan Energy Options has been refurbishing solar panels from landfills. He noted that the solar panels have a life well over 20 years and the technology continues to improve.

Steve Vagnozzi stated that he is intrigued by recycling solar panels and inquired whether they can be used for projects.

Dr. John Kinch confirmed that recycled solar panels can be used for projects; however, there are issues related to providing certifications and warranties.

Chair Triplett thanked Dr. Kinch for his presentation. He noted that there will be a follow up once Staff has had the chance to review options.

Board applauded.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Triplett adjourned the Board meeting at 4:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phil Deschaine
Secretary/Treasurer

Tina Orlando
Recording Secretary