

CAPITAL AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
BOARD RETREAT MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2025
LANSING CENTER GOVERNOR'S ROOM
333 E. MICHIGAN AVENUE, LANSING, MI 48933

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Triplett called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. He thanked the Board for their time and the CATA staff for all their hard work in organizing the Board Retreat.

INTRODUCTION:

Bradley Funkhouser welcomed everyone and began by explaining that this is a required retreat per CATA Board policy, and the presentations will give a brief overview of the past year and year to come. He then introduced the first speaker, Todd Brooks, Director of Operations.

DEPARTMENT TRENDS AND UPDATES:

OPERATIONS & PARATRANSIT: Todd Brooks, Director of Operations, gave an overview of the Operations Department, including staff, training new operators, and the continued partnerships that CATA has with MSU, and the Lansing School District. Mr. Brooks also gave a report on the Paratransit Department and CATA being ADA compliant.

Steven Vagnozzi inquired whether CATA plans to include Disability Day in the upcoming year.

Todd Brooks expressed his hope that CATA will include having a Disability Day again this year.

Phil Deschaine inquired whether Operations keeps track of overdoses.

Todd Brooks stated that CATA's Safety Department keeps track of overdoses.

MAINTENANCE: Dan Hodges, Director of Maintenance, gave an overview of his department including CATA's fleet, Maintenance Department staff, and specialized training for his department.

Steven Vagnozzi inquired about the life cycle for CATA's cutaway buses.

Dan Hodges stated that the life cycle for CATA's 40-foot buses is twelve (12) years; cutaways, seven (7) years; and minivans, four (4) years.

Shanna Draheim inquired about the specialized electric vehicle training for employees.

Dan Hodges stated that the training is offered to employees and there is another electric vehicle training scheduled for February.

Jack Schmitt inquired about specialized training at other transit authorities.

Dan Hodges stated that usually transit authorities that are like CATA in size do not have a training department. Fortunately, CATA has been able to build training into their department, which has been very beneficial. He noted that CATA also tries to promote communication between authorities throughout the U.S. to work through issues within the system and share feedback.

MARKETING: Lolo Robison, Director of Marketing and Customer Experience, gave an overview of the department's projects including media launches for regional mobility connectors, CATA Rydz microtransit service, and Free Rides campaign. She also noted CATA's continued partnerships, outreach programs and improvements made to CATA's website for better usability.

Steven Vagnozzi inquired about items covered under Title VI.

Lolo Robinson stated that Title VI covers complaints and service issues related to race, color, and creed.

HUMAN RESOURCES: Marshea Brown, Director of Human Resources, introduced her staff. She noted that the HR Department's primary focus is to support CATA's workforce, which currently totals 390 active employees. Ms. Brown shared some of her department's accomplishments such as administrative wage increases, added more supplemental health insurance policies, updated CATA's Administrative Employee Guidebook, which is in its final review stage, and created a new policy for the Earned Sick Time Act, effective 2/21/2025. She also noted that CATA's DEI Task Force Committee will continue to have monthly meetings thanks to Mr. Funkhouser's strong leadership.

FACILITIES: Andrew Brieschke, Deputy CEO, introduced the Facilities Department staff including Norm VanAlstine, Facilities Manager with over 21 years of experience and Jeff Pearl, Lead Custodian with over 20 years of service. Mr. Brieschke stated that the Facilities Department not only maintains numerous bus stops within the CATA service network, they also have been instrumental in placing bus stops for EATRAN as well. He also stated that the department added more parking spaces at the Administrative Building and installed card access at the CTC for extra security. He further noted that Facilities will add electric vehicle charging stations for employees in the spring while continuing to ensure that CATA remains compliant with local, state, and federal guidelines.

Shanna Draheim inquired about CATA's bus shelters and possible sponsorships for the new year.

Andrew Brieschke stated that CATA's Planning and Development Department handles bus shelter sponsorships and Dustin Hagfors, Director of Planning and Development will include the information in his presentation.

Phil Deschaine inquired about the electric vehicle charging station's cost for CATA and employees.

Andrew Brieschke stated that he believes CATA will cover the cost of using the charging stations and it will be free for employees. He also stated that CATA is proud to be able to offer this service to its employees and recognizes the environmental benefits as well.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: Dan Goodemoot, Director of IT, gave his presentation which included CATA's accomplishments in regional mobility and CATA's partnership with EATRAN. Mr. Goodemoot commented on CATA's IT improvements including replacing the PA system at the CTC, launching CATA Mobile Pay App and Transit App ticketing, upgrading CATA's fuel master software, laptops, wireless network and security by implementing two-factor authentication. He expressed how proud he is of his team and their fast response time in handling emergency situations.

FINANCE: Jim Frenndt gave a brief update of the Finance Department which included CATA's FY 2024 operating summary and their revenue, expenses and net operating income. Mr. Frenndt will provide a more in-depth presentation at the February Board meeting.

Chelsea Dowler inquired about the decrease in matched dollars from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Jim Frenndt stated that this is done every year through federal legislation.

Bradley Funkhouser stated that there are multiple public transit agencies competing for the same funds.

Steve Vagnozzi clarified that the 2026 budget has not been set and there are local agencies lobbying for less decreases.

Jim Frenndt stated that last year CATA was told that there would be a 26% decrease, and this year it is supposed to be the same.

Bradley Funkhouser confirmed Mr. Vagnozzi's remarks and stated that CATA and CATA's union have been involved in trying to lobby for less decreases. He also noted that CATA is in a good position financially and will be able to continue their service either way.

Chair Triplett appreciated Staff's cautious approach on CATA's finances. He noted that CATA is in a better position than other transit agencies due to the leadership of Mr. Funkhouser and his Staff.

Bradley Funkhouser stated that CATA is being transparent with all their challenges while continuing to follow future goals.

PLANNING: Dustin Hagfors, Director of Planning and Development, provided an overview on his department and reported on ridership including regional mobility, microtransit, fixed-route, and paratransit. Mr. Hagfors also commented on replacing old shelters and installing new shelters throughout the region. He further noted that his staff will continue to meet with partners in the community to better serve the public.

Shanna Draheim followed up from her previous inquiry about CATA's bus shelters and possible sponsorships for the new year.

Dustin Hagfors stated that CATA's Marketing Department has been partnering with local artists. He also stated that CATA is currently in the process of updating some of the shelters with art.

Bradley Funkhouser stated that one of the difficulties in placing shelters is getting environmental clearance from the federal government. Mr. Funkhouser noted that partnering with developers allows CATA to be more flexible and eases the process. He also noted that CATA is working on trying to change the legislation.

Steve Vagnozzi inquired whether microtransit could assist with CATA's Redi-Ride trips and generate more service hours.

Dustin Hagfors stated that CATA is working with the union to provide more on-demand types of service.

Steve Vagnozzi inquired whether the goal is to provide more flexibility in service.

Dustin Hagfors confirmed that CATA's goal is to provide more flexibility in service.

Chair Triplett reminded Board members that the January Board Retreat is designed as an informational meeting that leads into Mr. Frendt's budget report at the February Board meeting.

Steve Vagnozzi stated that as a new Board member, he is very impressed with the level of expertise that has been explained during the January Retreat. He expressed his opinion that CATA is more than a transit agency running buses, and as a Meridian Township member, he appreciates CATA's ingenuity as an organization.

Shanna Draheim expressed her love for CATA's Board Retreat. She also expressed how proud she is of CATA and the work that they have done in the community to make it better.

Phil Deschaine echoed Ms. Draheim's remarks. He also requested that Board members receive the slide presentations.

Chair Triplett commended Staff on their presentations. He also recognized how his comments from last year were mentioned in this year's Board Retreat. Chair Triplett expressed his appreciation for Mr. Funkhouser's leadership, especially in taking on a dual role, and hopes that the collaboration between CATA and EATRAN will become permanent. Lastly, he commented on CATA's new downtown facility and his excitement for the new building.

DISCUSSION:

None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

CLOSING REMARKS:

Bradley Funkhouser thanked Board members and the public for attending CATA's Board Retreat. He stated that Board members will receive a digital copy of the presentation and requested that any additional comments and/or questions be sent within the next couple of weeks for Staff to be prepared for the next Board meeting. Mr. Funkhouser also thanked Andrew Brieschke, Deputy CEO, for his leadership and overseeing the presentations.

Chair Triplett thanked Board members for their support and for setting up the foundation for future Boards.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Triplett adjourned Board Retreat at 5:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phil Deschaine
Secretary/Treasurer

Tina Orlando
Recording Secretary