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Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 22, 2026 at 9:00 AM

COTA - WG Porter Boardroom, 33 N High St, Columbus OH

1. Call to Order

Chair Sean Mentel called the July 22, 2026 regular meeting of the COTA Board of Trustees to order at 9:01 am.

2. Roll Call

Board Members Present	Board Members Excused
Sean Mentel, Chair	Trudy Bartley, Vice Chair
Pete Bucher, Trustee	Jeff Hunley, Trustee
Erika Clark Jones, Trustee	Brent Pastorek, Trustee
Mallory Donaldson, Trustee	
Doug McCollough, Trustee	
Stephen Sayre, Trustee	
Matt Starr, Trustee	
Amy Taylor, Trustee	
Heather Ulrey, Trustee	

3. New Board Member Appointment - Oath of Office

A. Ken Paul

Chair Mentel administered the oath of office to Ken Paul.

4. Approval of Board of Trustee Minutes

A. May 27, 2026 Annual Meeting of the COTA Board of Trustee Minutes

Trustee Doug McCollough moved to approve the May 27, 2026 Annual Meeting of the COTA Board of Trustees minutes, seconded by Trustee Erika Clark Jones. Motion carried.

B. May 27, 2026 Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes

Trustee Stephen Sayre moved to approve the May 27, 2026 Board of Trustees regular meeting minutes, seconded by Trustee McCollough. Motion carried.

5. Comments or Statements from the Audience

There were no comments from the audience.

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6. President's Report

COTA President Monica Tèllez-Fowler highlighted progress on the LinkUS initiative, including a key federal milestone for the West Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit corridor, service expansions that have already added 30,000+ service hours, and the planned September launch of the new Line 30 route along with improvements to Line 1. President Tèllez-Fowler noted the groundbreaking of the first LinkUS-funded pedestrian infrastructure project on Hoover Road, work on the proposed five-year Capital Improvement Program and Short-Range Transit Plan to guide future mobility investments, expansion of digital fare access through The Ohio State University app, the continuation of educational pass partnerships with Columbus City Schools and other institutions, and preparations to host the International Latinos in Transit Leadership Summit in Central Ohio this September.

7. Governance Committee Report - Sean Mentel, Chair

Governance Committee Chair Sean Mentel reported that the committee met July 16, 2026 and heard committee reports, which included five resolutions that are on today's regular agenda, and an additional four resolutions, which are on today's consent agenda.

8. Strategic and Operational Planning Committee Report - Trudy Bartley, Chair

Chief Innovation Technology Officer Sophia Mohr reported that the Strategic and Operational Planning Committee met July 7, 2026, which included presentations on the 2027-2031 Short-Range Plan and the 2027-2031 Transit Supportive Infrastructure Capital Improvements Program, and updates on the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee, the COTA Advisory Panel, and the LinkUS initiative. Three resolutions were presented, which were recommended for the regular agenda.

A. 2027-2031 Short-Range Transit Plan – Devayani Puranik, COTA Director of Planning

COTA Director of Planning Devayani Puranik presented the 2027-2031 Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTP), a five-year roadmap designed to expand transit service by approximately 30 percent. She said the plan was developed through extensive public engagement and data analysis, and that it recommends expanding and modernizing COTA's network by increasing service frequency, especially on weekends and throughout the day, extending service to underserved areas, introducing 24-hour service on core routes, launching new direct connections such as Airport–Downtown–OSU service, adding up to three new COTA//Plus zones, and aligning the network with future bus rapid transit corridors. The plan also proposes simplifying and restructuring certain routes to improve reliability and efficiency, focusing investments on high-ridership corridors and transit-dependent communities, and implementing improvements through phased service packages that balance customer demand, operational readiness, community input, and fiscal responsibility. Ms. Puranik said every recommendation COTA intends to implement

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will get public input, and that implementation will happen in phases.

Ms. Puranik then presented the corresponding resolution:

Resolution 2026-48 Authorizing the Adoption of COTA's 2027-2031 Short-Range Transit Plan

Trustee McCollough moved to approve Resolution 2026-48, seconded by Trustee Amy Taylor. Motion carried.

B. 2027-2031 Transit Supportive Infrastructure (TSI) Capital Improvements Program - William Murdock, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Executive Director

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission Executive Director William Murdock presented the 2027-2031 Transit Supportive Infrastructure (TSI) Capital Improvements Program, which includes 75 projects across 20 jurisdictions, with 61 construction-funded projects, 14 development-funded projects, more than 100 miles of transportation improvements, and 56 multi-jurisdictional efforts. The plan allocates approximately $263.3 million in project expenditures between 2027 and 2031, supporting active transportation, pedestrian, bicycle, trail, transit access, and roadway connectivity projects throughout the northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest quadrants of the region. Mr. Murdock's presentation noted 2027 TSI grant awards for numerous local infrastructure projects, outlined upcoming approval and implementation milestones, and introduced the proposed Central Ohio Advance Fund, a $5 million revolving funding program intended to help local governments advance grant-funded transportation projects while awaiting reimbursement, thereby reducing cash-flow barriers and accelerating delivery of regional transportation priorities.

COTA Chief Financial Officer Earl Jackson presented the corresponding resolution:

C. Resolution 2026-49 Authorizing the Adoption of the 2027-2031 Transit Supportive Infrastructure Grant Program Five-Year Capital Improvement Program

Trustee Matt Starr moved to approve Resolution 2026-49, seconded by Trustee Clark Jones. Motion carried with Trustee Sayre abstaining.

COTA Engineering and Design Director Tom Komlanc presented Resolution 2026-50:

D. Resolution 2026-50 Authorizing the Acquisition of Necessary Real Estate and Declaring the Necessity to Construct Phase A of the West Broad Street High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

Trustee Pete Bucher moved to approve Resolution 2026-50, seconded by Trustee Taylor. Motion carried.

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9. External Stakeholder Relations Committee Report - Erika Clark Jones, Chair

External Stakeholder Relations Committee Chair Erika Clark Jones reported that the committee met July 7, 2026, which included a presentation of COTA's Customer Experience Action Plan, and updates on government affairs work, the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee, COTA Advisory Panel, and LinkUS public engagement work.

10. Performance Monitoring/Audit Committee Report - Amy Taylor, Chair

Performance Audit/Monitoring Committee Chair Amy Taylor reported the committee met July 9, 2026, which included a financial report and operational performance update. The committee heard six resolutions, two were recommended for the regular agenda and four for the consent agenda.

COTA Chief Financial Officer Earl Jackson presented Resolution 2026-51:

A. Resolution 2026-51 Authorizing the Transfer of Funds Between the Central Ohio Transit Authority and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

Trustee Taylor moved to approve Resolution 2026-51, seconded by Trustee McCollough. Motion carried.

COTA Engineering and Design Director Tom Komlanc presented Resolution 2026-52:

B. Resolution 2026-52 Authorizing Additional Expenditures for the Contract with Kimley- Horn for East Main Street High-Capacity Transit Corridor Detailed Design and Construction Engineering Services

Trustee Taylor moved to approve Resolution 2026-52, seconded by Trustee McCollough. Motion carried.

11. Consent Agenda

A. Resolution 2026-53 Authorization to Adopt a Tax Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2027 and to Submit the 2027 Tax Budget to the Franklin County Auditor

B. Resolution 2026-54 Authorizing Additional Expenditures for the Contract with Galls, LLC for the Purchase of COTA Uniforms

C. Resolution 2026-55 Authorizing Additional Expenditures for the Contract with a Customer's Point of View, Inc. for Third Party Bus Operator Monitoring Services

D. Resolution 2026-56 Authorizing Additional Expenditures for the Contract with Peanut Butter, Inc. for Assistance with Employee Student Loan Repayment Services

Trustee Bucher moved to approve Resolutions 2026-53 through 2026-56, seconded

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by Trustee Starr. Motion carried.

12. Other Business

A. Executive Session for the following purpose: ORC 121.22 (G)(4) Preparing for, conducting, or reviewing negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment

B. Executive Session for the following purpose: ORC 121.22 (G)(1) to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of a public employee or official or the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee

Trustee Donaldson moved to enter Executive Session for the purposes described above, seconded by Trustee Clark Jones. Through roll call, the committee members unanimously voted to enter Executive Session at 10:06 am.

Executive Session ended at 11:26 am.

13. Meeting Schedule

- Strategic and Operational Planning Committee, 9:30 am, Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2026
- External Stakeholder Relations Committee, 3:30 pm, Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2026
- Performance Monitoring/Audit Committee, 2 pm, Thursday, Sept. 10, 2026
- Governance Committee, 4 pm, Thursday, September 17, 2026
- Board of Trustees Regular Meeting, 9 am, Wednesday, September 23, 2026

14. Adjournment

Trustee Clark Jones moved to adjourn the July 22, 2026 Board of Trustees meeting, seconded by Trustee Sayre. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:27 am.

Adopted: September 23, 2026

Signed: Signed by: 4E0CFE51E8D444D... **Chair, Board of Trustees**

Attest: Signed by: C080309020B34D2... **President/CEO**