

RTA Meeting
08/21/2025

REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
PUBLIC HEARING

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Public Hearing of the RTA Meeting

Taken at the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan

Located at 1001 Woodward Avenue

Suite 1400

Detroit, Michigan 48226

Thursday, August 21, 2025

Commencing at 1:00 p.m.

APPEARANCES:

David Massaron

Jon Moore

Donald Morandini

Jeanette Bradshaw

Helaine Zack

Freman Hendrix

June Lee

Dr. Erica Robertson

Alma Wheeler Smith

Ned Staebler

Also Present: Ben Stupka

Reported by: Megan Harder, CER-15895

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1 Detroit, Michigan

2 Thursday, August 25, 2025 - 1:00 p.m.

3 - - -

4 MR. STUPKA: All right. Why don't we go ahead
5 and do our role call.

6 MR. BLOYE: Helaine Zack.

7 MS. ZACK: Here.

8 MR. BLOYE: Jon Moore.

9 MR. MOORE: Here.

10 MR. BLOYE: Ned Staebler.

11 MR. STAEBLER: Here.

12 MR. BLOYE: Freman Hendrix.

13 MR. HENDRIX: Here.

14 MR. BLOYE: Donald Morandini.

15 MR. MORANDINI: Here.

16 MR. BLOYE: David Massaron.

17 MR. MASSARON: Here.

18 MR. MASSARON: All right. Is that a quorum?

19 MR. STUPKA: Yes.

20 MR. MASSARON: Approval of the agenda.

21 I'll take a motion.

22 MR. STAEBLER: So moved.

23 MS. WHEELER SMITH: Support.

24 MR. MASSARON: Moved and supported.

25 All in favor?

1 THE GROUP: Aye.

2 MR. MASSARON: Any opposed? Hearing none. The
3 agenda passes. Moving right along to public comments,
4 we'll start in the room [indiscernible] -- is there anyone
5 in the public wishing to comment? Seeing none. We'll
6 move to online. Anyone raising their hand online?

7 MR. BLOYE: No one online.

8 MR. MASSARON: No one online. All right.

9 Now we will get to Ben. Executive Director.

10 MR. STUPKA: All right -- okay. So, I'll start
11 with big news. So, we found out yesterday that our
12 communications marketing team, both at the QLINE and RTA
13 in general, won an outstanding communications award from
14 the Michigan Public Transit Association. So, this is a
15 combination of the Pause event (phonetic) they did around
16 opening day at the QLINE and the updated DATS marketing
17 campaign (phonetic). So, really, really proud of the
18 team, everybody pulling together to earn that award. So,
19 congratulations.

20 So administrative things, our team picnic is
21 scheduled at QLINE on August 23rd. I think I sent the
22 board invites, so feel free to attend if you can. We have
23 hired a new procurement and contracts manager, thank
24 goodness. They are starting on September 8th, and then
25 we're finalizing interviews for a digital experience

1 associate, essentially a website manager. Just want to
2 make sure we had June in attendance. Okay. Thank you.

3 Procurements are expressed services that claim
4 for September boards. This is for the D2A2 DAS, renewed
5 contracts for those services. Right now, those
6 [indiscernible] are going to be renewed contracts for
7 marketing for D2A2 DAS and QLINEs, so that will be
8 October, probably October, or maybe November. RTA
9 Triennial Site Review, so we have our final report. We're
10 going through corrective actions 413 are already
11 submitted. We have plans to close all those out here in
12 the next month. And then our Safety Triennial for the
13 QLINE is scheduled on September 8th, so the fun never ends
14 -- lots of fun things beyond the award we talked about.

15 We hosted a ride-along with the Chief -- Hillary
16 Doe, for an ongoing YouTube series that NBC is doing. We
17 did an extended coverage of our 5310 funding and got a
18 couple of really nice quotes in some of the more local,
19 smaller papers about 5310 funding and the RTA's work
20 around that. We really like and appreciate. We are
21 sponsoring Jazz Fest, so that helps us get some traffic
22 control from the Jazz Fest, along with a good variety
23 around that. We celebrated Disability Pride Month, and
24 our D2A2 are going to end at the end of Labor Day. So
25 overall, a good summer of promotion, and I don't think I

1 covered this, but the picture there is actually a ride
2 along with our CAC on the D2A2 bus.

3 So again, trying to work with the CAC to get
4 them out there and ride the services as well. Not a bunch
5 of huge updates in core business. Beyond the fact that I
6 do want to highlight, we are working hard with our
7 Providers Advisory Committee to develop and call kind of
8 an integration agenda. So going through their list of
9 priorities, connecting that into the master plan
10 priorities, and making sure we're identifying areas that
11 we can work together on. So, something like the Transit
12 App that we've talked about before is an example of that.

13 So, we're putting more structure around that
14 effort as we go forward. This initiative, so the big one,
15 Transit App, is planning to launch regionally in October.
16 So, in the September board meeting, we'll have more
17 information on what that launch is going to look like, key
18 talking points, what it takes for the board to be able to
19 talk to folks about and the marketing plan, and all that,
20 and how all things look good as part of that launch in
21 October. And I'm going to skip over the rest of this
22 stuff. It's just general updates at this point.

23 QLINE performance, so ridership, we're off-trend
24 on our goal of 1.1 million, which is 5 percent higher than
25 what we targeted for last year. So still looking good to

1 get a million, which is the baseline goal, but trending a
2 little bit down there. We have struggled with some lead
3 trips and on-time performance, particularly in the hot
4 days of July and August. We'll talk a little bit more
5 about that in the next slide. I did adjust the delay
6 trend chart.

7 So, what you see here is the darker blue is the
8 six-month average trends. You can see this is kind of
9 what we average in terms of different issues that are
10 causing delays. So, you can see here in July, the big
11 spike in depot issues and operations issues is kind of
12 what causes those on-time performance issues. The big
13 challenges we had were heat really impacts the battery
14 functionality. It's not just that it gets uncomfortable
15 and hot in the cars. Literally, cars start to slow down
16 and slow down and slow down until they shut off and have
17 to be reset and or fixed.

18 We did have an operator shortage. I'm happy to
19 say we do have new operators. We're up to 21 operators.
20 22 is the total operating amount that we're always
21 shooting for. I don't think we've even had 21 since I've
22 been there. So, we have 21, two new people got their keys
23 this week.

24 Making progress there, but then often new
25 operators, they operate the line more slowly. They bump

1 into things a little bit more. So, it's part of what you
2 see in the first couple months of their operations. Some
3 of the things we're doing to correct these issues. We did
4 do an alternative schedule where we ran three cars in the
5 morning and four cars during the peak. That allowed us to
6 get through some vehicle maintenance issues.

7 Some of the hotter days allowed the vehicles to
8 cool down. That helps stabilize things. So, we weren't
9 pulling cars off the alignment. We're going to end that
10 this weekend and move back to our regular schedule. We've
11 ordered new chillers which are pretty much sound like they
12 are. They keep the batteries cool and consequently the
13 rest of the streetcar. Those are ordered.

14 We'll get the first round of those in December
15 and the second round in March. That's just how long it
16 takes to get them. We just completed the other class
17 actually. And then we are launching a new schedule for
18 operators with two part-time opportunities, these will be
19 in addition to the 22 operators. That will help us with
20 some flexibility around FMLA which we talked about last
21 month. Of the 21 operators that we have, we have six who
22 are on intermittent FMLA. Which is just difficult to
23 manage, right.

24 I totally understand their need to have that
25 benefit but it's hard to manage on a regular basis. So,

1 we're looking at offering some part-time. And then on
2 October 1st, we're going to implement a new scheduling
3 system. So, we'll have much more control over our
4 schedule. Just to dig through these a little bit, what's
5 called GTFS which is essentially what I just put out into
6 the world. This is your schedule that you're measured
7 against.

8 Right now, we don't have full control over
9 building that schedule. We're working through a third
10 party. We don't have control over that schedule and
11 understanding how to adjust it, manage it, and everything
12 else. So really excited to get that online. We're
13 starting to train for that next week. Safety. Yeah.

14 MR. MASSARON: When can we expect those
15 solutions to start impacting the performance --

16 MR. STUPKA: Yeah. I think next month you're
17 going to see August numbers, which are going to be about
18 the same as this. I think September numbers, so when
19 you're in October, you'll start to see purely the weather.
20 So, you'll start to see that improvement, I think in our
21 October report -- the scheduling system should help.
22 That'll be in October. So, every month we should start
23 seeing a return to normal.

24 And really, it's about preparing for next
25 summer. And that's just -- we've talked about this at

1 this table several times. That's just the lead time we're
2 dealing with. Right. It's 9-12 months to get new parts.
3 You can't go to NAPA and get a chiller. So, you've got to
4 order them way ahead of time.

5 Safety. Not a lot of difference from last
6 month. We have had a few, in this month of August, a few
7 accidents from new operators. Nothing serious. Nobody
8 hurt. But just a few additional things that does happen.

9 MS. WHEELER SMITH: Ben?

10 MR. STUPKA: Yes, ma'am.

11 MS. WHEELER SMITH: Can we go back to the --

12 MR. STUPKA: Sure.

13 MS. WHEELER SMITH: I think that we had chillers
14 on there. They're old and defective?

15 MR. STUPKA: So, each streetcar has two
16 chillers. The purpose of the chillers, they sit on top of
17 the streetcar. They pump coolant down to the base of the
18 plate that's under the battery, to keep the batteries
19 cool. So, we had five or six of them out for repair.
20 Those were sent out for repair in January. We just got
21 our first round of them back in July. We also ordered two
22 new chillers. Those are the only two available from our
23 supplier. As soon as we got close to the summer, we said,
24 do you have anything on the shelf? They said, yeah, we
25 have two. Give us those two. So, we --

1 MS. WHEELER SMITH: So those two come in in
2 March?

3 MR. STUPKA: Those two we got already. Yep,
4 those two are on the streetcars already. So, what we're
5 trying to do is isolate maybe one streetcar. This one's
6 got the chiller issues. That way -- helps us manage that
7 streetcar and make sure it cools down. That's kind of our
8 fifth car. That's how --

9 MS. WHEELER SMITH: Do we have enough of a
10 budget to have a backup?

11 MR. STUPKA: Yep. So, we're able to take some
12 of the older models and get the best parts. So, we'll
13 have two backups.

14 MS. WHEELER SMITH: Thank you.

15 MR. STUPKA: QLINE surveys. So, we're three
16 weeks into about a month-long survey program for the
17 QLINE. We're doing a series of online surveys, on-board
18 surveys, and we're also doing business engagement. So,
19 we're doing pretty well. We've been out mostly this week
20 doing the on-board surveys. The efforts are expected to
21 wrap up next week and we'll be sharing the results in
22 September. So, this is kind of a ridership satisfaction
23 survey. So, we'll have the results of that soon.

24 MS. ZACK: How do we do the surveys?

25 Is that our staff doing the survey?

1 MR. STUPKA: Great question. So, we work with
2 our communications contractors to do the online survey.
3 Our team goes out and does the actual on-board surveys.
4 So, Rachel, who you see here, talking to a rider, we set
5 up a system where we go out in shifts.

6 All of us have done at least one or two shifts.
7 We have paper surveys. We have different ways for people
8 to take them. We encourage them to take them online. So,
9 we try to cover all the bases.

10 MS. ZACK: Thank you.

11 MR. STUPKA: d2A2 continues to do well and
12 perform better than last month. I do want to say we plan
13 on providing an update on the stop Michigan Central stop
14 question in September. I wanted to look at some
15 information from SEMCOG on their kind of real-time cell
16 phone data. It wasn't available for --

17 MR. MASSARON: -- Michigan Central slash
18 Midtown.

19 MR. STUPKA: Yes. My apologies.

20 MR. HENDRIX: You said September?

21 MR. STUPKA: September. I know. I apologize.

22 MR. STAEBLER: I appreciate you preemptively
23 getting --

24 MR. STUPKA: Yes. We were looking for an
25 alternative location. Additional stop location.

1 MR. STAEBLER: Thank you.

2 MR. STUPKA: Dash (phonetic) ridership continues
3 to outpace similar amounts from last year. So that's
4 still going along really well. I will be brief here
5 because Melanie is going to do a quick overview of the
6 strategic plan with a little bit more information. But
7 one thing I wanted to identify is we did submit a Kresge
8 grant application. The purpose of that application is to
9 provide some funding for whatever comes out of the
10 strategic plan in terms of business improvements, capacity
11 building, anything that comes out of that. We have some
12 ongoing support for people to get the grant to be able to
13 carry forward whatever comes out of the strategic plan.
14 That's it.

15 MR. MASSARON: Any questions? Concerns? Okay.

16 Hearing none, we're going to move right along to
17 a public hearing. Do I need a motion to move to open up a
18 public hearing?

19 THE GROUP: Yes.

20 MS. WHEELER SMITH: I move to recess the regular
21 meeting and move it to a public hearing.

22 MR. MORANDINI: Support.

23 MR. MASSARON: Moved and supported.

24 All in favor?

25 THE GROUP: Aye.

1 MR. MASSARON: Any opposed? Hearing none. Why
2 don't we start our public hearing. We're going to leave
3 it at the end of the presentation.

4 MR. STUPKA: All right. So, the purpose of the
5 public hearing is to review the draft fiscal year 2026
6 budget and business plan. I want to emphasize that this
7 is a draft. We will take any feedback we get from the
8 public hearing or from the board today and integrate that
9 into a final budget in September. So, I'll hit some
10 highlights in this document and then we'll take public
11 comment and then we'll take questions from the group.

12 I'm going to skip to the -- okay. The strategic
13 board priorities. There's a series of five goals that
14 we've identified in this document. These are the same
15 five goals that we have internal to the agency. So, these
16 are the same goals that I judge, we judge my performance
17 on, you can judge the team's performance on.

18 So, one of the things we noticed is last year
19 those weren't aligned with what was in the business plan.
20 So, everything is now aligned and in harmony, which I
21 like. So just wanted to go through and talk about the
22 structure of this. I'll read each goal and then under
23 that goal we have the 2025 result and then what we're
24 planning to do in 2026. So, the first goal is evolve the
25 workplace to fit a larger organization and new

1 responsibilities. So, in 2025 we completed the FTA
2 training overview and we're really hard to have an
3 upgraded and integrated budget, which is what you see in
4 front of you today.

5 In 2026, the one thing I really want to
6 emphasize is that we are going to be looking at a new
7 enterprise resource planning system to modernize our
8 financial practices. So, this will allow us to align
9 budget numbers with purchase orders and contracts with
10 invoices. Right now, we have a couple different systems
11 doing that, so really want to look at how we can align
12 that. I'll also say FTA recommended that we evolve the
13 workplace so we will take that guidance.

14 Communications efforts for new brand and
15 message. We launched a new brand, new core messaging, and
16 a new website in 2025, which is kind of wild, if you
17 really take a step back and think about it. And then we
18 launched an upgraded DAX marketing campaign that resulted
19 in increased ridership, and we won an award. So, I'd say
20 it was a good year.

21 We are going to expand D2A2 and online -- QLINE,
22 sorry, marketing efforts in 2026. That's really our big
23 goal is to use those to grow ridership, and we'll talk to
24 the board a lot more about that when we bring out the new
25 marketing contract in the fall. Evolved execution of our

1 core business functions. So this is really the things
2 that are in our state legislation.

3 So, our responsibilities as the designated
4 recipient of federal money and state money, the regional
5 master plan, and any of the planning efforts that we do,
6 smaller strategic planning efforts. So, in 2025 we
7 completed our first strategic technology plan. We updated
8 the RTMP. We distributed almost \$200 million in federal
9 and state money. In 2026 we're going to continue to
10 evolve the RTMP and really work with the PACs (phonetic)
11 and dial in those regional collaboration efforts.

12 Services initiative. This is where a lot of
13 things live, including QLINE, D2A2, all of our projects
14 kind of live in this category. So, we, in 2025, ensured a
15 stable transition that will allow the QLINE to operate
16 smoothly. We submitted a \$3 million CDS request for the
17 QLINE corridor. We increased ridership at
18 [indiscernible]. We received a large grant from the
19 Transit App, among other successful efforts in 2025.

20 In 2026 we want to push increased ridership on
21 all of our services. We want to implement some of the
22 capital and operational improvements we talked about with
23 the QLINE. We want to launch the Transit App. Our
24 Mobility Wallet pilot. Potentially build our first access
25 to transit projects, along with several other things. And

1 then finally develop a strategic agenda for the new RTA.

2 So, in 2025 we really focus on our legislative
3 agenda for our third year of having a legislative program.
4 But the big thing is we are currently launching a
5 strategic planning effort which Melanie will present in a
6 little bit more detail. So now we can jump into the
7 budget itself. I'm going to skip past this table beyond
8 saying that we have \$24.4 million in total revenues and
9 \$24.4 million in total expenses. I'll review a couple
10 highlights on the revenue side and then the expenses side.

11 So, revenues, the American Rescue Plan Act funds
12 still continues to be our largest source of revenue for
13 what we call the regional services side of our business,
14 which is essentially the RTA that existed before the
15 QLINES, but that is now the regional services part of our
16 business. So that's supporting all the functions of that
17 part of the business, along with DAX and PTA too
18 (phonetic). And we know that that is an expiring funding
19 source that runs out in 2028. I also want to highlight
20 the Local Bus Operating funding.

21 We are projecting over \$5 million in revenues.
22 The bulk of that goes to the QLINE. I think the board is
23 all very well aware and anyone listening of how LBO works,
24 I want to just identify that we do not know how much LBO
25 money we're going to get in fiscal year '26. We have what

1 the targets have been set by the state and delays in the
2 state budget adoption and other things that could impact
3 at the very least the timing, if not the amounts of
4 funding but we have our eyes firmly staring at what's
5 happening with that conversation.

6 Skipping to expenses. So, the RTA currently has
7 58 employees. A few things that drove some expense
8 increases this year. Health insurance premiums went up 18
9 percent. I do want to identify that we are going to have
10 to do a contract renewal and that's actually December 26,
11 so that would be part of the fiscal '27 budget that is
12 coming for us. From a professional services standpoint we
13 are going to renew our contract with Raymond, that's a
14 bigger item in this agenda but everything else largely
15 stayed the same in terms of legal, human resources,
16 financial services, our safety officer, those types of
17 services.

18 QLINE maintenance. So, this includes both
19 maintenance for the streetcars, the rail right-of-way and
20 the Peske Tech Center. So, this includes funding for
21 break overhauls, chillers we've already talked about,
22 concrete repairs on the rail right-of-way, ongoing
23 services like custodial and triple track maintenance. So,
24 this is really the bread and butter of the maintenance for
25 the QLINE services.

1 Planning services includes updates of the
2 regional master plan, the strategic plan, and then
3 planning and engineering support for the QLINE.
4 Communication services are our media services along with
5 our marketing efforts. Services and initiatives, this is
6 the funding for programs like D2A2, DATS, [indiscernible].
7 Access to Transit, Mobility Wallet, Transit App. Beyond
8 D2A2 and DATS, everything else has got their own grants
9 and funding sources. So those are tied directly to those
10 things.

11 Administration is a little bit of a catch-all
12 this includes insurance premiums, technology services for
13 our utilities, office operations. A couple highlights
14 here, we did see an increase in our overall insurance for
15 the agency, we're up to around \$900,000, the board will
16 remember from our conversations during the transition that
17 not a lot of options with streetcar insurance, so you
18 might have to take what you got but we are working through
19 updating those policies as we speak. We are also looking
20 really hard at our technology costs; both our office IT
21 costs but also technology on the QLINE. There's a fiber
22 network that's under the QLINE that helps to power the
23 Peske center and services within the actual QLINE itself
24 and the stations. We want to look at resurfacing that,
25 what's the age of it, do we need to do anything to upgrade

1 it? So, we're really looking very hard at trying to
2 understand the future needs of the technology of the QLINE
3 in particular.

4 And then final note is I think as the board
5 knows and all others know, this is just the ARPA funding,
6 so again this is the regional services, D2A2 and DAX
7 portions of our budget where we do run out of funding in
8 fiscal year 2029. We actually in doing some budget
9 updates, we have made that number a little bit smaller
10 than previous briefings so we are working that 2029 number
11 down the best we possibly can. So, we're working through
12 that.

13 And then finally the way we're kind of looking
14 at everything for this year is starting with that ARPA
15 investment that the board approved in 2021. In '21, '22
16 and '23, '24 is really building capacity, hiring a team,
17 bringing funding, launching projects. '24 and '25 is
18 growth and transition, taking on the QLINE and becoming a
19 bigger agency. But now we're talking about a new
20 strategic direction and that's really the purpose of the
21 strategic plan, what are we going to -- so with that, I
22 think we do public comments first and then board
23 questions?

24 MS. PIANA: Board questions first.

25 MR. STUPKA: Board questions first?

1 MS. PIANA: Yes.

2 MR. STUPKA: Okay.

3 MS. PIANA: And then -- actually, sorry. Public
4 comment. Then board questions.

5 MR. STUPKA: Thank you.

6 MS. PIANA: Thank you.

7 MR. STUPKA: So, we'll start in the room. Are
8 there any people in the room that would like to have a
9 public comment? Seeing and hearing none. Why don't we go
10 online?

11 MR. BLOYE: There's no one online.

12 MR. STUPKA: Okay. In the world or just on --

13 PUBLIC COMMENT: Mr. Chair, may I be heard?

14 MR. STUPKA: There is one. Yes, you may.

15 Remember the three-minute limit that we employed
16 at the beginning of the meeting as well. Go ahead.

17 PUBLIC COMMENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be
18 a lot quicker. I just wanted to I guess I should say my
19 name. I'm Lucas Lucecki (phonetic) from Transportation
20 Riders United. I just wanted to say again my compliments
21 to whoever put this together for making it very clean and
22 easy to understand for someone like me who doesn't get
23 accounting. That's all I got. Thank you.

24 MR. STUPKA: Thank you. I'm sure the team
25 appreciates that feedback. Is there anyone else online

1 who would like to be heard? Okay. Hearing none, now we
2 go on to any members of the board. I know we've all had
3 individual briefings and been surprised to respond to
4 individual concerns, but is there anything you'd like to
5 talk about now? You may be heard. Go ahead.

6 MR. MORANDINI: You mentioned technology and
7 QLINE. Any idea how -- but out of budget --

8 MR. STUPKA: So, I will do my best. We actually
9 hired someone to help us understand as well. It was built
10 at the same time as the QLINE, so it's the same age. The
11 things that we're more concerned with are not necessarily
12 the fiber under the QLINE, it's the fiber network and Wi-
13 Fi network on the vehicles themselves. So, there's kind
14 of a system on the vehicles themselves. Of course, during
15 our discovery phase, and anybody who's dealt with IT is no
16 surprise, the company that supports the system is no
17 longer in business. It was bought by another company.

18 So, we're kind of uncovering these pieces.
19 Nothing that has caused any operational issues or anything
20 like that, but we're just starting to uncover those types
21 of things, along with looking at camera systems, even
22 things like door security, just all those pieces. Do you
23 want to add anything, Mel? Mel's been stewarding this for
24 us, so I'll let her answer, maybe provide any more color.

25 MS. PIANA: I think the real opportunity that

1 the QLINE team is taking is looking towards incorporating
2 and managing these assets as a comprehensive IT asset
3 program that fits into the long-term capital improvement
4 plan. We are taking a look at how do we start building
5 that replacement schedule over time. Our IT professional
6 that is helping us used to work for Rocket Fiber. So, we
7 have someone who completely understands the system here
8 and feel that we are getting the best pricing projections
9 and cost estimates as possible and feel confident in the
10 numbers that we're getting for the next couple of years
11 and looking ahead as we get stronger at a replacement
12 schedule.

13 MR. LEE: Mr. Chair.

14 MR. STUPKA: Go ahead.

15 MR. LEE: Relative to ARB (phonetic), from the
16 plan, is the goal to get it completed in 2026 or are you
17 just trying to get the project going? What's the scale
18 and what's the projected budget?

19 MR. STUPKA: Great question. So, we have the,
20 we're going to start the discovery in this coming fiscal
21 year in 2026. Depending on who you ask on the team, we're
22 kind of like, it could take a year, it could be three
23 months. So, we have a separate \$75,000 pot with Raymond
24 to help us through that discovery phase. Early
25 conversations are that it probably doesn't need to be a

1 huge system. We're not that big.

2 It could be a Microsoft tool. It could be
3 something else. We're not like an Oracle or anything too
4 big. So, that's kind of what we're looking at. We put in
5 an additional, just in this budget which we may not spend,
6 an additional, I believe, \$75,000 or whatever somehow
7 figure out, oh yeah, we can start this three months from
8 now. We have money to be able to do that. My guess is
9 that it will be towards the end of fiscal year 2026, maybe
10 even 2027.

11 MR. LEE: So, the budget is for implementation
12 and not necessarily for the actual project?

13 MR. STUPKA: We have a budget for, with Raymond
14 to help us select the project and implement it and then we
15 have a separate budget. So, \$275,000 pot is for the
16 actual product itself.

17 MR. LEE: Thank you.

18 MR. STUPKA: Anybody else? Hearing no one --

19 MS. WHEELER SMITH: While we have a small system
20 right now, are we building an expandable --

21 MR. STUPKA: For the ERP?

22 Or just in general?

23 Yeah, we will be looking at, and I think part of
24 to answer June's question is it kind of depends on where
25 the strategic plan lands us too, right? But I think

1 anything that we'd be looking at would be sustainable and
2 something that's integrated into the systems we have now.
3 We've had, as often known as the treasurer, we've had
4 really good success using build.com and other systems so
5 we want to make sure we're still able to use those. Well,
6 June and I have had experience doing ERPs. I think
7 Raymond did it a long time ago.

8 It never goes as easily or as smoothly as you'd
9 like. That's why we're being very cautious. It's a very
10 painful process. So, with that we can go ahead and close
11 the public hearing if there are no others and then -- oh,
12 did you have a question?

13 MR. HENDRIX: Just a comment, a question to Ben.
14 It's sort of unrelated, but across all operations are you
15 fully staffed up or are you still in the process of trying
16 to build any critical positions?

17 MR. STUPKA: Yep, so we have two positions
18 pending that will be filled before this budget year starts
19 '26. We budgeted for one additional position that we,
20 just to have an extra in the budget. We're not completely
21 sure where that might land.

22 MR. HENDRIX: In what area, Ben?

23 MR. STUPKA: So that would be on the regional
24 services side. So, it could be additional policy
25 associated, additional planning associated, something like

1 that. We figure we'd budget one more position. And then
2 on the QLINE side we're just down the one operator which I
3 would say is critical. And then we have two part-time
4 positions also budgeted. I think we also need a new lead
5 instead.

6 MR. HENDRIX: Have you guys experienced a lot of
7 turnover on your side? The QLINE, is there a rhythm as to
8 people coming and going?

9 MR. STUPKA: So, there is a rhythm. I'd say
10 there's like a two-person churn that kind of is, you know,
11 when you're talking to the folks who've been there, that's
12 usually you're kind of like maybe 19 to 21. You might get
13 to 22, but you're kind of like 19 to 21. The new piece
14 that we've experienced is the introduction of FMLA and
15 having the people below that in that kind of team, having
16 six of them and having intermittent FMLA, it's just hard
17 to manage.

18 So that's a new wrinkle and that's part of why
19 we're trying to introduce these part-time positions. The
20 other thing that we hope that's going to help us with, a
21 lot of those folks are more senior and experienced
22 operators and knowing, bringing on new people, they go
23 through a comprehensive training program, but it can be a
24 couple months before they're really comfortable and
25 keeping some experienced operators helps us out, they know

1 how to do everything. All right. Everyone, we'll go
2 ahead and I think I need a vote to close the public
3 hearing, so we'll go ahead and close the public hearing.

4 MS. PIANA: Yes, we opened it with a motion.

5 MR. STUPKA: Okay. So, I guess I take a motion
6 to close the public hearing.

7 MS. WHEELER SMITH: Support.

8 MR. STUKPA: Move to support, all in favor?

9 THE GROUP: Aye.

10 MR. STUPKA: Any opposed? Hearing none, we can
11 go right back to resuming the meeting and we'll start with
12 the, continue with the strategic plan overview.

13 MS. PIANA: We have kicked off the strategic
14 planning initiative with our consultants, if you remember,
15 it's Bridgeport Consulting plus Watson Yates as their
16 partner, and wanted to just give you a brief overview of
17 the process and where we are and set some expectations of
18 all your involvement over the next couple of months. Just
19 as a reminder, the reason we're doing this is we've set
20 clear priorities, strengthen the organization, and really
21 start to prepare the region for long-term transit
22 investment and outcomes from the strategic plan that
23 Bridgeport will adopt in April 2026. And our facilitation
24 partners are already underway with us. There are four
25 phases to our strategic planning process.

1 We are obviously in phase one in the planning
2 and design process, and we are starting now in the team
3 interviews with Bridgeport. We will move into late
4 December, I think, in discovery and data gathering, and
5 move into drafting the actual plan after selecting all
6 this information early in the new year, preparing for the
7 final plan drafting in March and April coming to the
8 board. So Bridgeport has said there will be no surprises
9 for board members about what's going to be in the plan,
10 and so we will be communicating along the way, and if
11 there's any needs that you have in terms of how or when
12 you need to hear from us, I'm all open to make sure that
13 we put that as an expectation for the team in our
14 communications plan internally. So, what's coming up
15 ahead, and where we need your support over the next couple
16 of months.

17 So, in August, we are doing leadership team one-
18 on-one interviews. We have two focus groups with staff,
19 one on the QLINE team, and one with the regional services
20 team. And Chair Massaron is helping kick this off. And
21 then the team, the leadership team, will help do some
22 stakeholder mapping, which is going to be an exercise in
23 person with Bridgeport just to see how we're going to map
24 out who we interview as part of the stakeholder process.
25 We have a high-level number that we need to hit, and we're

1 going to figure out how to structure that going forward.

2 So, in September, though, we have set aside
3 two weeks between September 15th through the 26th to do
4 board member one-on-one interviews. Brittany will conduct
5 those with you, but Kam and Brittany will be reaching out
6 to get those on your calendar. So, expect to hear from
7 them early next week. And these are virtual one-on-one
8 with Brittany. And then in October, Julia and the
9 planning and innovation team are going to be conducting
10 our regional transportation master plan workshops. And
11 these are going to be small one-to-two board members
12 participating and giving feedback on the redesign and the
13 RTMP update, which is going to help us design some
14 stakeholder interview questions as well and help start
15 bridging the RTMP to a strategic plan outcome.

16 So, these workshops, I believe, are going to be
17 an hour and a half, and we prefer them to be in person.
18 And again, Kam and Brittany will be reaching out to help
19 schedule those and get those on your calendar. And then
20 in September and October, we will also start the
21 stakeholder interview process as well. Those are
22 happening in parallel all the way up until November.

23 November we'll be starting to prepare and ready
24 for the board retreat on December 4th, which is your last
25 board meeting of the year. A reminder, it's a combination

1 of November -- what did I put? Sorry. It's 12/4. It is
2 a combination of November and December. And this is your
3 normal, regular Thursday meeting. But we are asking you
4 to reserve the whole day, and the meeting will be here in
5 some kind of order room.

6 So again, we are planning for a set-aside of the
7 business functional meeting from 1:00 to 2:00 during the
8 [indiscernible] day. So, it will be a long day for you,
9 but we know you guys will be all ready and prepared for
10 it. So that's what it looks like in phase 1 and phase 2.

11 MR. MASSARON: We've told the board members the
12 date or the --

13 MS. PIANA: It was chosen because it is your
14 regularly scheduled board meeting here.

15 MR. MASSARON: For sure. Obviously, if there's
16 a [indiscernible] that has an issue, let us know, we'll
17 figure it out.

18 MS. PIANA: Please let us know now.

19 MR. MASSARON: Sooner rather than later, I
20 guess.

21 MR. HENDRIX: December 4th?

22 MR. MASSARON: December 4th.

23 MS. PIANA: If that is an issue, we will work
24 around our calendar on the other deliverables we --
25 and that is it. Thank you.

1 MR. MASSARON: And obviously, as we go through
2 with board members who drive the kind of overall vision
3 here, feel free to reach out to your stakeholders or your
4 planners to make sure that whatever vision we are doing
5 here aligns. Any other questions? All right. So around
6 the consent agenda, which includes the approval of the
7 July '25 meeting summary, the financial report, and then
8 summary -- can I get a motion here?

9 MR. MORANDINI: So moved.

10 MS. WHEELER SMITH: Support.

11 MR. MASSARON: All in favor?

12 THE GROUP: Aye.

13 MR. MASSARON: No opposed? The motion carries.

14 We're going to move on now to the regular
15 agenda. The first one is our remit financial services
16 contract.

17 MR. STUPKA: So, the request is to have the
18 board approve a three-year contract up to three one-year
19 renewal options for financial services with Raymond. It's
20 a \$327,000 annual fixed fee, with \$75,000 in the first
21 year to help us with the ERP transition. So, it's just
22 over a million-dollar contract. Oh, and just a little bit
23 of additional funding to help with the training and review
24 at the end of the three-year period.

25 We did this through a competitive procurement

1 process in line with our procurement policy. The
2 evaluators included the board treasurer, myself, Rachel as
3 the QLINE general manager, and Melanie. We had six
4 vendors submit qualified proposals in support for
5 capacity, resources, experience, technical approach, and
6 Raymond won in every category. So, with that, I can take
7 any questions. Any questions?

8 MR. MASSARON: All right. Make a motion to
9 approve the contract.

10 MS. WHEELER SMITH: So moved.

11 MR. MORANDINI: Support.

12 MR. MASSARON: Moved and support. All in favor?

13 THE GROUP: Aye.

14 MR. MASSARON: Any opposed? Hearing none,
15 motion carries. Contract approved. The next one is
16 approval of the amended abbreviated EEO program plan.

17 MR. STUPKA: So as part of taking on the QLINE,
18 we had to create an EEO plan that's compliant with the
19 FTA's guidelines. In doing so, we created a plan that was
20 actually aligned with an agency that was over 100 people.
21 So, it includes some extra things that when we went for a
22 training review, they said, oh, you don't have to do all
23 those things. So, we said, great. What do we do now?

24 They said, why don't you abbreviate the plan?
25 And here's the structure for it. So, this is simply an

1 abbreviated plan that is part of our training overview.
2 There's some utilization analysis and a few other things
3 you don't have to do. The core nuts and bolts of the EEO
4 plan still remains.

5 MR. MASSARON: Questions? Concerns?

6 All right. Take a motion.

7 MR. MORANDINI: So moved.

8 MR. MOORE: Support.

9 MR. MASSARON: Move and support. All in favor?

10 THE GROUP: Aye.

11 MR. MASSARON: Any opposed? Hearing none,
12 motion carries. And our last item on the regular agenda,
13 approval of the DBE goal methodology update.

14 MR. STUPKA: So as part of our federal
15 compliance, every three years we have to update our
16 disadvantaged business enterprise goal. So, this is the
17 updated goal for fiscal years '26, '27, and '28. This
18 goal is aligned with only our federal funding program, and
19 we're only looking at DBEs that are part of the state
20 system. Those are just kind of the rules. I won't go
21 through the whole D methodology unless folks have
22 questions about it. I do want to identify that the goal
23 itself did go down slightly.

24 A lot of the reason for that is the bulk of our
25 federal funding is going to support staff. So, we're not

1 using it for as much contracting as we were before. Some
2 of our larger federal contracting opportunities are things
3 like the Express Bus Service, which there's only really
4 one or two contractors in the entire state that do that
5 service. One of the other things that we've noticed along
6 the way, actually two contracts involved in here actually
7 helped to elucidate a point. One of the contracts that
8 were in the consent agenda is for a company called ETA.

9 That's our new scheduling software company.
10 They are a DBE, but we are not using federal money to pay
11 for those services. They're part of the QLINE budget.
12 So, we can't count them for this goal, but they're still a
13 DBE. Similarly, Bridgeport, also a DBE, which will be
14 federally funded, but it's not registered as a DBE.

15 So, these are some of the things you have to
16 kind of look at along the way and say, hey, can we help
17 you register? Is that something you're interested in? So
18 those are just some of the parts of this extremely fun
19 program that you get to run, or we get to run. So, with
20 that, I'll take any questions.

21 MR. MASSARON: Questions? Concerns? Hearing
22 none, I'll take a motion to approve the methodology
23 update.

24 MR. MOORE: So moved.

25 MR. MORANDINI: Support.

1 MR. MASSARON: Moved and supported.

2 All in favor?

3 THE GROUP: Aye.

4 MR. MASSARON: Any opposed? Hearing none, the
5 motion carries. So now we're on to new business. Go
6 ahead.

7 MR. MORANDINI: The plan overview slide.

8 Is that online?

9 MR. STUPKA: We'll send it. We'll email it.
10 It's uploading now, yeah.

11 MR. HENDRIX: It's up to DBE methodology. Is
12 that online?

13 MR. STUPKA: That's in your packet and online.

14 Yep. Absolutely.

15 Any other questions?

16 Hearing none, the meeting is adjourned.

17 Thank you all and see you next month.

18 (At 1:59 p.m., meeting was concluded)

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1 CERTIFICATION

2 STATE OF MICHIGAN)

3)

4 COUNTY OF MACOMB)

5 I, Megan M. Harder, certify that the meeting was
6 taken by me; that it was transcribed by computer-
7 assisted transcription software; and that this
8 transcript is a true and correct transcription of the
9 proceedings in the above-entitled matter to the best
10 of my knowledge and ability.

11 I further certify that I am neither counsel for,
12 related to, nor employed by any of the parties in the
13 action in which this proceeding was taken and that I
14 am not financially or otherwise interested in the
15 outcome of this action.

16 Dated on this 21st date of August 2025.

17
18 
19

20 _____

21 Megan M. Harder, CER-15895

22 Notary Public

23 Macomb County Michigan

24 My Commission Expires: 04/01/2030

25

RTA Meeting

08/21/2025

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**RTA Meeting
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