



OSTA

Ottawa Student
Transportation
Authority

**Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA)
Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**Held on
Monday, November 8, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.
Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA)
1547 Merivale Road, Suite 300, Ottawa (Nepean)
Teleconference (Google Meet)**

REGULAR SESSION MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

President/Chairperson: Joanne MacEwan

Directors: Jennifer Jennekens
Michael Carson
Camille Williams-Taylor
Tom D'Amico
Lisa Schimmens
Cindy Simpson
Chris Ellis

Absent: None

General Manager/C.A.O.: Vicky Kyriaco

Guests: Philippe Renaud, Partner, Marcil Lavallée
Jeff Redmond, Controller, OSTA
Nina Camilleri, Communications Coordinator, OSTA

Recording Secretary: Laurie Frid, Executive Assistant

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:28 p.m. with Joanne MacEwan in the Chair.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority respectfully acknowledges that we are located on the ancestral, traditional and unceded Indigenous territory of the Algonquin Peoples, on whose territory we learn, play and work.

3. Introductions

Joanne MacEwan thanked the trustees in attendance, and introduced them to the Board.

4. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

None.

5. Approval of the Regular Session Agenda

**Moved by Cindy Simpson
Seconded by Lisa Schimmens**

THAT the Regular Session agenda be approved. Motion Carried.

Public Delegations

There were no members of the public in attendance, therefore, no public delegations presented.

Regular Session Action Items

6. 2020-2021 Draft Audited Financial Statements & Variance Analysis

Philippe Renaud, a partner with Marcil Lavallée was welcomed and introduced to the Board. Philippe presented the annual audit/management reports, and acknowledged that they were able to carry out the audit, as planned. Key controls, billing and cost allocations were reviewed as part of the annual process. In particular, the review was complete with a keen eye on what affect COVID-19 had on student transportation.

The audit report for the year ending August 31, 2021 was clean, with no issues reported on, no recommendations and no unusual transactions. The Management report was also reviewed, providing a clean opinion on Management's preparation of the financial statements.

Some highlights on the audited financial statements included:

- Total assets for the year sat at \$5.2 million, with liabilities at \$5.9 million which include advances from the two Member School Boards.
- Total revenue, \$59.4 million, is lower this year due to COVID-19 and the correlating shutdown.
- Total expenses, \$59.4 million comprised of various elements such as public transit (\$4.6 million), salaries (\$2.2 million), Occupancy, etc.

The General Manager/Chief Administrative Officer acknowledged Jeff Redmond for his hard work and diligence in handling an incredibly complex financial year, due to COVID-19.

**Moved by Lisa Schimmens
Seconded by Michael Carson**

THAT the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority Financial Statements for the year ended August 31, 2021 as audited and reported upon by Marcil Lavallée, Chartered Professional Accountants, be approved. Motion Carried.

7. a) Confirmation of the Regular Session Minutes, October 25, 2021

**Moved by Tom D'Amico
Seconded by Cindy Simpson**

THAT the Regular Session minutes of October 25, 2021 be approved. Motion Carried.

(b) Business Arising from the Regular Session Minutes, October 25, 2021

The General Manager/Chief Administrative Officer informed the Board that recently, a survey was circulated to key individuals, including the Board, to assist with the collection of high level information, which will support the production of OSTA's subsequent two year strategic plan.

The Board was also informed that OSTA has now circulated the updated Transportation During COVID-19 policy to its Operators, who are reporting aggregate numbers on the status of driver vaccinations.

8. Mileage Rates

With the cost of gas continually increasing, it is important to ensure that OSTA staff, particularly those in the Safety Zone who use their personal vehicles, are reimbursed accordingly. The mileage rates were compared to those in both Member Boards, and reflect the Canada Revenue Agency for reported reimbursed expenses. Any rates higher than these would be classified as taxable benefits.

**Moved by Jennifer Jennekens
Seconded by Cindy Simpson**

THAT the OSTA Board of Directors increase the mileage rate to \$0.59 cents/kilometer for the first 5,000km and \$0.53 cents per kilometer driven after that for any given calendar year. Motion Carried.

Regular Session Information Items

9. Operational / School Active Transportation Update

OSTA continues to work on mitigating the long-term impacts of the ongoing driver shortage. Currently, only 628 students have no known return to service, which is a huge improvement from the 12,000 students who were going to be impacted at the start of the school year. OSTA staff are taking a more targeted approach and continue to find creative solutions to help students get to school.

To date, 95 families have taken advantage of OSTA's Single Ride Voucher program, which helps students get to school while routes are cancelled. Cancellations continue to be posted online. To date, there are 41 runs of which 25 are expected to resume service in the near future. Short term cancellations have increased due to COVID-19 or planned vacations. It is anticipated that there will be an increase of long-term cancellations come January 2022 as "snowbirds" take their long-awaited vacations. OSTA is working with its operators to mitigate the situation.

Based on discussions with the Ottawa Public Health and the two Member School Boards, OSTA has updated its COVID protocols for contact tracing. Due to adults and some students now being vaccinated, there is no longer the need to completely cancel routes when a case is reported at the school or on the bus. Contact tracing continues to be quite complex with multiple variations that can occur.

OSTA continues to promote its School Active Transportation. OSTA's Walk & Roll webpage has been redesigned to improve access to resources for students, families, teachers, etc. School Zone Safety Blitzes are planned in the coming weeks at Half Moon Bay Public School and Vimy Ridge Public School. This pilot project will test whether a direct approach with communication and immediate follow up by Ottawa police and bylaw enforcement will encourage safer driver and pedestrian behaviour around the school site.

Work has recently begun on the Ministry of Education's Routing Simulation which is based on a new set of standards which are comparable to those of OSTA. This work is time-intensive and is to be completed by the deadline of December 17, 2021.

Questions were answered accordingly.

10. System Review and Initiatives

Ottawa's evolving labour market indicates that recruitment and retention of drivers is likely to be even more challenging in the future. In order to ensure there is enough service to transport students to school next year, OSTA will need to make certain changes to the system in preparation for next year's planning cycle, and for future years.

OSTA proposes a bell time review be conducted where bell time changes would not exceed 10 minutes, and therefore, could be approved by the OSTA Board. A list of schools was provided with the understanding that their bell time was not changed in the last review of 2015. Some consultation with the school community would be conducted in January.

Currently, OSTA plans the system based on the student's eligibility, then ask the parent/guardian to opt-out of transportation. In our experience, some students never use transportation and changing to an opt-in system would allow us to build capacity more efficiently. OSTA will be evaluating the feasibility of reverting to an opt-in system which will be brought back to the Board.

Other initiatives include bus technology, which incorporates stop arm cameras with fines, internal cameras, ridership tracking, GPS and a tablet for drivers. In addition, OSTA will continue to work collaboratively with its operators and other corporate partners to heighten public awareness of the benefits and importance of the bus driver role in education. OSTA will continue to work closely with OC Transpo as we conduct a public transit review.

Questions were answered accordingly.

11. Long Range Agenda

- OSTA continues to work with our consultant on a communications strategy. A presentation will be brought forward to the Board.
- OSTA's Annual General Meeting to take place in December 2021.

12. New Business, Regular Session

None.

13. Board Meeting Schedule: 5:30 p.m. start time:

Future Board Meeting Dates:

December 6, 2021 – AGM

January 24, 2022*

February 28, 2022

March 28, 2022

April 25, 2022 – AGM

May 30, 2022

June 29, 2022*

August 22, 2022

* indicates optional meeting dates, dependant on agenda requirements.

On behalf of the OSTA Board of Directors, Joanne MacEwan, President/Chairperson, congratulated Vicky Kyriaco, General Manager/Chief Administrative Officer on her 10-year anniversary with OSTA. It was noted that Vicky's hard work and dedication has not gone unseen. She continues to put student safety first, and thrives in her role, even amongst the many challenges that she has faced such as the tornado, floods, the driver shortage and now, with COVID-19.

12. Adjournment of the Regular Session

Moved by Cindy Simpson

Seconded by Camille Williams-Taylor

THAT the Regular Session meeting adjourn at 6:12 p.m. Motion Carried.

Signature

Title

Signature

Title