



OSTA

Ottawa Student
Transportation
Authority

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

Held on
Monday, February 28, 2022 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:	Jennifer Jennekens
Directors:	Tom D'Amico Camille Williams-Taylor Lisa Schimmens Michael Carson Cindy Simpson
Absent:	Donna Blackburn Joanne MacEwan Wendy Hough
General Manager/C.A.O.:	Vicky Kyriaco
Guest:	Jeff Redmond, Controller
Recording Secretary:	Laurie Frid, Customer Service and Executive Support Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:38 p.m. with Jennifer Jennekens 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. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

None.

4. Approval of the Regular Session Agenda

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

THAT the Regular Session agenda be approved. Motion Carried.

5. Resolve In Camera

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

THAT the committee resolves In Camera. Motion Carried.

Return to Regular Session at 5:51 p.m. with Jennifer Jennekens in the Chair.

Regular Session Action Items

6. a) Confirmation of the Regular Session Minutes, January 24, 2022

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

THAT the Regular Session minutes of January 24, 2022 be approved. Motion Carried.

(b) Business Arising from the Regular Session Minutes, January 24, 2022

The General Manager/Chief Administrative Officer advised the Board of two corrections from the previous Board report, Proposed Bell Time Approval, presented on January 24, 2022.

The current morning/afternoon bell time at Elgin PS is 8:15 a.m. and 2:45 p.m., with the proposed morning/afternoon bell time set to 8:05 a.m. and 2:35 p.m., respectively. The recommendation for a bell time change at Elgin PS was deferred at the last Board meeting.

Secondly, the current afternoon bell time at St. Stephen is 3:00 p.m., with the proposed time set at 3:10 p.m. The Board had approved the correct bell time at the last meeting.

Jeff Redmond joined the meeting (5:52 p.m.)

7. Financial Update

Jeff Redmond, OSTA’s Controller, presented the December 31, 2021 financial statements, including forecast. The current balance sheet suggests an accumulation of cash, noting that once repayments are made to both Member School Boards and appropriate funds allocated, there will be an excess of

approximately \$4.5 million. An overview of each page was provided with a remark that there have been significant fluctuations due to COVID-19.

The budget was built on the premise of normal operations, pre-COVID-19, as previous year results were not suitable for predicting the current year's costs. Some highlights include:

- COVID-19 expenses will continue to increase as we deal with personal protective equipment, extra cleaning costs, and more.
- Large vehicle costs have decreased significantly due to the driver shortage and students (approximately 2,000) being moved to public transit and small vehicles. Small vehicle expenditures are currently in a deficit position, however, does include COVID-19 cleaning.
- OC Transpo provided free transportation in December. Currently, there is a 78% utilization on presto cards. It is thought that students may not be tapping their cards when boarding public transit, and Bylaw is now involved.
- An additional \$222 thousand was added to the forecast to support the various driver recruitment campaigns.
- A comparison of students being transported was provided, depicting a drop of 12.79% from two years ago (December 2019) to present.

Questions were answered accordingly.

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

THAT the OSTA Board of Directors receive the report Unaudited Financial Statements and Forecast for the 4 months ending December 31, 2021, as presented. Motion Carried.

Jeff Redmond adjourned the meeting (6:04 p.m.)

8. Proposed Bell Time Approval

At the January 24, 2022 Board meeting, several bell time changes were approved with the provision that OSTA connects with the Superintendents to inform them of the challenges that some members of the school communities would be facing, as expressed in the survey results.

The first cluster of schools was not approved at the last Board meeting. Pinecrest PS and Barrhaven PS had a positive survey response. Although Cedarview had a low response rate, and only 38% agreed to the change, OSTA suggested approving the bell time change to better work with other runs. It was noted that several students at this school have transitioned from yellow bus to public transit.

**Moved by Camille Williams-Taylor
Seconded by Michael Carson**

That the proposed bell times for Cedarview MS, Pinecrest PS and Barrhaven PS be approved to be implemented for the September 2022-2023 school year and thereafter. Motion Carried.

The next cluster of schools was deferred at the last Board meeting. OSTA met with the Superintendents to find solutions to support families during and after the change.

OSTA is not recommending a bell time change at Elgin PS, Queen Elizabeth PS or Robert E. Wilson for several reasons. OSTA recommends a bell time change at Hopewell PS to help create efficient routes

while servicing other schools, and Queen Mary PS, who we suggested re-introducing the walking school bus.

Questions were answered accordingly.

**Moved by Camille Williams-Taylor
Seconded by Michael Carson**

That the proposed bell times for Arch St PS, Hopewell PS, and Queen Mary PS, be approved to be implemented for the September 2022-2023 school year and thereafter. Motion Carried.

Regular Session Information Items

9. Strategic Operations Plan

The General Manager/Chief Administrative Officer presented the 2021-2024 operational plan to the Board. Several initiatives were highlighted, including the integration of bus technology, a website refresh, driver recruitment and retention, expanding our communication with schools, and more.

Questions were answered accordingly.

10. Transportation Confirmation Process

OSTA launched a new transportation process, asking all parents/guardians to confirm whether or not they will use transportation in 2022-2023. This new process/form is meant for students who ride the yellow bus and use public transit. Parents/guardians who intend to apply for joint custody and/or specialized transportation do not need to complete the transportation confirmation form. The submission deadline is April 3, 2022.

OSTA has asked that schools disseminate information about this new process to their community. OSTA has created various documents to aid communication, including a school guide, flyer, and FAQ. There are plans to follow up with families who have not responded by direct email and phone calls after the deadline. This new process will serve as an introduction to a future transportation registration form.

Questions were answered accordingly.

11. Driver Recruitment and Retention

OSTA's Operators continue to face challenges with driver recruitment and retention, with COVID-19 exacerbating the situation. OSTA has assisted the Operators with outreach while Operators continue to conduct various recruitment and retention initiatives (e.g., videos, print ads on billboards/OC Transpo buses). OSTA also contracted a communications specialist to create a strategy for dealing with the current driver shortage crisis.

OSTA has been conducting research to determine the current state of affairs with the driver shortage and has plans to bolster our Operator's efforts. A recent driver survey helped determine why they chose driving as a career, what they love about their job, and what things they would change. OSTA has plans to obtain quotes for health benefits for drivers and has consulted with two companies to develop a driver recruitment campaign.

OSTA continues to assist Operators by routing enquiries through our driver recruitment webpage. Although the number of individuals who show some potential interest is high at 560, the number of successful drivers is low (currently ahead by 6 drivers). There are several reasons for this, including delays at the Ministry of Transportation. OSTA has plans to hire a research company to help us understand the pain points in the process and barriers that prevented them from becoming drivers.

Questions were answered accordingly.

12. Health and Safety Policy

The Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedure was presented which now includes the Work from Home Checklist.

13. Mileage Rates: Procedure Update

The Reimbursement for Expenditures Incurred on OSTA Business Policy and Procedure was presented with updated language that allows OSTA to make changes to the mileage rate annually, in alignment with the Canada Revenue Agency.

14. Long Range Agenda

- Public Transit Survey Results
- Transportation Mode Survey Results
- Bus Technology Update

15. New Business, Regular Session

None.

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

Future Board Meeting Dates:

March 28, 2022
April 25, 2022 – AGM
May 30, 2022
June 29, 2022*
August 22, 2022

* indicates optional meeting dates, dependant on agenda requirements.

12. Adjournment of the Regular Session

**Moved by Cindy Simpson
Seconded by Michael Carson**

THAT the Regular Session meeting adjourn at 7:14 p.m. Motion Carried.

Signature

Title

Signature

Title