

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
JACKSONVILLE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2025**

The regular Board meeting of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) was held on Tuesday, April 15, 2025.

BOARD MEMBERS

Aundra Wallace, Vice Chair
Patricia Sams, Secretary
Donald Horner
Max Glober
Elaine Brown

JTA EXECUTIVE STAFF

Nathaniel P. Ford Sr., CEO
Cleveland Ferguson, EVP Administration
Greer Gillis, SVP System Development
Raj Srinath, SVP Finance and Technology
Jeffery Smith, SVP Operations
Jessica Shepler, SVP Public Affairs

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Greg Evans, FDOT

OTHERS PRESENT

Katie Smith, Board Administrator
Richard Milian, General Counsel
Geanelly Reveron, FDOT Representative

A. **CALL TO ORDER** – Vice Chair Wallace called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. and thanked the Board for attending the meeting.

Vice Chair Wallace welcomed Elaine Brown to the JTA Board and shared that she comes with a great deal of experience and knowledge.

Director Glober led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Smith provided roll call to confirm a quorum.

Vice Chair Wallace shared the Safety Message for the Month of April: “Think Safe... Work Safe... Be Safe.”

B. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 25, 2025 BOARD MEETING**

MOTION (Sams/Brown) to approve the minutes from March 27, 2025. Motion Approved (5-0).

C. **COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL LIAISON** – Councilman Johnson was unable to attend the meeting.

D. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** There was one public comment.

1. **John Nooney:** Mr. Nooney shared his thoughts on tourism for Jacksonville and how the JTA could partner with other City agencies. He also shared information on a few projects in Jacksonville area and that he is following these matters by attending public meetings being held across the region.

E. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT:** Mr. Ford stated began by welcoming Elaine Brown to the JTA Board and stated that she is a highly qualified Jacksonville community leader and has long proven her commitment to the Jacksonville community, and staff looks forward

to her continued commitment as a member of the JTA Board. Director Brown takes the place of former Board Treasurer Megan Hayward. He thanked Director Hayward for her service and contributions to this agency.

Mr. Ford shared that in April the JTA participated in a JAX Connect event hosted by the Jacksonville Chamber and Beep. It was a wonderful opportunity to engage with local businesses, stakeholders, and community members in Downtown Jacksonville to share the status of the Ultimate Urban Circulator (U²C) and the Bay Street Innovation Corridor (BSIC).

He also shared the progress on the NW Corridor project and staff has been engaging with the local communities gaining their feedback on the proposed art shelter designs submitted by local artists. This initiative aims to bring both functional and aesthetic value to mobility infrastructure, creating a more welcoming environment for riders.

Staff had the opportunity to welcome the Nassau Chamber of Commerce to the Jacksonville Regional Transportation Center (JRTC) this past month. This visit provided an opportunity to showcase the JRTC's amenities and services, strengthening the relationship with Nassau County and exploring potential collaborations.

The Emerald Trail public meeting was another highlight, where community input was gathered and discussed the ongoing plans for the development of this important project. The trail promises to be a key element in enhancing Jacksonville's green spaces and connectivity.

Mr. Ford stated that he was honored to represent the JTA at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Annual Mobility conference, where he engaged with leaders from across the country on industry best practices, innovation, and challenges facing public transit and shared information on JTAs programs and innovative mobility solutions including the U²C Program which will begin service this summer.

He announced that the JTA team earned their spot as 3rd Place Overall Champions at the 2025 APTA International Bus Roadeo. Congratulations to: Bus Operator Ramon Farfan – Third Place Operator & USSC Pre-Trip Inspection Winner and congratulations to the Xpendables maintenance team (George McGarry, Rudolph Wells, and Jarrod Morales) – USSC Vehicle Inspection Winner. The JTA was also presented with the Gold Safety Award as the number one safety-oriented organization in the nation.

Mr. Ford shared that on April 9, 2025, he testified on behalf of APTA before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit in Washington, D.C. He provided insights on the challenges and opportunities facing public

transportation, focusing on key issues such as funding, innovation, and the importance of infrastructure development--further elevating the JTA's voice at the national level.

He announced that the JTA will open the Autonomous Innovation Center (AIC) downtown. The AIC will be the state-of-the-art command center for the U²C program. During this event the official name and branding of the service will be announced.

Mr. Ford concluded the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) report by sharing a video highlighting all of the activities over the last month.

H. CONSENT AGENDA

There were no items under the Consent Agenda.

I. ADOPTION AGENDA

1. RESOLUTION 2025-07: AUTHORIZATION TO MAKE RESERVATION PURSUANT TO AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE CONTRACT: Mrs. Gillis stated that staff recommends the Board adopt Resolution 2025-07 authorize the CEO to execute a letter of intent to reserve one hundred purpose-built shuttles for public transportation. This reservation aligns with the authority's goals for transformative mobility solutions. She then provided background and history on the process and JTA's focus on preserving the Skyway. After hearing concerns about the skyway and whether or not it had fulfilled its original vision, the JTA Board established a skyway advisory committee in 2015 to determine the future of the skyway. The committee's recommendations led the board of directors to unanimously vote in December of 2015 to keep, modernize and expand the skyway. It was from this decision that the Ultimate Urban Circulator (U²C) program was developed will implemented in three phases. To begin the U²C phase one, the Bay Street Innovation Corridor (BSIC), the JTA applied for and was awarded a \$12.5 million US Department of Transportation Build grant.

The award from the administration highlighted the importance of innovation in the public transportation industry and provided the necessary investments for the JTA to realize the U²C. But due to the use of federal funds, the vehicles have to be Buy America compliant. JTA worked to establish an American made Autonomous Vehicle (AV) and on September 4, 2024, Holon announced that it would be building a \$100 million plus manufacturing facility in northwest Jacksonville. The facility will be the first AV assembly factory in the country. In November of 2024, the JTA Board approved the statewide automated transit vehicles contract that the JTA produced in partnership with the Florida Public Transportation Association. This allows authorities not only in Florida, but around the country to procure AVs.

Mrs. Gillis stated that therefore staff recommends that the JTA would use the statewide AV contract to reserve one hundred shuttles for the full build out of the U²C program. And the JTA requests authorization to make the reservation to provide a place holder for the manufacturing line.

Mr. Milian then provided the Board with Resolution 2025-07 that provides all of the details Mrs. Gillis shared for adoption and authorizing the CEO to execute a letter of intent to reserve the one hundred vehicles.

The Board and staff discussed the steps that will be taken during the implementation of the U²C program and the purchase of the vehicles. The first fourteen vehicles for BSIC will be purchased immediately with the remaining AVs purchased as needed; however, Board approval will be requested prior to those future purchases.

There was also discussion around the cost and life of the AVs, as well as maintenance cost. The Board asked staff to look at the maintenance cost for both the physical vehicle and the software that is needed.

Vice Chair Wallace asked Mr. Milian if there was any voting conflict for him on this item, as he is JTA Board member and the CEO of JAXUSA. Mr. Milian replied that he does not believe Vice Chair Wallace has a conflict.

MOTION (Brown/Sams) to adopt Resolution 2025-07 authorizing the reservation pursuant to the AV Contract. Motion Approved (5-0).

J. SAFETY, AUDIT AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE (Vacant, Committee Chair)

ACTION ITEMS

1. **APPROVAL OF THE UPDATE TO THE MOBILITY OPTIMIZATION THROUGH VISION AND EXCELLENCE 2027 PLAN:** Mr. Ferguson stated that staff recommends the Board review and approve the adoption of the Mobility Optimization through Vision and Excellence (MOVE) 2025-2030 Update to the Strategic Plan (MOVE2030) - Phase I. This update articulates JTAs mission, vision and strategic direction and allows this for the opportunity through future work sessions as well as your annual retreat to take a look at this plan and update it further through 2030 at present. This will enable the Authority to be in immediate compliance with existing policies and regulations that have been inactive since the board first approved the MOVE2027 plan.

MOTION (Sams/Horner) to approve the update to the MOVE2027 Plan. Motion Approved (5-0)

K. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE (Sams, Committee Chair)

There were no items under the Finance and Administration Committee.

L. SERVICE DELIVERY (Vacant, Committee Chair)

There were no items under the Service Delivery Committee.

M. LONG RANGE PLANNING AND SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT (Wallace, Committee Chair)

ACTION ITEMS

1. APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTAL PHASING AGREEMENT 3 FOR BAY STREET INNOVATION CORRIDOR: Mrs. Gillis stated that staff recommends that the Board authorize the CEO to negotiate and execute the Supplemental Phasing Agreement 3 with Beep, Inc. to provide the final phase of the AV Design-Build, Operations and Maintenance Services for the U²C Program Phase I, the BSIC Project. This final phase of the project is for the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) of the AIC and AV fixed route service of the BSIC Project for a duration of up to five years and at a not-to-exceed amount of \$36.3M. This project supports the Authority's goals of Transformative Mobility Solutions.

The Contract identifies three separate phases and associated scopes of work, with negotiation and execution of a Supplemental Phasing Agreement for each phase. The first Supplemental Phasing Agreement (SPA 1) was issued on September 13, 2022, for Phase 1B work. Phase 1B (60 percent Design and deliverables) was completed in March 2023. Mrs. Gillis confirmed Vice Chair Wallace's inquiry related to the fiscal impact is that USDOT BUILD grant funds will only be used for phase 1 of the U²C program.

MOTION (Horner/Sams) to approve the supplemental phasing agreement 3 for BSIC.
Motion Approved (5-0)

N. OLD BUSINESS

Vice Chair Wallace stated that staff requests the Board approve the updated minutes from the July 2, 2024 to correct a procurement number that was incorrect in the minutes.

MOTION (Sams/Brown) to approve the updated minutes from the July 2, 2024 Board meeting. Motion Approved (5-0).

Mr. Milian stated that at the March Board meeting there were comments related to payment of tuition. He addressed these comments by sharing that JTA has long had a reimbursement program for its general employees, which is not unusual. However, there are instances from time to time the CEO will negotiate tuition reimbursement as a term of a particular employee's employment and the CEO, clearly in my mind as your council has authority to do that. The enabling statute says that the CEO is to employ and hire and fire staff and set compensation, and this is just a benefit of their compensation.


When it's done on an individual basis, it's typically because that employee has some unique special skill that's important to JTA. The terms when the CEO does that are very similar or they are almost always. The course is something relevant to their job and important to JTA.

Finally, in my experience, when the CEO does this on a case by case basis, to my knowledge, calls legal and says, is this appropriate. Meaning, is it an appropriate expenditure of taxpayer monies and the analysis is always, does it comply with the purpose of the Agency, does the course promote the purposes to which this agency is created. If the answer to that is yes, then legal will relay to the CEO either directly or through his staff that council finds this appropriate under your enabling statute. So those are the two instances where JTA reimburses tuition. It's either because you have an employee that's sorted under the reimbursement policy or the CEO negotiates it as a particular term of employment. Therefore, Mr. Milian shared he does not find anything unusual or inappropriate about the tuition process.

O. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.


Patricia Gillum Sams, Secretary


Aundra Wallace, Vice-Chair