



MINUTES
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
SEPTEMBER 21, 2011

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The regular meeting of the Regional Transportation Authority Board of Directors was held in the meeting room at Music City Central at 400 Charlotte Avenue on September 21, 2011. A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by RTA Board Chair Jo Ann Graves.
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Chair Jo Ann Graves entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2011 meeting. Motion was made and seconded. The vote of approval was unanimous and the minutes were accepted.
- III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no public comments.
- IV. **MARKETING REPORT:** Committee Member Ed Cole reported that the Marketing Committee met last week. Marketing efforts are underway for the Music City Star's *Game Day Express* and the Wilson County *Player of the Week* promotion.

Additionally, the Star's 5th Anniversary was on Sunday, September 18th. Last Friday (September 16) there was a well received customer appreciation event held at Riverfront Station in celebration of the anniversary. The participation of Wilson Bank and Trust in the celebration activities was much appreciated.

- V. **OPERATIONS REPORT:** Chair Howard Bradley included these points as he reported on the Music City Star and its connecting bus service:
- The Music City Star celebrated its 5-year anniversary this month and the monthly ridership numbers keep us celebrating.
 - July 2011 brought two fewer service days compared to July of 2010 but the ridership held steady with a daily average of 1,225.
 - Route #93, Music City Star West End Shuttle, also remained steady, providing over 6,000 rides in July.

Reporting on the commuter routes, Chair Bradley stated the following:

- The oldest express route, 96X Nashville/Murfreesboro Relax and Ride, had an average daily ridership of 376. Two MCI over-the-road buses were placed in service on Route 96X this month. The feedback has been positive and the comfortable buses have been well received by the passengers. A third MCI bus is scheduled to be placed in service this Monday (September 26).

- Route 91X Franklin/Brentwood Express numbers dipped just slightly in July, but this route is still performing well with July having the second highest average daily ridership in the past 12 months.
- Route 92X Gallatin/Hendersonville Express and Route 89X Springfield/Joelton Express ridership remains steady.
- Route 95X Spring Hill Express shows a slight daily average increase.

Fiscal year comparisons between 2010 and 2011 indicate an overall RTA ridership increase of almost 10,000. This represents a 27% increase. The Star increased almost 24% and the Express Bus service increased by more than 30%.

The Music City Star's Fourth of July service was a success again this year, providing a sellout crowd with a reliable and hassle-free way to enjoy the festivities in Nashville.

- VI. **FINANCE AND AUDIT REPORT:** Committee Vice-Chair Paul Webb reported that at the Finance Committee meeting they received the year-end report for June 30th and RTA finished the year in the black which met budget expectations. (This report was sent to each Board member.) The July 31st report for the first month of the new fiscal year was positive.

Committee Vice-Chair Webb then asked CFO Ed Oliphant to report on the line of credit. Mr. Oliphant reported that as of September 6th the balance was at zero. There is a 30 day resting period requiring a zero balance before the line of credit can be used again and he does not anticipate any problem meeting that.

- a. **FARE INCREASE FOR RELAX AND RIDE REGIONAL SERVICES (A-11-020):** Committee Vice-Chair Webb presented the following action item to the Board as a recommendation from the Finance Committee. CEO Paul Ballard clarified that this was a motion to go out to public hearings for a fare increase. Proper motion was made and seconded. Board Chair Graves then asked Mayor Webb to explain this to the body.

Mayor Webb explained that early in the summer staff felt that there was a need to adjust the revenue for express bus service. Staff surveyed similar cities for comparison of rates, and RTA rates were found to be lower than average. As a result, the Finance Committee agreed that raising the fare to \$4.00 from \$3.50 was something that should be done and would not create a serious problem to the current riders.

Therefore, the Finance and Audit Committee is requesting that the Board grant approval for RTA to go out to public hearing for a fare increase of \$0.50 per ride on all express bus routes to be implemented on January 1, 2012 in order to cover increased operating costs and anticipated reductions in CMAQ funding. The vote of approval was unanimous.

- VII. **CHAIR'S REPORT:** Chair Graves deferred her report until later.

- VIII. **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT:** General Manager Lora Baulsir reported on the following:

- a. **UPDATE ON MUNICIPALITIES JOINING THE RECONSTITUTED RTA (I-11-007)**: General Manager Lora Baulsir provided an updated list of municipalities and jurisdictions that have voted to join the reconstituted RTA as required under the 2009 state legislation approved by the RTA Board in January. She noted that since their last meeting two more have passed this and they are now down to the final four: Ashland City, Davidson County, Dickson, and Brentwood and a couple of these are scheduled in October. CEO Paul Ballard asked if there were any that needed help from the Board. Ms. Baulsir listed Ashland City and possibly Dickson. Mr. Ballard asked that if anyone present knew the officials in these cities to please lend their help in moving this along.

Additionally, Ms. Baulsir reported that locomotive 120 that was rehabbed last year is now in full service and will provide a spare locomotive. She introduced Shanna Hughey who is the new alternate for Nashville/ Davidson County. In closing, Ms. Baulsir reported that she has been contacted by Tootsie's who is interested in having a hot dog stand at Riverfront Station. They want to be there all day, not just during the commute time.

- IX. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**: Paul Ballard reported that TDOT has announced their CMAQ awards for this year. He was pleased to announce that the hard work of MTA Planning Director Jim McAteer and his team has been rewarded.

Extra money was applied for and awarded to expand service to Rutherford County. The CMAQ grant awarded for this service expansion is for three years in the amount of \$2.1 million dollars. Another grant has been awarded for Sumner County service. This is a three year grant for \$720,000.

Additionally, one million dollars has been awarded to MTA to start a commuter service from the new location on Myatt Drive. It has a huge parking area and will make a wonderful place for a Park 'n' Ride. Another grant for \$825,000 has been awarded to start service to Clarksville and Clarksville will be the grant recipient.

Mr. Ballard commented that there are still details to be worked out with these, but this is outstanding news and he thanked Commissioner Schroer and his staff for supporting public transportation in such a tremendous way.

The question was raised about moving to diesel hybrid electrics and Mr. Ballard confirmed that is what MTA purchases now. The fuel mileage is 35-40% better and sometimes even higher and emissions are much improved.

- X. **CHAIR'S REPORT**: Chair Graves reported that the Mayors' Caucus met last month and Ralph Schulz, President and CEO of the Nashville Chamber of Commerce, spoke to the group talking about Nashville's economic development and what we have to look forward to as the vitality of this area. It was a very positive report with a number of jobs on the horizon for this area. It confirmed to her that the group needs to continue to think regionally, there are a lot of opportunities coming and the future is bright for this region.

Chair Graves reported the Mayors' Caucus discussed a regional issue concerning water and invited Sumner County Executive Holt to share this with the group. Executive Holt stated that the Corps of Engineers is planning on charging a fee for lack of hydro-powered generation. If it is implemented, it will affect Sumner, Wilson and surrounding counties as well as part of Williamson. Following those will be Davidson and Montgomery counties. These agreements that they plan to put in place will not only charge a fee but will give control to the Corps as to how much water each region may use from the river.

Rutherford County Mayor Burgess stated that it is crucial to all in Middle Tennessee that they be involved in this. The outcome, as far as economic viability and control for the Middle Tennessee area is at stake here, is at risk. Everyone will be affected no matter where they are.

Mayor Graves noted that there will be a retreat in January to begin evaluating strategies and prioritizing the next steps in moving toward dedicated funding. She reminded the Board that Michael Skipper with MPO will be reapplying for the HUD grant which will fund some of the initiatives that have been discussed.

Mayor Graves asked Ed Cole to give an update on the Transit Alliance. Mr. Cole reported that the Transit Leadership Academy is going extremely well and graduation will be next month. The next Transit Alliance Board meeting will be the 25th of October.

XI. **OTHER BUSINESS:** There was no other business.

XII. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

Respectfully,

Ed Cole

Ed Cole
RTA Secretary