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 October 19, 2011. A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Chair Jo Ann Graves.

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Chair Graves entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the September 21, 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. **SOUTHEAST CORRIDOR REPORT:** Committee Chair Ernest Burgess reported that the committee discussed how to best use funds received through a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) award. RTA was awarded $720,000 in federal CMAQ funds and $90,000 in state funds on an annual basis over a three year period.

Suggested service improvements through the Southeast Corridor High-Capacity Transit Study completed in 2007 include express service from Murfreesboro to downtown Nashville via I-24 and continuing to the Vanderbilt/ West End area. Also included in the recommended service improvements are express trips from Smyrna, LaVergne, and Bell Road. The committee will consider these suggestions for improvement and report to the board in November.

V. **MARKETING REPORT:** Chair Graves noted that Committee Chair Ed Cole was traveling today and that the committee did meet but there were no action items and there is no report.

VI. **OPERATIONS REPORT:** Chair Howard Bradley reported the following:
- The Music City Star’s monthly ridership was the highest in the past year with over 28,000 riders.
- The #93 - *Music City Star West End Shuttle* provided transportation for almost 7,500 riders in August which is the highest number in the past year.
- The #96X - *Nashville/Murfreesboro Relax and Ride* had an average daily ridership of 402. As of this month, there are four MCI over the road buses in service on this route.
- The #91X - *Franklin/Brentwood Express* ridership numbers increased in August posting the highest daily average in the past year.
- The ridership numbers on #92X - Gallatin/Hendersonville Express improved to over 2,850 in August. An additional afternoon trip was added to this route in September and is expected to have a positive impact on these numbers as well.

- The #89X - Springfield/Joelton Express ridership numbers increased again in August and were the highest since the route’s inception in February. While most passengers on these commuter routes are riding into Nashville in the morning, the #89X route is also being used by passengers riding from Springfield to work in Joelton in the morning and back again in the evening.

- The #95X - Spring Hill Express posted its highest one year numbers in August with a daily average of 77 and monthly ridership of almost 1,800.

The month of August revealed Nashville retail gasoline prices dropped slightly but ridership continued to grow. Mt Juliet’s Randy Robertson began a discussion on how the retention of passengers is measured when the weather and economic issues improve. It was explained by Mr. Ballard that historically the service retains about half of those riders.

Fiscal year comparisons between 2011 and 2012 begin strong with an overall double digit ridership increase above 35%. The Star increased more than 36% and the Express Bus service a little over 35%.

VII. **Finance and Audit Report:** Committee Vice-Chair Paul Webb reported that the monthly financial reports through August show a favorable variance to budget as well as the two months of this fiscal year ended in August. The budgets are in good shape for accounts payable as well as we are within 30 days or less for the accounts payable.

Staff is now using actual historical data in preparing the budget that gives prior year to date budget information instead of using just the one twelfth. Staff is also providing a document with a budget split by each county and city providing another way to oversee the finances of the RTA. Also, as recommended last month, beginning in 2013 the fare structure will be reviewed by the committee every January.

The audit draft has been received and it will be distributed before the end of the year.

VIII. **RTA Management Contract (A-11-021):** Todd Presnell reported that the management contract between MTA and RTA is coming to an expiration date at the end of the year (November). It was an initial three year term and the action item is to renew that contract for an almost five year term to end at the end of the fiscal year 2016.

Mr. Presnell stated that he has reviewed the contract and some modifications have been made and none of them are substantive. Most of the changes made reflect how the MTA staff has evolved in managing the finances and administration of the RTA. Other changes take into consideration the new 2009 legislation that this Board adopted in January 2011. Overall the substance remains the same. Things will continue to operate as they have in the past with this five year agreement.
From a legal perspective, it is Mr. Presnell’s recommendation that the Board adopt the contract. He has been in contact with counsel for MTA and they have gone over this agreement. It is his understanding that she will present this same contract to the MTA Board for approval.

Chair Graves asked for a motion for approval and that was provided by Mr. Trent and it was seconded by Mayor Foster. There were no questions and the motion to adopt was approved unanimously.

IX. **RTA RECONSTITUTION NEXT STEPS (I-11-008):** Chair Graves asked General Manager Lora Baulsir if the membership of RTA was now unanimous in their vote to reconstitute and Ms. Baulsir confirmed that it was. She then asked Counsel Todd Presnell to advise the Board of their next steps.

Mr. Presnell reported that the next step would be take the resolution and certified copies of the ratification from the member governments and file those with the Secretary of State and the Department of Transportation. Upon those filings, this body will be reconstituted under the new legislation as well as the old legislation under which it was first created in 1988. Chair Graves asked how long that would take and Mr. Presnell stated that he and Ms. Baulsir hoped to have that done by the next Board meeting in November.

X. **GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT:** Ms. Baulsir gave the following report:

a. **RTA DUES UPDATE I-11-009:** A reminder was given that membership dues are to be paid by December 1st. Notices were initially sent in the spring to make that information available to the governments when planning their budgets. There are only about six or seven members who have not yet paid. Ms. Baulsir will send them a reminder this month.

Continuing, Ms. Baulsir noted her appreciation for the vote of confidence given by the Board’s approval of the renewal of the management contract. She also thanked the members who got their reconstitution votes passed. A special note of thanks was given to Mayor McCullough who did a one day turn-around to get the last vote needed to make the count complete.

There is a lease coming up in November at Riverfront Station that is in conjunction with the CMA Awards. Country music artist Jason Aldean will be performing in a concert at the station the day before the CMA Awards. He is a top performer and tickets are not required because the promoters want a large crowd there. The concert will be between the morning and the afternoon trains. This should not have any impact on the Star ridership.

On Monday (October 17), Ms. Baulsir was on a panel with Charles Bone, Michael Skipper and Dawn Distler who made a presentation to Lipscomb University’s Connect 2012 Leadership group at Music City Central. It was exciting to meet another group of transit advocates.

In closing, Ms. Baulsir reported that on Monday, October 17, the train had a record ridership of over 1500 passengers.

XI. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT:** Paul Ballard was out of town due to a death in his family.
xii. **Other Business:** With time to spare in this meeting, Chair Graves asked Commissioner Schroer if he would like to share anything with the group. The Commissioner shared that for the very near future, and perhaps for the long term future, bus rapid transit is the direction middle Tennessee is going to have to take for developing transit in the corridors. The light rail option is billions of dollars and no one knows where that money is going to come from and if it is ever going to be available. The development of rapid mass transit in this region will have to be developed incrementally.

With that in mind, Commissioner Schroer stated that one of the things he intends to implement by July 1st is to change the high occupancy vehicles (HOV) lanes to high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes where individuals will pay a fee to use an HOV lane if they are not an HOV vehicle. This will not require legislative action. There are a number of ways to do this and his approach will not be expensive. Commissioner Schroer is considering implementing a monthly pass for those who will use the HOV/HOT lane. He stated that presently during HOV hours, 70% of the ridership in the HOV lane from Franklin to Nashville is single passenger vehicles. He sees this as the first step for bus rapid transit as it will create a lane that is purely used for high occupancy vehicles that is controlled and monitored. Fees received will pay for the enforcement of this.

Conversation continued with focus on the current state of both state and national funding issues and what might be expected in the longer term.

In conclusion, Mayor Graves stated that initially she was a strong proponent for light rail in her district; but, she recognizes the cost is daunting for that and bus rapid transit (BRT) may be the best choice from a cost stand point. Additionally, she noted that traffic patterns change and populations move and shift. When light rail is built, we are locked in by the rails that we lay. If we put in a BRT system we have the ability to reconfigure where we want the buses to run and what populations they are serving because it is mobile. For her, she has come to believe that BRT may be the better way whether it is short term or long term as it is more flexible over the years.

XIII. **Chair’s Report:** Mayor Graves reported that the Mayors’ Caucus continues to move forward evaluating mass transit. At the November meeting Kerry Perkinson will speak about the oil situation across the world. The time and place for the meeting has yet to be determined but it is hoped that it will be held at the Nissan plant in Smyrna followed by a tour of the plant. The Mayors’ Caucus Executive Committee will hold a retreat in January to start looking at scenarios and options about mass transit - how it might be funded and what the priorities are. They will bring a report from the retreat to the full Mayors’ Caucus.

XIV. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:43 a.m.
Respectfully,

**Ed Cole**
Ed Cole
RTA Secretary