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 April 20, 2011. A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Acting Chair Ed Cole, Secretary to the RTA Board.

II. **Approval of Minutes:** Acting Chair Cole entreated a motion to approve the minutes of the March 16, 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:** Chair Ernest Burgess reported that the committee met and has agreed to revisit the Southeast Corridor Plan that was completed four years ago and better define their direction in how to move forward with the corridor which is one of the busiest in the region. They will encourage other participants in the other jurisdictions to help them start this journey in a progressive sort of way.

V. **Marketing Report:** Chair Ed Cole reported there are no action items to bring at this time. He reported that three of the route schedules are now available in Spanish. The team is working on a marketing plan for the Music City Star’s July 4th trip to Riverfront Station so it will once again be a successful event. Concluding, Acting Chair Cole noted that staff participated in several marketing events in March and early April and that this week is Transit Week with a number of events that are underway. Today’s event is at the Farmer’s Market from 11:00 until 2:00 and MTA/RTA will have a booth there. Additionally, tomorrow is Earth Day at Vanderbilt and MTA/RTA will have a presence there. The community wide event of Earth Day will be Saturday at Centennial Park where one of the hybrid buses will be parked and open for the community to see.

VI. **Operations Report:** Chair Howard Bradley reported on the operating statistics for February noting that it was a great month. The Music City Star had record ridership with more than 20,000 total trips and an average daily ridership of 1,023. The increased ridership in all
forms of mass transit that we are seeing is very closely connected to the higher gasoline prices. Route 93, the train shuttle, continues to increase with almost 6,300 rides in February. The oldest express route, #96 LaVergne, Smyrna, and Murfreesboro, also continues to increase with vehicles close to capacity. The #91 from Franklin continues to show a good trend and is performing well with the highest ridership in the last year. The #92 Gallatin-Hendersonville remains steady with capacity issues on the early departure bus. The #95 Spring Hill ridership also remains steady. The numbers for the newest route, #89 Springfield-Joelton, showed good ridership for the demonstration service in February and an average in March thus far of 111 trips per day. Overall the RTA ridership in February shows more than a 10% increase over last February and year to date shows an increase of over 5%. The Star increased almost 20% compared to February of 2010 and more than 10% year to date.

Continuing, Chair Bradley reported that the committee discussed the increasing demands based on rising cost of fuel and the strain it will put on the infrastructure. We expect some routes will reach and/or exceed capacity before the year is out.

He then presented the following action item.

a. **Fourth of July Train Service (A-11-005):** Chair Bradley reported that the success and popularity of this service over the last two years warrants continuation of this service for 2011 with ticket prices increasing from $10.00 to $12.00. The committee recommends that the train service be provided again this year with the increased ticket cost. Proper motion was made and seconded and the vote of approval was unanimous.

VII. **Finance and Audit Report:** Vice Chair Paul Webb reviewed the financial reports noting that the variances are in line within expectation, bills are being paid, and the financial situation with the RTA continues to improve. He then presented the following action item.

a. **Contract for Architectural/Engineering Services (A-11-006):** Vice Chair Webb discussed the action item which would allow the RTA to utilize an assignment clause from an MTA contract with EOA Architects. This would be used for quarterly train inspections and other A/E services as needed. Motion was made and seconded. There was no discussion and the vote of approval was unanimous.

VIII. **General Manager’s Report:** Lora Baulsir reported the local votes for the reconstituted RTA have rendered five members thus far with the most recent being Cheatham County. Robertson County has taken it to their Legislative Committee and will bring it to their full committee next month. Several others plan on bringing it before their governing bodies.
in May and June. She offered her assistance should any member need additional information concerning this.

Continuing, Ms. Baulsir reported on the locomotive rebuild. Locomotive 120 has come back and TSG is using it along with another locomotive to test it out. A few minor things have been found that need to be fixed. Once those have been resolved it should then go into full service. This completed the report.

Acting Chair Cole asked if anyone had any questions for Ms. Baulsir. Mayor Foster addressed Ms. Baulsir and stated that he had spoken with Mayor Graves about the discussion in last week’s committee meeting related to capacity issues of the Hendersonville Gallatin express service. Mayor Graves would like some kind of report from RTA about what types of solutions we might consider. Ms. Baulsir stated that this would be added to the agenda for discussion at next month’s meeting.

IX. **Chief Executive Officer’s Report:** Paul Ballard reported that last week MTA held a kick-off for an alternative study analysis on the Broadway/West End Corridor which is similar to the study that has been done in the southeast corridor and the northeast corridor. This is an important corridor for all of Middle Tennessee and anyone who is interested is invited to participate. Next month a briefing of this will be presented at the MPO meeting.

Mr. Ballard then mentioned the Music City Circuit service. These are the free circulator buses that operate in downtown Nashville. Previous to this service, RTA formally paid MTA to run a dedicated bus to provide the downtown service. Just about a year ago MTA was able to cancel that contract and reduce the cost to RTA. Now the circuit has taken that up and it serves the train passengers coming downtown as well as the general public and it runs all day long. That service has been extremely successful. In the month of March it carried more people than it did last July. This has been a great joint project between MTA and RTA and we are celebrating its first birthday.

Continuing, Mr. Ballard reported that staff has had several conversations with the developers of Hamilton Springs in Lebanon. If the Board would like, staff can schedule a time for the developers to make a presentation to the Board. He stated that this is a wonderful project that is very transit oriented. The developer owns property on both sides of the track equally distanced between Lebanon and Martha station. They want to do residential, commercial, and business making it a true land transit development. This is a great example of how public transportation and the development of public transportation enhance development and economic development of communities.

In conclusion, Mr. Ballard shared that the RTA’s March ridership numbers, for both the train and bus combined, are the highest in its
history. This, he noted, underlines the timeliness of the comments brought today by Mayor Foster on behalf of Mayor Graves on how to prepare to deal with success.

Acting Chair Cole asked for any additional comments and Mayor Burgess asked if either Mr. Ballard or CFO Ed Oliphant would describe how these very successful Relax and Ride programs are funded. Are they self-sustaining?

Mr. Oliphant explained that they are not self-sustaining. If every seat was filled with a person paying a full-price ticket there would still be a gap of approximately $10 – 50 per day. CMAQ funding is available for the first three years of any new service to fill in the gap until ridership can build. Then funding must be found to take care of it once it is no longer eligible for the CMAQ funds. Municipalities and counties that receive the benefits are also asked to contribute some type of operating subsidy to support that service provided in their area. Acting Chair Cole mentioned that dedicated funding would address these supplemental subsidies as well.

Additional conversation followed concerning development of services throughout the region with particular concerns being voiced about the northeast corridor study. At the invitation of Acting Chair Cole, MPO Executive Director Michael Skipper addressed the Board regarding the status of the Northeast Corridor Study.

Mr. Skipper noted that the recommendations are on the table and they are getting the consultants to wrap up the feedback they got from the mayors at the last meeting. While the long term goals have been set, in order to meet them, the short term goal must be to increase the robustness of bus service and continue to build riders along this corridor. This will support the heavy investment required for the long term goals.

Acting Chair Cole stated that he would convey to County Executive Mayor Holt, Chair of the Northeast Corridor Committee, that it would be appropriate for him to call a corridor committee meeting as soon as possible and invite Mr. Skipper to review and discuss the corridor study at that time. This would be the time for Mr. Skipper attend and have conversation with the committee concerning this corridor’s development.

X. **Chair’s Report:** Acting Chair Cole stated that the meetings of the Mayors Caucus, the Transit Alliance Board and the board of Cumberland Region Tomorrow held yesterday at Lipscomb were extremely successful. Each board met separately and then came together for a luncheon. One of the things discussed at lunch was the moving forward by the Transit Alliance with the creation of a Citizen Leadership Institute for transit consistent with the goal they had set
nearly a year ago. This is a partnership with the Nelson and Sue Andrews Institute for Leadership. All members of the Mayors Caucus are being asked to recommend nominees for the first class. The goal is to have a class of approximately 35 civic leaders from the ten counties beginning in June and lasting for seven sessions and then to continue with three classes per year. This would result in having 200 plus civic leaders in the region that can talk about transit issues with their peers and colleagues, building a better base of understanding for mass transit and in particular that of the need for dedicated funding by the end of 2012.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS: There was no other business.

XII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

Attested:

Ed Cole
Secretary