



MINUTES
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
NOVEMBER 20, 2019

- I. **Call to Order:** The regular meeting of the Regional Transportation Authority of Middle Tennessee (RTA) Board of Directors was held at the Nashville Downtown Public Library, 615 Church Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37219 on Wednesday, November 20, 2019. A quorum was established, and the meeting was called to order at 9:45 a.m. by Vice Chair Paige Brown.

In Attendance Were:

City of Gallatin	Mayor Paige Brown
City of Lebanon	Mayor Bernie Ash
City of Mt. Juliet	Kenny Martin
City of Spring Hill	Victor Lay
City of Westmoreland	Mayor Jerry Kirkman
City of White House	Gerald Herman
Davidson County	Faye DiMassimo
Dickson County	Mayor Bob Rial
Rutherford County	Mayor Bill Ketron
Sumner County	Mayor Anthony Holt
Williamson County	Mayor Rogers Anderson
Wilson County	Mayor Randall Hutto (<i>via phone</i>)
Governor Appointees	Ed Cole, Davidson County
	Darrell James, Dickson County
	Margot Fosnes, Robertson County
	Ed Elam, Rutherford County
	Kelly Dannenfelser, Williamson County
	Ken Davis, Wilson County
	Suzanne Carlson, TDOT

- II. **Approval of Minutes:** Proper motion was made and seconded, and the August 21, 2019 minutes were approved unanimously.

- III. **Public Comments:** Vice Chair Brown opened the floor for public comments:

Cheryl Lewis – Wilson County

Ms. Lewis reported the following:

- a. On behalf of the Music City Star passengers, Ms. Lewis reported parking issues in Wilson County. She stated that there are four stops in Wilson County, and many of the passengers will drive to Mt. Juliet to ride because it has a shorter schedule.
- b. She stated that passengers who had previously been able to park across the street (where the Chamber of Commerce and other businesses are located) are now

facing their cars being towed, due to those businesses reclaiming their overflow parking lots.

- c. She said that one particular passenger shared her frustrations via a Facebook post and said that she was frustrated with the time that it has taken for WeGo to deliver on the promised changes.
- d. She also recalled a time when there were passenger meetings held to discuss schedule options. The passengers voted to have the train to return to the Martha Station, but that option was not exercised. If this option had been exercised, the Wilson County parking crisis would not currently be happening.
- e. Wilson County passengers are begging for help with the scheduling.

There were no other public comments to come before the Board.

IV. Finance & Audit Report: Chief Financial Officer Ed Oliphant reported the following:

- a. **Monthly Financial Report Compared to Budget (R-D-19-010):** CFO Oliphant reported and reflected on the statement of operations for the month of September 2019 compared to the budget and balance sheet as of September, 2019. He was present to answer any questions. There were no questions at this time.
- b. **Proposed EasyRide Pilot Program (R-A-19-007):** The EasyRide Program is an employer-paid transit pass program to provide employee commuter benefits on RTA and Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (Nashville MTA) services in Middle Tennessee under the name WeGo Public Transit. The program has been used predominantly by the State of Tennessee, Vanderbilt University, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Metro Nashville Public Schools, and several other smaller users.

Over the course of the past two performance audit reports conducted by the Office of the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury, RTA received findings relative to the lack of formal agreements between itself and employers participating in the EasyRide program. During review of the program, staff found that program pricing for the business community varied considerably, causing considerable confusion for the staff's understanding of the program and how to sell it. This structure also causes disproportional staff management time every month to track revenue and ridership to prepare invoices. In addition, the lack of an established, consistent pricing structure with defined and predictable monthly or annual costs for participants is a significant barrier to program recruitment of the business community. Current and potential business customers have expressed a strong preference for a consolidated pass program – one which their employees could utilize a single pass for both Nashville MTA and RTA services. Although the original finding of the Comptroller of the Treasury recommended that RTA have individual contracts with each customer, staff expressed the verbal opinion that a consolidated program could work, provided that there was specific documentation relative to pricing structure and revenue splits between the Nashville MTA and RTA and that compensation to the RTA under the program was fair relative to overall use.

In order to both address the findings of the Comptroller of the Treasury and to expand usage of the EasyRide program, Nashville MTA and RTA want to revise the EasyRide program to address the following program objectives:

- All: Simplify program transportation benefits;
- All: Simplify program administration;
- All: Simplify program fee structure to better predict costs and revenues for

- annual budgeting;
- MTA/RTA: Protect existing program revenue;
- MTA/RTA: Grow program participation to increase overall ridership and operating revenue;
- MTA/RTA: Increase transparency between the two agencies on program revenue and ridership;
- Business Partners: Manage and reduce both direct and indirect transportation costs;
- Business Partners: Provide sustainable and competitive employee benefits.

The Finance Committee recommended the Board provide management the flexibility to work with the business community in developing and entering into pilot agreements for the EasyRide Program. These agreements would stay within the confines of the program objectives defined above and meet the overall requirements for greater formalization of the program as required by the Comptroller of the Treasury. At the point a new EasyRide Program has been developed, we would come back to the Finance Committee and RTA Board for discussion and possible approval of a new permanent EasyRide Program.

A proper motion was made and seconded. The vote of approval was unanimous.

V. Audit Report: Sumner County Mayor Anthony Holt reported the following:

- a. FY2019 Annual Audit Report (R-A-19-008):** The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019 has been completed and will be distributed along with the auditors required communication at the committee meeting. We are pleased to report that the RTA once again received a “clean” opinion on the report from our auditors and had no new audit findings.

The financials presented with this action item represented the audited numbers in the regular format the Committee receives on a monthly basis.

RTA’s outside accountants from Crosslin reviewed the Annual Report at the committee meeting. The Audit Committee recommended the Board accept the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019.

A proper motion was made and seconded. The vote of approval was unanimous.

VI. Operations Committee Report: Committee Chair Jerry Kirkman reported on the following items:

- a. Monthly Operating Statistics (R-D-19-011):** Mr. Kirkman reported on the monthly operating statistics report through September 2019. Director of Service Quality Dan Freudberg was present to answer any questions. There were no questions at this time.

VII. Annual Calendar of Meeting Dates (R-A-19-009): Chief Administrative Officer Rita Roberts-Turner reported the following:

Under Article 2, Section 3 of the RTA by-laws, the RTA shall meet at least quarterly at a time and place to be established by the Chair/President of the Board. RTA may meet more frequently if needed. Additionally, under Article 4, Section 5 of the by-laws, the Executive Committee shall meet monthly except for those months in which the Board shall meet. In order to effectively satisfy the established meeting requirements, a schedule of proposed 2020 meetings dates for both the RTA Board and Executive Committee is herein attached.

Staff recommended that the proposed meeting dates be adopted and approved by the Board.

A proper motion was made and seconded. The vote of approval was unanimous.

VIII. Slate of Officers Submitted for Vote in January 2020 (R-A-19-010): CAO Roberts-Turner reported the following:

Pursuant to Article 3, Section 1(a) of the RTA by-laws, officers of the RTA shall be elected by the full RTA Board at its first regular meeting in each calendar year. The by-laws further require the Executive Committee to place names in nomination at a full RTA board meeting one month prior to the actual election of officers.

The officers of the RTA shall be Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary and must include at least one appointed member and one elected official member; they shall be elected at the first regular meeting of the RTA Board in each calendar year by the entire RTA membership.

In anticipation of the Board's November 20, 2019 meeting, the Executive Committee selected the following slate of candidates for the Board's consideration:

Chair – Randall Hutto, Wilson County Mayor
Vice Chair – Paige Brown, Gallatin Mayor
Secretary – Ed Cole, Davidson County Governor Appointee

Subject to the Board's approval, the above slate of candidates will be presented to the full Board at its January 2020 meeting.

It was recommended that the Board approve the slate of candidates presented by the Executive Committee and that the Board hold the election of officers at the next regularly scheduled meeting in accordance with the by-laws.

A proper motion was made and seconded. The vote of approval was unanimous.

VIII. Other Business:

IX. CEO's Report: Chief Executive Officer Steve Bland gave the following report:

- The first of our rehabilitated locomotives is in service and operating well. The second locomotive is on its way to the rebuilder now for scheduled completion next spring.
- Following Board action last month, we completed the sales agreement for eight new passenger coaches for the Star. The seller is undertaking several agreed upon modifications before initiating delivery of the first car.
- Construction bids are out for the Mt. Juliet Park & Ride expansion. Bids are due in December, and we had four potentially interested contractors participate in the pre-bid meeting. This project is becoming particularly acute as neighboring businesses are enforcing no parking restrictions on Star Commuters, and we have received a number of customer complaints in this regard in the past several weeks.
- HDR is finalizing a draft report examining the feasibility of various WeGo Star improvements. This report is being reviewed by RJ Corman for accuracy, after which time we will present to an RTA Board committee. Ultimately, we would

like to incorporate these projects into the Nashville Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Long-Range Plan.

- Mayor Kirkman reported on operating results for September. Effective in October, in addition to the 93 – Star West End Shuttle, we will be reporting on the 64 – Star Downtown Shuttle.
- The developer of the Vintage Station North mixed-use project adjacent to the Mt. Juliet Station has expressed an interest in developing a pedestrian crossing connecting that development to the Mt. Juliet Station (presently, customers of that facility will need to walk to Mt. Juliet Road and cross at the existing vehicle gate to access the station.) The RTA has no direct involvement in this effort, but we have referred them to RJ Corman and the Nashville and Eastern Rail Authority, who control the right of way.
- This past month, we met with the City of Murfreesboro and Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) about the possibility of incorporating a Rutherford County Park &-Ride into a pending Transit Operating Facility project that the City has for Rover, its local transit system. The location they are considering would be very advantageous, as it has excellent access to I-24. He expressed our willingness to work with the City to advance the project and to ultimately help develop the park-and-ride portion of the site.
- Last week, Terry Bebout from RJ Corman, Suzanne Carlson from TDOT, and CEO Bland participated in a discussion about the Star at the Donelson Chamber Aviation, Transportation, and Infrastructure Committee. The session was well attended, and the group expressed strong support for the long-term growth of Star services and infrastructure improvements.
- He thanked Ray Render from Congressman Rose's Office. Ray is a regular attendee at RTA Board meetings and took the time to come in and meet with us to get an overview of the RTA, how it functions, and ongoing plans and programs.
- Many of us were in attendance at the MPO's kickoff to the Long-Range Transportation Plan process at the Frist Museum this month. CEO Bland stated that he hoped everyone had a chance to use the free transit pass that was distributed at the event.
- CEO Bland stated that he was happy to welcome Ed Elam, our new Governor's appointee from Rutherford County. The Governor's Office is completing paperwork on an appointee from Montgomery County; he should be confirmed before your January meeting. Unfortunately, we learned this past month that Lee Zoller, our Governor's appointee from Sumner County, has relocated out of county and is no longer eligible to serve. We have notified the Governor's Office of this vacancy.
- As a reminder, there will be no Board or Executive Committee meeting in December.

X. Chair's Report: Chair Hutto apologized for not physically being in attendance and thanked Vice Chair Paige Brown for chairing the board meeting. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas.

XI. Adjournment: Proper motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Ed Cole, RTA Secretary &
Davidson County Governor Appointee