



NASHVILLE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY Board of Directors Meeting

May 23, 2019

- I. Call to Order:** The regular meeting of the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (Nashville MTA) Board of Directors was held at WeGo Central Office, 400 Dr. Martin L. King Jr. Blvd, Nashville, TN 37219 on Thursday, May 23, 2019

Present: Gail Carr Williams, Chair; Hannah Paramore Breen, Member; Glenn Farner, Member; Walter Searcy, Member; Secretary Margaret Behm; and Chief Executive Officer Stephen G. Bland.

A quorum was established, and Vice Chair Janet Miller called the meeting to order at 3:48 p.m.

- II. Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the April 25, 2019 board meeting were approved.

- III. Public Comments:** Vice Chair Miller opened the floor for public comments. The public was reminded that comments were limited to three minutes. The following members of the public addressed the Board with these comments:

Glen Graham

Mr. Graham reported the following:

- He stated that the rerouting information that was distributed to help riders during the NFL draft was highly incorrect. He had to wait over an hour to catch his bus and then had to walk half a mile to get to his destination.
- He stated that he liked the new, simplistic purple and white pocket schedules, but they are too simple, lacking vital information such as major landmarks and destinations and the names of transfer routes.
- He would like for the new route maps to show one-way directions of travel as previously shown on the old route maps.
- Drivers on Route 17 need to be more consistent and take shorter detour Routes. On a recent bus ride, the driver went north on Fifth Avenue, left on James Robertson Pkwy., remained on it until it became Rosa Parks Blvd, which turned into Eighth Avenue South; the driver turned right on Division St., left at Twelfth Ave and back onto the regular route. Anyone waiting for the bus in the Gulch was passed by. Detours need to be short as possible.

- He expressed his appreciation to the staff for getting the fourth gate on the lower level of MCC open for use again.
- He reported that the escalators are constantly breaking down and the water fountains on the lower level of MCC are still not working.

Darius Knight

Mr. Knight reported the following:

- He stated that nobody wants to see route reductions, but he feels that this is the best plan that can be done at the time and appreciates the staff for working overtime to make these changes happen.
- He reported that the same maintenance issues keep being reported, but aren't getting resolved.
- He stated that WeGo Rapid Routes need to be cleaned.

Peter O'Connor

Mr. O'Connor reported the following:

- He stated that he would like for the old bus stops back at NES because it's too hard for the people that can't walk to catch their bus.
- He stated that we should have a 24/7 transit system with the way that Nashville is growing.
- He stated that the escalators at WeGo Central need to be serviced because they are constantly breaking down.
- He stated that people aren't coming to the public meetings because the meetings are getting way too political.

Rhonda Clark

Ms. Clark reported the following:

- She stated that she's glad that WeGo Transit is not doing away with On-Demand Service.
- She stated that she feels that fare increases aren't high enough and that we can afford to go up a bit more.
- She asked how getting rid of the 100 Oaks route would affect Access Ride and On-Demand service.
- She stated that there needs to be designated funds for fixed routes.

Sheila Hanson

Ms. Sheila Hanson reported the following:

- She takes bus 25 to church, but if this route is cut then she doesn't know how she's going to get to church.
- She stated that she has the transit app and keeps getting error notifications and wants to know if someone can look into those error notifications.
- She stated that she thinks combining 21 and 25 routes is a good thing, but putting the connector buses closer to downtown isn't going to save us any money.

There were no other public comments at this time.

IV. Operations & Finance Committee Report: Chair Searcy stated that he had no items to report to the board at this time.

V. New Initiatives and Community Engagement Committee Report: Vice Chair Janet Miller reported the following:

- a. **Authorization to Take a Series of Fare Increase and Service Reduction & Adjustment Proposals to Public Hearing Prior to Final Consideration by the Nashville MTA Board (M-A-19-015):** CEO Steve Bland reviewed and explained the proposed changes and fare adjustment proposals needed to cover an estimated \$8.7 million operation budget deficit.

The board requested that the detailed board action item be attached as a point of reference to these minutes. The Action Item is included by reference herein and a copy of the Action Item is included in the permanent minute book.

There was no further discussion, and the board unanimously approved moving forward with public hearing in order for staff to bring a final recommendation at the June board meeting.

VI. Chair's Report: Chair Williams thanked the staff for all of their hard work and she asked the staff not to hesitate to call upon the board members when they need help. Chair Williams concluded her remarks by saying that she's looking forward to all of the work that is forthcoming.

VII. CEO's Report: CEO Bland reported the following to the Board:

- I want to recall your attention to pages 13 and 14 in the Committee packet which lists significant upcoming procurements. We'll include this information in each month's packet and would ask that you take a look and let us know if you are away of any supplies of the particular goods and services that we should reach out to.
- With respect to Neighborhood Transit Centers, we are continuing negotiations on property for the Clarksville Pike Center, and are preparing an application for the highly competitive Build Act Program to fund construction. We are also advancing design for the Hillsboro Transit Center, in conjunction with the renovation of the school complex.
- You've seen all of the coverage of the impact of the NFL Draft last month, with approximately 600,000 in attendance. I want to thank our staff and our customers for their preparation and their patience, as the Draft and the Marathon went off relatively smoothly. We did experience a drop in ridership that week that will be reflected in our April numbers, and we incurred approximately \$10,000 in supervisory overtime expenses.
- The focus for many of our staff this month have been preparing for the service reduction and fare adjustment proposals you acted upon earlier. I want to repeat – and I'll keep doing it – my admiration for the staff involved in designing the

proposed changes. Early on, Gail said to me “I hope we do this with a surgical knife, and not a hatchet, and I certainly think they met and exceeded that challenge. Unfortunately, the issues underlying these service cuts and fare increases are not affected by these proposed changes. What’s called for is a dedicated funding source that is reliable and growing. Otherwise, inflation alone will continue to eat away at our budget, and we’ll be forced to do this again next year.

- My thanks to Gail and Walter for attending our Council Budget Hearing along with Ed, Rita, Eric and myself. The hearing went relatively smoothly, with a number of good questions from those in attendance.
- RTA Items:
 - a. The first round of public outreach for the South Corridor Study was completed this past month. There was decent turnout in Columbia, Franklin, Brentwood and Nashville.
 - b. Developers are breaking ground next month for a transit oriented development adjacent to the Music City Star station in Mt. Juliet.
 - c. Staff are wrapping up work around the negotiation of a purchase agreement to acquire new (used) passenger cars for the Music City Star.
- Finally, Congratulations to our esteemed Board Chair, Gail Carr Williams; and her late husband, David Williams as recipients of the fourth annual Francis S Guess Bridge to Equality Award from the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee. The award honors the memory of civil rights trailblazer Francis S. Guess, and recognizes those who spur innovation leading to equality. We can’t think of two more deserving recipients than David and Gail.

VIII. Other Business: There was no other business to come before the Board.

IX. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.