

NASHVILLE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Board of Directors Meeting

July 25, 2019

- I. **Call to Order:** The regular meeting of the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (Nashville MTA) Board of Directors was held at WeGo Central, located at 400 Dr. Martin L. King Jr. Blvd., Nashville, TN 37219 on Thursday, July 25, 2019.

Present: Gail Carr Williams, Chair; Janet Miller, Vice 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 Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m.

- II. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the June 25, 2019 board meeting will be deferred to the August board meeting.
- III. **Public Comments:** Chair Williams opened the floor for public comments. The public was reminded that comments were limited to three minutes.

Darius Knight

Mr. Knight reported the following:

- He congratulated Chief Operating Officer India Birdsong on her new job promotion.
- He stated that he is still seeing the same previously reported issues with the 1800 and 1900 models. Also, the Gillig bus display signs are still not working properly. He asked that we look at finding another company that can fix the display signs.
- He noticed that the fare box on bus 77 didn't work and that it was rigged with wires; and felt like several people didn't pay that day.
- Over a period of three to four weeks, he noticed that a supervisor was advising customers that their bus was going to be late and they would have to wait over an hour for bus service.
- In the future, he would like for us to notify the customers well in advance of possible service reductions.
- He reported that several buses are operating without air or poor air condition.

John Bull

Mr. Bull reported the following:

- Drivers are doing better with announcing bus stops for the visually impaired.
- He noticed that two traffic lights have been installed close to Walmart on Nolensville Pike, and that's where two fatalities took place.
- He suggested a neon vest for the those that might be visually impaired.

Peter O'Connor

Mr. O'Connor reported the following:

- We need longer bus hours and customer care hours.
- We need more bus stops in the airport area; currently there is only one bus stop.

Angelique Johnson

Ms. Johnson reported the following:

- She thanked the board for listening to their public comments.
- She requested that WeGo Public Transit enforce bus drivers to announce all bus stops. Walter Searcy suggested that she let the bus driver know what stop it is that she needs to get off on.
- She asked the question how budget cuts would impact crosswalks and shelters.

Sheila Hanson

Ms. Hanson reported the following:

- She agreed that drivers need to announce the bus stops, especially for the hearing impaired.
- The elevator needs to be leveled out at WeGo Central.
- The incline, near the Haywood bus stop area needs to be flattened; it is not ADA accessible.

James Thomas

Mr. Thomas reported the following:

- He stated that the bus drivers need assistance with better bus detour routes.
- Shelby Street bus passed him by and didn't pick him up.
- He likes the bus stop at Walmart.

Glen Allen Graham

Mr. Graham reported the following:

- There is a lack of inbound stops near 12th and Edgehill.
- Drivers are taking various routes for detours; drivers need consistent detour routes.

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

IV. Operations & Finance Committee Report: Committee Chair Searcy reported the following:

- WeGo Star Train Shuttle Service Contract (M-A-19-022):** The Nashville MTA Board approved the renewal of a contract with the Regional Transportation Authority of Middle Tennessee (RTA) for connecting Davidson County bus services operating from Riverfront Station to West End Avenue. The Board also approved service cuts to Nashville MTA that included the cancellation of the Music City Circuit. The Circuit served Riverfront Station and was heavily utilized by train riders as a way to get from the train station to WeGo Central to catch other WeGo services.

Consequently, the RTA desires to enter into a contract with the Nashville MTA to continue the portion of the Circuit between Riverfront and WeGo Central to help get riders to their final destination. The continuation of this segment would require approximately five hours of shuttle service per weekday. In the contract's initial year, service would begin on September 30, 2019 in conjunction with the Nashville MTA's implementation of the service cuts and would expire on June 30, 2020.

Under this contract, the RTA would pay the Nashville MTA for up to five hours of daily service at a rate of \$109.47 per hour, or an amount not to exceed \$105,100,

covering the 192 days of weekday transit service contained in the contract. This contract price is consistent with RTA contracts approved last month.

A fuel escalator clause will also be included in all new contracts to protect the Nashville MTA should the average fuel prices escalate above \$2.25 per gallon. The clause stipulates that for every 25-cent increase in the monthly average per gallon cost of fuel, the hourly rate will increase \$1.50 per hour for that month going forward. However, this will likely not be a factor since the Nashville MTA has hedged approximately 80% of projected diesel fuel consumption at a contract price of around \$2.22 per gallon.

The Operations & Finance Committee recommended the Board to approve the new contract with RTA to continue the portion of the Music City Circuit between Riverfront Station and WeGo Central beginning September 30, 2019 through June 30, 2020 for a not-to-exceed amount of \$105,100.

There was no further discussion. The vote of approval was unanimous.

V. New Initiatives and Community Engagement Committee Report: On behalf of the New Initiative and Community Engagement (NICE) Committee, Board Member Glenn Farner stated that there were no committee items to report at this time.

VI. Chair's Report: Chair Williams began her comments by saying that she works with the best board ever. She thanked everyone for their hard work at last month's board meeting. As a Board Chair, she thought that everyone did a great job, including the work that was done in the months preceding last month's board meeting. She thanked everyone for their time, effort, thoughtfulness, and the work that everyone puts into doing the work that we get the grand opportunity to do for our community and Nashville.

Chair Williams said the approved WeGo Star Train Shuttle Service Contract action item goes to show that the community comes together to support our ridership and supports our community in meaningful ways.

Chair Williams stated that the public comments mean a lot and help to guide the work that is done by WeGo Public Transit. All public comments are appreciated and do matter.

In closing, Chair Williams thanked COO India Birdsong for her service at WeGo Public Transit and congratulated her on her new job promotion as Chief Executive Officer for Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority. It is a testament to the hard work that she has done here.

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

- Mr. Bland called everyone's attention to pages 13 and 14 in the Committee packet which lists significant upcoming procurements. This information is in each month's packet and members are encouraged to share this information with businesses.
- With respect to Neighborhood Transit Centers, there was media coverage of the Build Act application submitted to develop the Clarksville Pike Transit Center. The Development team put together an extremely strong application, but the Build Act program is extremely competitive, generally receiving \$50 in applications for every \$1 they have available. Even if not successful with this application, the material will be beneficial as other funding opportunities are pursued.
- Following last month's Board action regarding service and fare levels, staff has been active preparing for the fare increase on August 2 and service changes on

September 29. In terms of public engagement and communication, the focus for the next few weeks will be on communicating the fare changes. Once these have gone into effect, we will turn our attention to the service changes.

- The Nestor renovation project is substantially complete, and staff are in the process of moving into renovated spaces. There will be a tour of Nestor following our August meeting.
- Mr. Bland attended the Board Planning Workshop for the Tennessee Public Transportation Association (TPTA) in Clarksville this past month. The Legislative agenda of the Association or in the upcoming year will focus on building closer relationships with the senior leadership at TDOT, and their highway design side to promote greater integration of mass transit into TDOT projects.
- A meeting was held with the Advisory Committee for our Better Bus Service Design project. Planning will be developing service scenarios over the next month to begin taking to the public in October.
- In accordance with FTA regulations, staff is in the process of updating the Title VI program. Title VI is intended to ensure non-discrimination in the delivery of services, programs and projects. This program will be for public comment in August and will be brought to the Nashville MTA Board in September for adoption.

RTA Items:

- The RTA lost another Park & Ride lot, this time in Rutherford County. The lack of good Park & Rides is a significant barrier to growth in RTA service, and staff are currently working on a plan to develop better, permanent and purpose-built Park & Ride lots.
- The RTA is in the process of turning over 10 new Commuter buses to Gray Line for operation of RTA services. The first buses will hit the street – in WeGo colors – in August.
- The RTA received the final report from the State Comptroller's Office relative to the RTA's sunset legislation. The only significant issue that needs to be addressed is a better formalization of EasyRide Employer subsidy pass programs with employers. Sumner County Mayor Anthony Holt, who chairs the RTA's Audit Committee, and I will be presenting at a Joint State Legislative Oversight Committee on August 21. The RTA's enabling legislation will be taken up by the General Assembly in the next legislative session.
- Finally, Mr. Bland reminded the Board that India Birdsong has accepted a position as CEO for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transportation Authority in Ohio. India's last day with us will be August 2. The Chief Operating Officer position has been posted. Mr. Bland thanked Ms. Birdsong and wished her luck in Cleveland.

VIII. Other Business:

- a. **Annual Review of Board Ethics & Conflict of Interest:** Board Secretary Margaret Behm reviewed the Board Ethics and Conflict of Interest policy with the board members. All members are required to disclose conflicts of interest, and may be required to recuse themselves from a particular vote.
- b. **Election of MTA Board Officers (M-A-19-023):**

In accordance with the Metropolitan Charter, the Nashville MTA Board shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair annually. Currently, Gail Carr Williams and Janet Miller serve as the Chair and Vice Chair respectively for the Board.

Board Secretary Margaret Behm opened the floor for nomination of board officers. Walter Searcy made a motion to keep the same officers intact for another year. Hannah Paramore Breen seconded the motion and the motion was carried that Gail Carr Williams will remain as board chair and Janet Miller as Vice Chair.

There was no further discussion. The vote of approval was unanimous.

IX. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.