

NASHVILLE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Board of Directors Meeting

December 19, 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, December 19, 2019.

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

Absent: Hannah Paramore Breen, Member

A quorum was established, and Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 2:45 p.m.

- II. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the November 21, 2019 board meeting were approved.
- 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 appreciates that maintenance is correcting some of the issues that have previously been reported.
- He feels that switching to diesel is still a good idea.
- He asked what will the outcome be with the 1700-1900 vehicles? Gillig should be responsible for the repeated issues. He said it's sad that these buses come in brand new and continue to break down. He thinks that we need to create a new contract with New Flyer to amend for the 40-foot buses.
- As for Better Bus, he's not optimistic about the next budget year and thinks that we should go back and lower our figures. He feels that if we don't, we're going to have to go through more service cuts.
- He feels that the rebranding did not include the public, and it was not the best decision money-wise.

James Thomas

Mr. Thomas reported the following:

- He didn't like that a bus driver moved his cart to the other side of the bus for another passenger's wheelchair to be placed where his cart was.
- He had an issue with his cart not being locked in place.
- He said bus 1702 took off before people got to their seats.
- He said when bus 1826 was pulling up, he almost ran over three people and slammed on his brakes.
- He said the bus driver driving bus 704 was driving too fast and hitting all of the potholes and driving through all of the yellow lights.

Note: Chair Williams acknowledged and offered up condolences on behalf of the Board and WeGo staff in the passing of Mr. Thomas' father.

John Bull

Mr. Bull reported the following:

- He stated that the bus completion stats listed in the Operating Statistics report were outstanding.
- He said the marketing report was remarkable.
- He stated that a councilman recently reported 31 pedestrians have been killed in Davidson County, and he asked that we all be careful.

Peter O'Connor

Mr. O'Connor reported the following:

- He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and hoped the new year goes well for everyone.
- He's still noticing people smoking.
- He said the end of the line on Route 52A needs to be moved behind Walgreens.
- He reported that bus header signs are still not working.
- He would like for there to be extended bus and customer service hours.
- He said bus drivers need to pay attention how they treat passengers because there are passengers that pay attention and report everything they say and do.

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

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

- Hillsboro Transit Center Signal Agreements (M-A-19-034):** As presented in the September 2019 Nashville MTA board meeting, staff has been working to advance the development of transit centers to support a decentralized transit network consistent with the objectives in the nMotion Strategic Plan. One of the sites for the advancement of a transit center is located along Hillsboro Pike in Green Hills. This project is progressing in conjunction with a major renovation of Hillsboro High School and in partnership with Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS). The transit center will be located along Hillsboro Pike adjacent to the high school and immediately across Hillsboro Pike from The Mall at Green Hills. The center will replace a heavily-utilized yet undersized stop that is scheduled to be demolished as part of the high school renovation project. The transit center would serve Route 7 Hillsboro along with potential future extensions of nearby routes. The Hillsboro Transit Center Project is funded with federal and local funds.

Since the transit center is located along Hillsboro Pike, it is necessary to facilitate a means for transit vehicles to exit the transit center. As part of the high school renovation project, the traffic signal on Hillsboro Pike at the intersection of Hillsboro High School and The Mall at Green Hills entrance is being reconstructed. To facilitate transit operations, the new intersection will include a queue jump which will allow transit vehicles to exit the center on time to improve safety and reliability. To memorialize the construction, operations, and maintenance of the queue jump, staff has worked with MNPS and Metro Public Works (PW) to draft agreements. Summaries of the two agreements are noted below.

The Operations & Finance Committee recommended the Board provide the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) the authority to enter into an agreement with MNPS for

construction of the traffic signal along Hillsboro Pike proximate to the entrance of Hillsboro High School and The Mall at Green Hills to facilitate transit operations at the Hillsboro Pike Transit Center. In addition, the Committee recommended the Board provide the CEO the authority to enter into an agreement with PW for the operations and maintenance of the referenced traffic signal for the duration of the useful life of the Hillsboro Pike Transit Center.

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

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

a. FY2019-2020 Marketing & Communications Plan Adoption (M-A-19-035):

Marketing cannot increase ridership by itself. Good marketing and communications are about defining a strategy and direction to tell a complete story about your service and products. In other circumstances where products are introduced or new features or enhancements to existing services are made, marketing can assist in getting the word out more effectively than word of mouth.

Historically, the Nashville MTA has not adopted a formal marketing plan outlining the goals, objectives, performance metrics, and budgets associated with marketing. After a discussion with the Board earlier this year, staff prepared a proposed marketing plan.

The plan leverages past practices and introduces new strategies and tactics for continuing the measurable improvements in awareness, cultivation of a positive customer experience, and helping to deliver on agency priorities.

The NICE Committee recommended the Board adopt the proposed Marketing and Communications plan for implementation.

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

b. Adoption of FY2020-2024 authority Capital Investment Plan (M-A-19-036):

Annually, the Nashville MTA Board of Directors adopts a rolling multi-year capital investment plan to guide the Authority's future project development activity and to allow staff to seek funding opportunities for various projects. Generally, projects identified in the first year of the Capital Investment Plan (CIP) are relatively firm in scope and budget. Projects in out-years are likely more conceptual.

The staff presented a recommended CIP for the period of FY2020-2024. Overall, investments totaling \$31,282,000 are recommended in Year 1 of the plan, with a total project investment recommendation of \$189,001,881 over the life of the plan. Projects identified in Year 1 (FY2020) have access to full funding.

The NICE Committee recommended the Board formally adopt the attached FY2020-2024 CIP.

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

VI. Chair's Report: Chair Williams stated said that she appreciated the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Triennial Presentation and management's response back to FTA; it's a good indication of the work that we do at WeGo. She admitted that when she first saw the

report and the deficiencies, she immediately thought, there was a huge problem. She thanked Rita Roberts-Turner for her explanation that this report is a means of making us a better and a stronger organization. Chair Williams also thanked the staff for their hard work in preparing for our response back to FTA. A job well done.

She stated that we have a lot of things going on in an evolving and changing city. She said that she loves the way that WeGo is adapting to new administration. She knows that as those changes come, we continue to adapt as we always have and keep a high standard of excellence.

In closing, Chair Williams expressed that this year has been a tough year for her, and the WeGo Board, CEO Bland, and staff have stood by her and supported her through it all. She said that this kind of love and support will be the thing that holds and lifts her during this season of her life. She said that she could never thank the Board and staff enough for being so supportive. She concluded by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas.

Note: On behalf of the WeGo Board and staff, Vice Chair Miller expressed our love and appreciation to Chair Williams

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

- At the Operations & Finance Committee, Director of Planning & Grants Felix Castrodad reported on our quarterly route by route ridership trends. In next quarter's report, we'll see the full impact – at least short term – of the service changes that went into effect on September 29. Service Development and Operations are fine-tuning the adjustments, primarily addressing areas of recurring overcrowding and looking at schedule adjustments for the next schedule change to improve on-time performance. Stops and shelters have completed all bus stop and shelter changes required by the service changes.
- This past month, winners of our local Bus and Maintenance Roadeos competed at the Tennessee Public Transportation Association (TPTA) Roadeo in Chattanooga. He was proud and happy to report that we brought home one Big Wheel Award and two Big Wrench Awards. Michael Featherston placed first in the 40-foot bus competition; Kevin Sentes placed second in the 35-foot bus competition; Troy Willis placed first in the Bus Maintenance Competition; Pedro Ochoa placed second in the Bus Maintenance Competition; and Christopher Brown placed first in the Van Maintenance Competition. Our state winners will go on to compete against their national peers at the American Public Transportation Association Roadeo (APTA) in San Antonio in the spring.
- We've had several meetings with Nashville Mayor John Cooper's Senior Advisor for Transportation and Infrastructure, Faye DiMassimo. Ms. DiMassimo has extensive experience in transportation, mostly in the Atlanta region, and will be advising the Mayor on broad issues of transportation, mobility, and infrastructure.
- We are currently out to bid for construction of the Nolensville Pike Shelter Improvement project, with bid opening scheduled in December and Board Award scheduled for January. Our pre-bid meeting generated significant contractor interest.
- There are only two remaining items on the Murfreesboro Pike Transit Signal Priority Project: utility closeouts with the Nashville Electric Service and completion of the signal software functional testing and burn-in period. Unfortunately, software testing conducted earlier that week continued to produce system failures that prevent us from accepting this system from the supplier, although our previous on-board software issues appear to

have been resolved. The signal software supplier has been formally notified of their requirement to cure and is working to address the remaining open items.

- I attended the special Metro Council Budget and Finance Committee meeting where the State Comptroller briefed the Council on Metro's financial condition. Unfortunately, and as you likely have read, the news was not particularly positive, and we are likely to be in for another year of austerity budgeting. Mayor Cooper and Director of Finance Kevin Crumbo are kicking off the FY2020-2021 budget process early, and we are scheduled to meet Finance staff in December.
- With respect to our fare collection project, we are scheduled to begin internal testing of various fare products next month, with beta testing among a controlled number of customers scheduled for early next year. This past month, we initiated periodic Projective Executive Team meetings including myself, Keith Durbin from Metro IT, senior management from our vendor, and project staff from all three organizations to receive updates and resolve high level issues pending on the project.
- Community Outreach and Engagement Specialist Miriam Leibowitz, Director of Operations Carolyn Riggs-Farrar, and I attended the annual meeting and update with the Youth Action team from the Oasis Center. About 10 high school students from a variety of schools are on this year's team and have conducted numerous transit-related projects.
- WeGo staff has been actively engaged with City Emergency Management and Social Services staff to support the City's planning for cold weather homeless response. As in past years, we are providing emergency cold weather transit cards and supporting special moves when the city must activate its emergency shelters.
- RTA Items
 - The second of four WeGo Star locomotives has been shipped off to be rebuilt. It is expected to be returned to service in the spring of 2020.
 - Staff members are working on receiving eight new used cars for the Star from a railroad in Michigan. The sales agreement with the RTA has been completed, and the seller is working on several make-ready items before we accept the fleet and move it to Nashville.
 - Construction bids are out for an expansion of the Mt. Juliet Park & Ride Lot. This lot is over capacity at 160 spaces, and we will be adding about 100 spaces. This project has taken on greater urgency as adjoining businesses where overflow riders have been parking have started tagging cars.
 - We have begun discussions with the City of Murfreesboro to potentially advance a joint project that would include construction of a new operating facility for their city bus system, Rover, and incorporate a permanent park-and-ride lot for RTA commuter service.

VIII. Other Business: There was no other business at this time.

IX. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Attested:

Gail Carr Williams
Chair

Margaret L. Behm
Secretary