

NASHVILLE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Board of Directors Meeting

April 22, 2021

I. **Call to Order:** Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the declaration of a state of emergency by Governor Bill Lee, the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (Nashville MTA) held a special, limited agenda meeting via videoconference on Thursday, April 22, 2021 to conduct essential business to protect the health, safety and welfare of Tennesseans in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. This meeting was held in accordance with Executive Order No. 78 in order to discuss essential business.

II. **Roll Call of Persons Present:** Gail Carr Williams, Chair; Janet Miller, Vice Chair; Mary Griffin, Member; Walter Searcy, Member; Secretary Margaret Behm; Chief Executive Officer Stephen G. Bland, Chief Financial Officer Ed Oliphant, Chief Operating Officer Andy Burke, Director of Service Quality Dan Freudberg, Director of Planning & Grants Felix Castrodad, Director of Procurement and Business Diversity Amber Gooding, Nick Oldham, Sr. Safety Manager, and Sr. Executive Assistant & Board Liaison Monica Howse.

A quorum was established, and Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Walter Searcy made a motion to approve the March 25, 2021 minutes. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Janet Miller and unanimously approved by the board by roll call vote.

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. Darius Knight was not able to join the meeting but sent in his written comments below:

- Mr. Knight asked the Maintenance Department if they could look into the brake issues with some of the 2020 Gillig buses. He said that they are jerking when they first take off and when they brake again, and this could potentially lead to a customer falling. He also said that it could be that operators need more training on how to operate the buses.

John Bull

Mr. John Bull's public comments were as follows:

- Mr. Bull said that he has completed his second Pfizer vaccine and he is starting to use WeGo Public Transit more frequently. Still wearing a mask per guidelines and does not wish to scare the children.
- Mr. Bull said the buses are running precisely on time. In particular, #23 is running more frequently and seems to be addressing the overcrowding issues.
- Mr. Bull said that he was excited about the "WeGo Link Mobility On Demand" pilot and he recently signed up to be a beta tester.
- Mr. Bull suggested that we allow buses to run an hour late in the evening to accommodate those that work on second shift.

Naoka Boatwright

Ms. Naoka Boatwright's comments were as follows:

- Ms. Boatwright said that she has been commuting from Franklin to Vanderbilt in the last 2 and half years, and she appreciates RTA service very much.

- Ms Boatwright said that she was very thankful that she could still commute from Franklin to Vanderbilt every day, but with the recent changes, Vanderbilt employees have only one option in the morning and one in the afternoon. This creates a 9.5 hour workday, which is a very long day. She said that it would be much appreciated if there could be an additional bus route that would pick up passengers at the 21 st Avenue bus stop in front of Vanderbilt each afternoon, especially now that Vanderbilt employees can ride the bus for free. She said, if there are more choices, more people would consider riding an RTA bus.
- Mr. Bland asked that Director of Planning and Grants Felix Castrodad reach out to Ms. Boatwright to discuss her specific concerns.

IV. Operations & Finance Committee Report: Walter Searcy introduced the following items for discussion and action:

- Monthly Financial Report Compared to Budget (OF-D-21-010):** Chief Financial Officer Ed Oliphant reported and reflected on the statement of operations for the month of February 2021 compared to the budget and balance sheet as of February 28, 2021. CFO Oliphant availed himself for questions and there was no further discussion at this time.
- Debt Obligation Notification (OF-D-21-011):** Chief Financial Officer Ed Oliphant reported: In March 2021, the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (Nashville MTA) Board authorized Nashville MTA to enter into a 3-month extension of its existing line of credit loan starting at \$14 million with Fifth Third Bank with the possibility of increasing the loan up to \$20 million if needed. The Metro Council set Nashville MTA's borrowing limit at up to \$20 million through June 30, 2021 as stated in the city's FY2021 Budget Resolution which became effective July 1, 2020. The loan was needed due to delays in receiving the FY 2021 Section 5307 formula capital grant funding. Nashville MTA uses a portion of this grant funding to pay for preventive maintenance and paratransit operating costs. The State of Tennessee Comptroller's Office requires any public entity to submit a report of debt obligations to be filed within 45 days of entering into any debt agreement. It must also be presented to the governing body of the public entity and be included in a public meeting. A copy of the submission, which is included for reference, was filed with the Comptroller's Office on April 7, 2021.

We signed a three-month extension agreement for our Revolving Credit Promissory Note with Fifth Third Bank effective April 1, 2021 with a borrowing capacity from \$14 million to \$20 million, if needed, with an expiration of the note on June 30, 2021. This loan is needed to cover our cash flow needs through the remainder of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. The terms of the loan are as follows:

Term:	Three Months
Maturity Date:	June 30, 2021
Interest Rate:	Variable – LIBOR Rate plus 1.65%
Legal Fee:	\$920 paid to Butler Snow Law Firm representing Fifth Third Bank
Non-Use Fee:	20 basis points on the daily unused principal amount of the note, charged quarterly. Maximum fee will not exceed \$7,000 on \$14 million and \$10,000 if the loan is increased to \$20 million.

We have submitted our grant application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in order to gain access to this funding as it relates to our preventive maintenance and ADA paratransit services. As soon as we receive these grant funds, the loan will be paid down to minimize our interest expense.

c. **Monthly Operating Statistics (OF-D-21-012)**: Director of Service Quality Dan Freudberg reported and reflected on the monthly operating statistics report through February 28, 2021. Mr. Freudberg availed himself for questions and there was no further discussion at this time.

V. **New Initiative & Community Engagement Committee Report**: There were no discussion or action items to be presented this month.

VI. **CEO's Report**: CEO Bland reported the following:

1. Employees off on COVID leave remains relatively low at 6 as of this morning. An event with round two of vaccinations is being held at Nestor this week – we have about 150 employees who participated in the first round. We'll be surveying employees voluntarily about vaccination status over the next month or so.
2. Mayor Cooper's State of Metro Address is scheduled for April 29 at the Music City Center. This is when we expect to learn his projected budget recommendations for FY2021-22.
3. GNRC completed the regional suballocation process for American Rescue Plan Act funds. MTA will receive the lion's share of funding, at \$46,243,245 of the \$48,243,245 coming to the Nashville region. The RTA, Franklin Transit and TMA Group will split the rest.
4. Members of the DTO Board are continuing negotiations with ATU Local 1235 on a new collective bargaining agreement. The current agreement expires at the end of June. Bill Miller, who recently retired as COO, is staying on in a part-time role to lead the bargaining team for DTO.
5. Andy Burke is fully on board as our Chief Operating Officer, and you'll be hearing from him in the coming months.
6. In other staff news, Renuka Christoff joined us this week as our new Director of Marketing, Sales and Communication. She will have a more than full plate, and I know you'll enjoy working with her.
7. We have a total of 6 people that signed up as Beta testers for our new WeGo Link program. WeGo Link is our partnership with Uber to provide first mile/last mile service in Antioch. People traveling from an 8 square mile area in Antioch can connect to our 55 route at either Nashboro Village or Bell Road stations.
8. The design team for the North Nashville Transit Center held an operations programming workshop with our operating personnel from Operations, Maintenance Facilities, Security, Safety, Planning, etc. last week to start scoping the new facility. From this they have begun to develop site concepts. In parallel, Perri DuGuard of duGard Communications is also advancing an overall community engagement plan. Related to this project, we are participating in a broader Metro inter-departmental task force relative to North Nashville to coordinate planning and community engagement for a variety of projects and initiatives.
9. Although this month's agenda is rather light, we'll keep you busy next month as we begin discussions on next year's operating budget and capital investment plan. On the topic of next month's meeting, it is unlikely that the Governor will extend his remote meeting Executive Order and we'll likely need to meet in person. Monica is examining options for a larger meeting space so we can adequately spread out.
10. We are working with the Mayor's Office, Public Works, Metro Planning, and the Downtown Partnership on advancing the Downtown Neighborhood Traffic Project. This project includes funding from Metro, WeGo, the Downtown Partnership and TDOT. WeGo has been asked to provide administrative support by acting as the procurement agency for the project.

11. On the RTA side:

- a. We continue to work with the City of Murfreesboro regarding the possibility of adding a park-and-ride lot in Murfreesboro adjacent to their planned facility for Rover, their local transit service.
- b. We met with the Board of Directors of the Nashville and Eastern Rail Authority in support of a private developer constructing a boarding platform at Mt. Juliet Station that mirrors the existing platform on the opposite side of the tracks, adjacent to the Vintage Station North development. The Executive Committee authorized their General Counsel and Chief Engineer to work with RTA and the developer to further advance this proposal.
- c. We met with Federal Transit Administration Region 4 Staff to discuss options to continue possible joint development opportunities adjacent to Donelson Station. This follows initiatives by Metro Council Member Jeff Syracuse to jump start the transit oriented development discussion in the Donelson area.
- d. We are soliciting information from the consulting community to examine future options for enhancing the Star in accordance with the range of options included in the City Transportation Plan. These run the gamut from maintaining the status quo, to incremental improvements to add a small number of trips to significant investments including the installation of positive train control.

VII. Other Business: Chair Williams acknowledged Ms. Faye DiMassimo, Senior Advisor for Transportation and Infrastructure Office of Mayor John Cooper, and asked if she had anything to share.

Ms. DiMassimo said that she was excited about the Downtown Neighborhood Traffic Project and said that it's going to be an exceptional partnership between the Mayor's office, WeGo Public Transit, the Tennessee Department of Transportation, and the Downtown Partnership and the notion of how we focus on transit prioritization. She said this project will be kicked off sometime in May.

She said the Council approved the establishment of a Department of Transportation, so the Solid Waste functions of Public Works will migrate over to Water for the time being, and they will be standing up a department of transportation and recruiting nationally for a new director. She said they are looking for someone with a multimodal perspective and background, and a proven record of success and implementation so that position can be a strong partner to the efforts that WeGo leads.

Ms. DiMassimo said that she was excited about a couple of other projects in the works; the first being the kickoff for smart parking for downtown, in the Midtown areas. She said that they held a prebid meeting earlier in the week and had 15 interested parties participate in the prebid and she was very pleased with that kind of competitive interest in the project. Ms. DiMassimo said that she was also excited about the Jefferson Street project. She said that they recently applied for the Jefferson street cap through some of the federal funding that's become available through the Biden administration to begin to heal the intrusion of the interstate into the incredibly vibrant black community in the Jefferson Street area.

Ms. DiMassimo concluded her remarks by thanking CEO Bland and WeGo Public Transit for the partnership and said she is looking forward to all future successes

VIII. Chair's Report: Chair Williams reported the following:

Chair Williams expressed her appreciation to Ms. DiMassimo for being present and sharing information with the board members and staff. She said that she had the opportunity to sit on a panel with Ms. DiMassimo last week and it was good to be able to share with her and to know that we have so much interest in what's going on in the region and here in Nashville from so many leaders in our city and region

She said that she appreciated Vice-Chair Miller's comments on how important the budget cycle is for MTA, particularly this year and every year.

Chair Williams concluded her remarks by saying that she was proud of everyone at MTA and that everyone continues to set the standard for excellence on how to be great citizens here in Nashville and how they support transit here in Nashville.

IX. Adjournment: With no further business, Chair Williams called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Walter Searcy made a motion to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Attested:

Gail Carr Williams
Chair

Margaret L. Behm
Secretary: