

**NASHVILLE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**

**June 24, 2021**

I. **Call to Order:** The regular meeting of the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (Nashville MTA) Board of Directors was held at the Music City Center, located at 201 Rep John Lewis Way S., Nashville, TN 37203 on Thursday, June 24, 2021.

II. **Roll Call of Persons Present:** Gail Carr Williams, Chair; Janet Miller, Vice Chair; Mary Griffin, Member; Jessica Dauphin, Member; Walter Searcy, Member; Secretary Margaret Behm; Chief Executive Officer Stephen G. Bland, Chief Administrative Officer, Rita Roberts-Turner, Chief Financial Officer Ed Oliphant, Chief Operating Officer Andy Burke, Chief Development Officer Trey Walker, Director of Planning & Grants Felix Castrodad, Director of Marketing & Communications Renuka Christoph, and Sr. Executive Assistant & Board Liaison Monica Howse.

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

**Approval of Minutes:** Vice-Chair Janet Miller made a motion to approve the May 20, 2021 minutes. The motion was seconded by Mary Griffin and unanimously approved by the board.

**Public Comments:** Chair Williams opened the floor for public comments. The public was reminded that comments were limited to three minutes.

**John Bull**

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

- Mr. Bull said that he was excited about moving back to pre-covid levels with the typical 4-8 trips a day.
- Mr. Bull said QuickTicket works well, he solely uses his phone app because it's one less card to carry.
- Mr. Bull said that he recently started using Google Maps for scheduling because it seems slightly more precise than the Transit App.
- Mr. Bull said that the Eco seat for the bus stops can't handle a full bench w/o site work.
- Mr. Bull said he's excited about the Better Bus Program that will begin in October and that WeGo is moving away from the hub system.
- Mr. Bull said that he's still hopeful of wireless capabilities on the buses.

**Darius Knight**

Mr. Darius Knight's public comments were as follows:

- Mr. Knight asked the Operations staff to continue motivating operators at the beginning of each shift to keep the upward morale among the bus drivers.
- Mr. Knight said that it would be nice if a similar study could be done on the Cayce Homes project complexes that the city owns on Murfreesboro Pike (near the Charles E Davis Blvd.) regarding housing and transit discussions.
- Mr. Knight said that he believes that we shouldn't continue to invest money in the repairs at the Nestor location, but find another location with a state of the art garage that houses all of the main offices, and as a bonus, a transit station attached to it.

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

- a. **Monthly Financial Report Compared to Budget (OF-D-21-016)**: The Monthly Financial Report Compared to Budget Report was included in the board packet for review purposes but was not verbally discussed at the board meeting. If any board member had questions that were instructed to reach out to Chief Financial Officer Ed Oliphant for clarification and additional information.
- b. **WeGo Liability Insurance Renewal (M-A-21-011)**: Staff requested the Board to authorize the Chief Executive Officer to enter into a contract with RLI Insurance for our liability coverage for the period effective July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 for \$3 million in coverage with a \$100,000 deductible for a premium of approximately \$1,240,753.
- Mr. Walter Searcy made a motion to approve the WeGo Liability Insurance Renewal. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Janet Miller and unanimously approved by the board.
- c. **MTA-RTA Contract Renewal for EasyRide Services (M-A-21-012)**: Staff requested the Board approve Nashville MTA entering into a contract with the RTA that calls for the Nashville MTA to reimburse RTA for EasyRide trips provided to State employees participating in the EasyRide program at a rate of \$3.15 per ride for a period of one year, beginning July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.
- Mr. Walter Searcy made a motion to approve the MTA-RTA Contract Renewal for EasyRide Services. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jessica Dauphin and unanimously approved by the board.
- d. **MTA-RTA EasyRide Program Revenue Sharing Agreement (M-A-21-013)**: Staff requested the Board approve the renewal of the EasyRide Program Revenue Sharing Agreement with RTA for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 based upon the formula explained above and that Nashville MTA will continue to be the Master Contractor for the EasyRide Program and will share revenues with RTA based upon the calculated formula. Each Board will review the agreement on an annual basis to assess if any changes should be made to the Agreement going forward.
- Mr. Walter Searcy made a motion to approve the MTA-RTA EasyRide Program Revenue Sharing Agreement. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mary Griffin and unanimously approved by the board.
- e. **MTA-RTA Management Contract Renewal (M-A-21-014)**: Staff requested the Board approve entering a new five-year contract with RTA for MTA to manage and oversee all operations of the RTA at an annual cost of \$844,056. The contract shall become effective July 1, 2021 and terminate June 30, 2026. The compensation under the contract may be adjusted as necessary beginning July 1, 2022 and each year thereafter for the life of the contract by mutual agreement of both parties. There is also a termination clause in the contract that allows either party to terminate the contract for any reason at any time with a 30-day written notice to the other party.
- Mr. Walter Searcy made a motion to approve the MTA-RTA Management Contract Renewal. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Janet Miller and unanimously approved by the board.
- f. **MTA-RTA Contract Renewal or Regional Transit Services (M-A-21-015)**: Staff requested the Board approve the renewal of two contracts with the RTA consisting of Contract 1 for regional bus services and Contract 2 for connecting bus services supporting commuter rail. Both contracts are for a period of one year beginning July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022 for the following base amounts:
- Contract #1 for a not-to-exceed amount of \$1,733,980 for regional bus service; and,
  - Contract #2 for a not-to-exceed amount of \$320,199 for connecting buses supporting commuter rail.

Mr. Walter Searcy made a motion to approve the MTA-RTA Contract Renewal or Regional Transit Services. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jessica Dauphin and unanimously approved by the board.

- g. MTA State EasyRide Contract Renewal (M-A-21-016):** Staff requested Board approval for the Nashville MTA to enter into a contract with TDOT for the EasyRide program at \$2.50 per ride and \$3.70 for AccessRide with a contract amount of \$1.75 million and a contract term of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

Mr. Walter Searcy made a motion to approve the MTA State EasyRide Contract Renewal. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mary Griffin and unanimously approved by the board.

- h. StrIDe MOU Agreement (M-A21-017):** Staff requested the Board approve the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Nashville MTA and the Metropolitan Board of Public Education for the purposes of transportation services for registered MNPS high school students in grades nine through twelve, and MNPS middle school students in grades five through eight who qualify. Cost of StrIDe card cardstock will be covered by MNPS. The contract will remain in effect through June 30, 2022 at a reimbursement rate of \$0.70 per bus trip and \$3.70 per trip for WeGo Access to Nashville MTA.

Mr. Walter Searcy made a motion to approve the StrIDe MOU Agreement. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Janet Miller and unanimously approved by the board.

- i. Monthly Operating Statistics (OF-D-21-017):** The Monthly Operating Statistics were included in the board packet for review purposes but was not verbally discussed at the board meeting. If any board member had questions they were instructed to reach out to Chief Operating Officer Andy Burke for clarification and additional information.

- j. Annual Bus Maintenance Audit (OF-D-21-018):** Chief Operating Officer Andy Burke reported the following:

In November 2015, the first maintenance performance audit was conducted by Transit Resource Center (TRC) of the WeGo Public Transit Fleet Maintenance program. This first audit in 2015 was part of an extensive evaluation where findings from that study indicated that annual audits were needed to track maintenance performance over time.

Since then, it has evolved into a phased working plan for transformation within the bus maintenance department at the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (Nashville MTA). Based on the initial results from the 2015 audit, the maintenance department has initiated multiple strategies for enhancement, including manpower shifts, equipment purchase, documentation processes and training updates.

This is the sixth maintenance performance audit conducted by Transit Resource Center (TRC) of WeGo Public Transit. This maintenance performance audit consisted of a physical inspection of 24 vehicles (16 buses and eight vans) selected at random, and a records review and fluids analysis of eight vehicles also selected at random, the same process used during previous audits.

The WeGo Public Transit Fleet Maintenance program has annually renewed this independent audit practice with TRC. To gain a better understanding of how we have performed over time this year, the annual fleet assessment has been completed and we are pleased to report our annual progress results and next steps for improvement in bus maintenance.

Mr. Burke and Director of Fleet Maintenance Carl Rokos reviewed trends in the maintenance performance audit findings, which have shown an overall decline in average defects per bus, as well as out of service defects per bus. Key areas of focus in the coming year will be upgrades to maintenance training facilities and curriculum, and a benchmarking review of maintenance staffing levels.

IV. **New Initiative & Community Engagement Committee Report:** Vice-Chair Miller introduced the following items for discussion and action:

- a. **Nestor Modernization Study Task Order (M-A-21-018):** In March 2017, the Board approved the award of a contract to HDR Engineering, Inc. for task-order based program management consultant services to support the implementation of the nMotion strategic plan. The contract had a base duration of three years with two one-year renewal options and a maximum annual value of \$4.5 million.

The Nestor Facility Modernization Study will evaluate various alternatives to modernize the existing facility to provide more efficient use of space, equip the facility to service the new generation of buses, improve staff spaces, and provide up-to-date safety and security features. In addition to identifying modernization options, the study will also look at potential relocation options should modernization prove infeasible due to site constraints. It will provide high level cost estimates for both modernization and relocation to assist the Board in making future decisions about the facility. Primarily, the site is constrained by its presence in the floodplain of the Cumberland River, which will limit the Authority's ability to expand the footprint of the physical facility if necessary.

Staff requested the Board to provide the Chief Executive Officer the authority to enter a Nestor Modernization Study Task Order under the contract with HDR for a base amount of \$358,445, with a contingency amount of \$36,000, for a total not-to-exceed total of \$394,445. The task order will be funded using federal CARES Act funds as this project is directly tied to the overall resilience of the Authority in keeping with the stated purpose of this program, and has an anticipated schedule of 9 months. Following completion of the study, the scope includes a full presentation to the Board on identified findings and alternative approaches.

Vice-Chair Janet Miller made a motion to approve the Nestor Modernization Study Task Order. The motion was seconded by Mr. Walter Searcy and unanimously approved by the board.

- b. **FY2022 Proposed Operating Budget (M-A-21-019):** CFO Ed Oliphant and Chief Executive Officer Steve Bland led a discussion on the FY2022 Proposed Operating Budget Forecast with the Board.

This action item presented the proposed budget for FY2022 and was a follow up from the May 2021 Board meeting in which we discussed relevant background information that went into the development of the FY2022 budget as well as the impact of COVID-19, the CARES Act, the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and the FY2021-22 Metro Nashville appropriation to the MTA, which was formally approved by the Council on June 15.

The Committee recommended that the Board adopt the FY2022 budget as presented today.

Vice-Chair Janet Miller made a motion to approve the FY2021 Proposed Operating Budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Walter Searcy and unanimously approved by the board.

- c. **Adoption of the FY2022-2026 Capital Investment Plan (M-A-21-020):** Director of Planning & Grants Felix Castrodad presented the following:

The Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA) Capital Investment Plan prioritizes needs, identifies funding sources, and sets timelines for MTA's capital projects over a five-year period. The plan outlines regulatory, state of good repair, growth and expansion needs that guide the Authority's future project development activity. Generally, projects identified in the first year of the plan are relatively firm in scope and budget while projects in out-years are likely more conceptual.

Staff recommended a Capital Investment Plan for the period of FY2022-2026. Overall, investments totaling \$41,670,854 are recommended in Year One (FY2022) of the plan, with a total project investment recommendation of \$198,444,931 over the life of the plan. Projects

identified in Year One have access to full funding. Overall, we project a balanced capital budget over the full 5 years, while being relatively conservative in estimating future resources.

Vice-Chair Janet Miller made a motion to approve the Adoption of the FY2022-2026 Capital Investment Plan. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jessica Dauphin and unanimously approved by the board.

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

1. Design work continues on the North Nashville Transit Center project. We held a live event that was also live streamed on Facebook on May 22 where project staff illustrated the nature of neighborhood transit centers and we gathered input on the public facing elements of the center that people would like to see. As part of this effort, a survey has been published for people to respond to, and it remains online via our website. Mr. Bland thanked Member Walter Searcy for his attendance at the event.
2. We discussed the Metro budget process as part of our overall discussion on our Operating Budget and Capital Plans. Again, we'd like to thank the Mayor and Council for restoring stability to our operating budget, and for the Mayor's commitment of \$26 million in Metro funding to our capital projects to the next Capital Spending Plan proposal, which is expected to go to Council in the Fall. Mr. Bland thanked Members Gail Carr-Williams and Janet Miller who attended the Metro Council public hearing on the operating budget to speak on behalf of the formation and staffing of the Metro Department of Transportation.
3. Metro has kicked off their planning effort for the East Bank. Felix Castrodad is representing us on the steering committee for this effort.
4. The public comment period for our pending Fall service changes has closed, and we had robust public engagement. Staff is compiling the input to examine final service recommendations that we'll be bringing forth at your July meeting. Certainly, our intent is to restore service to full pre-pandemic levels (we're currently at about 90%). Beyond that are several specific Better Bus service expansion proposals that have been accounted for in the operating budget just approved. However, like almost every employer, we are growing increasingly concerned about hiring and retaining staff in the "post-pandemic" environment. As of now, we are fully staffed at the Bus Operator position for our current service level. However, with restoration to full service, this would put us just under 4% short of necessary positions, and with Better Bus enhancements we'd be over 9% short. We are assessing the labor market and our options now but will need to take these realities into account in the recommendations we bring forward in July. If this issue is not resolved, we'd be better off holding off on service expansion to remain reliable than to put out additional service that we can't deliver. Beyond staffing levels, global issues with supply chains in various industries are starting to materialize in our equipment acquisitions. This includes an order of 25 small buses for Access and low patronage routes, and 10 buses for RTA commuter services that are now facing uncertain delivery schedules.
5. We are collaborating with Metro Nashville on the Downtown Traffic Study that was included in the Metro Nashville Transportation Plan. This will be an effort to examine all the uses of our Downtown Street Network and develop various measures of optimizing the space available. A primary point of interest for WeGo will be the examination of transit priority corridors. We are handling the procurement of consulting services for this project on behalf of Metro, and you can expect to see reporting on the project at future meetings, including an eventual recommendation for contract award.
6. On the RTA side:
  - a. We received information from 4 consulting firms 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.

- b. In similar fashion to MTA, the RTA Board met this month and approved the Authority's Operating Budget and Capital Plan, as well as the mirror image actions between MTA and RTA that you approved earlier today.
- c. RTA Board Members Mayor Ketron of Rutherford County, Mayor Vogle of Robertson County, Mayor Holt of Sumner County, Mayor Brown of the City of Gallatin and Governor's Appointee Ed Cole joined me in a meeting with TDOT Officials to expand dialogue about the future plans of the RTA, and the continued need for the State's financial support.

**VII. Chair's Report:** Chair Williams reported the following:

Chair Williams said that it was good for us to be back in person and to finally get to meet our newest board members, Jessica Dauphin and Mary Griffin in person.

She also acknowledged and welcomed Ms. Renuka Christoph as the Director of Marketing and Communications at Nashville MTA.

Chair Williams congratulated CEO Bland and staff on the restored budget. She said that she was excited about the restored budget and she admits that it's going to be a lot more work, creativity, and innovation that is going to be required by all. She said that the board members will assist and support MTA's efforts in every way. She also mentioned another component of the Metro budget which is the funding of the Department of Transportation from the Mayor's office. She said that she's looking forward to seeing how that office works with MTA and helps to further the work that we're doing and to make it more comprehensive and allow for better transit for all as a result of the Department of Transportation.

Chair Williams said that she's looking forward to all that will come out of the Nestor renovations.

Nashville has a new vibe about transit. It feels more collaborative than we have felt, and it doesn't feel as isolated as in the past.

Chair Williams said that she was excited about the partnership with Amazon and for them to consider us as a partner says that they see the good work that is being done by MTA every day.

Chair Williams concluded her remarks by reminiscing and acknowledging her father, a former transit driver. She said that she recently had a chance to look through some of her father's old things and found work ID badges and letters that passengers had written him about how he made them feel safe when they rode his bus. She said it is because of this that she found a renewed commitment to transit and her work at MTA, and the work that this board does to make certain that it's a part of a legacy of what we do as servants and what she was taught and raised to do as a daughter of transit. She said that she was proud and appreciative of all that we do.

**VIII. Other Business:**

- a. **Annual Review of Board Ethics and Conflict of Interest Report:** Secretary Margaret Behm reminded the board members of their role and responsibilities as board members.

In 2006, the Tennessee General Assembly required municipalities to adopt a code of ethics by July 1, 2007, which applies to boards, commissions, authorities, corporations, and other entities created or appointed by the municipality. The legislation permitted such entities to adopt model codes developed by the Municipal Technical Advisory Services (MTAS) or by the County Technical Advisory Service (CTAS) as an alternative to drafting a policy of their own.

Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (Nashville MTA) Counsel Margaret Behm recommended the MTAS model to the Nashville MTA Board of Directors, which was adopted on June 19, 2007. The Code of Ethics is reviewed with all new Board members and regularly reviewed with the full Board.

- b. **2021-22 Election of Nashville MTA Board Officers:** Chair Williams turned this portion of the meeting over to Board Secretary Margaret Behm. Ms. Behm reported as Secretary of the Board it was her role to conduct the 2021-22 Election of Nashville MTA Board Officers. In accordance with the Metropolitan Charter, the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (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 Behm opened the floor for nomination and it was the will of this board and unanimously approved by all board members to retain Gail Carr Williams as Board Chair and Janet Miller as Vice Chair.

- IX. **Adjournment:** With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

**Attested:**

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**Gail Carr Williams**  
*Chair*

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**Margaret L. Behm**  
*Secretary:*