



MINUTES
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
FEBRUARY 20, 2013

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The regular meeting of the Regional Transportation Authority Board of Directors was held in the meeting room at Music City Central at 400 Charlotte Avenue on February 20, 2013. A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. by RTA Chair Karl Dean, Mayor Metro Nashville & Davidson County.
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Chair Dean entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2013 meeting. Proper motion was made and seconded. The vote of approval was unanimous and the minutes were adopted as presented.
- III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no public comments.
- IV. **MARKETING REPORT:** Committee Member Ed Cole reported that the committee received an update on marketing activities from Marketing and Communications Director Patricia Harris-Morehead. Included in the report were anticipated plans for next fall and the Game Day Express as well as Wilson County events around the Music City Star. At the next meeting, the committee plans to look at new opportunities for marketing the RTA services.
- V. **OPERATIONS REPORT:** Portland Mayor Ken Wilbur reported the December numbers were down a little bit due to the holidays in December. He also noted changes in the format of the reports. A new consolidated report shows operating statistics on each route to give a broader regional comparison.
- VI. **FINANCE AND AUDIT REPORT:** Committee Chair Paul Webb reported that year to date in our annual financials are very favorable. At the end of December the balance sheet was still very positive and the line of credit had not been accessed. The accounts payable are in good order as well. A preliminary budget will be presented in April.
- VII. **RTA MASTER PLAN (I-013-002):** Planning Director Jim McAteer presented a briefing paper with one approach to updating the RTA Master Plan. MTA will be updating their master plan this summer and this is an opportunity to expand the work that was done through the MPO 2035 Transportation Plan and create the first ever RTA Master Plan.

The recommendation is to coordinate this effort through hiring one consultant team to perform the analyses and create one joint document that provides an overall vision for transit in the Region but includes two separate stand-alone components of an RTA and MTA Master Plan.

This would need to be closely coordinated with the Nashville Area MPO and other stakeholders to achieve both a vision and a short, mid, and long-term list of projects (or steps) towards achieving that vision.

VIII. CHAIR'S REPORT: Chair Dean noted his appreciation for all involved in bringing Governor Glendening, the former governor of Maryland, to the city last week when he spoke on the future of Metropolitan areas. One of his main themes was the need for everyone to be serious about transit. Successful cities and regions do not become successful without planning and working on it and if we ignore transit it will be to our peril. Chair Dean then presented former RTA Chair Mayor Joanne Graves with a plaque recognizing her leadership as chair of the RTA Board during 2011 and 2012.

IX. CEO'S REPORT: CEO Paul Ballard deferred his report to General Manager Lora Baulsir.

X. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT: RTA General Manager Lora Baulsir presented the following update:

- a. **POSITIVE TRAIN CONTROL UPDATE (I-013-003):** In 2008, Congress enacted the Rail Safety Improvement Act in response to a commuter rail and freight train accident that several people were killed or injured in and it was determined to be caused by human error. This Act requires all passenger rail operations to install Positive Train Control, or PTC, on their lines by the end of 2015. PTC is technology that would automatically stop the train if there are indications that there is a potential hazard that the engineer is not responding to appropriately. We would be required to build at least two communication towers, install a back office server at Nashville and Eastern's dispatch office and install several pieces of equipment on the rail line and locomotives. We estimate that it would cost about \$15,000,000.

We have submitted a PTC Implementation plan to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and it has been approved. However, we, along with the majority of the other smaller railroads are facing some obstacles to implementation that we have voiced to the FRA. First, is the funding for a project of this magnitude. The FRA established a grant for implementation of PTC, but no funds are appropriated to the program. The second issue is that much of the software and hardware required to implement PTC is still in the developmental or testing phase; and other equipment has been bought up by the larger class I railroads like Amtrak, Norfolk Southern or CSX that have more flexibility with funding than we have. Another issue is that all PTC systems must be interoperable so that any train operating on a PTC track can communicate with the host railroad's PTC system. The Class I railroads like CSX, Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern have formed a consortium and have purchased licenses to frequencies in the 220 MHz range but the smaller railroads might have trouble purchasing or leasing frequencies.

Because there are so many significant issues being raised from so many railroads, the Federal Railroad was asked to submit a report to Congress outlining the issues and their recommendations. Bottom line is that they agreed that there are challenges to implementation by the current deadline and

they recommended that the deadline be extended to 2020. That report was submitted in August and there have not been any changes to the deadline. One other recommendation of the FRA is that they be allowed to approve a railroad to use alternative safety technology in lieu of PTC, particularly in areas with lower safety risks. There is already an exemption from PTC for any system that operates twelve or less trips per day. We operate twelve trips Monday through Thursday and fourteen on Friday. So we are right on the edge of being exempt anyways. Add on top of that our excellent safety record and that there is not a huge amount of freight traffic on the line, we think we might be eligible for some smaller version of PTC. We are working with the FRA on whether we might qualify for a Temporal Separation plan. This would require us to put lockout equipment on each of the three branches off of the Music City Star line, keeping freight rail from entering the line while the Star is in operation. They seemed pretty open to that, but still had concern that there could be a passenger train collision with another one of our passenger trains. They may be receptive to having us do more efficiency testing to monitor that. We have sent the FRA several documents related to our operation and they have agreed to come to Nashville to do a site visit, since no one that we have been working with is familiar with our operation. We plan to have a consultant be at that meeting so they can guide us as we see if we can get a smaller PTC option approved or, if we are required to do the full-blown PTC, they can assist us with that process.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS: Ed Cole mentioned the upcoming Transit Leadership Academy.

XII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

Respectfully,

Paula Mansfield

Governor Appointee
RTA Secretary