



**MINUTES**  
**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**  
**NOVEMBER 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, 400 Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, TN on November 20, 2013. A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 10:12 a.m. by Chair Nashville and Davidson County Mayor Karl Dean.
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Chair Dean entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the October 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:** Nashville resident Margo Chambers addressed the Board. Ms. Chambers reminded the Board that the East-West Connector needs to be in compliance with the USDOT Section 4F law. She would like to see the small starts application to be in compliance with the historical preservation act. She would like to have bicycle and pedestrian safety studies, including the effect on fatalities, done for the application.
- IV. **MARKETING REPORT:** Committee Chair Governor's Appointee Kelly Dannenfels reported the committee met in an extended session to discuss rebranding goals and special marketing opportunities. She then reported on the following item:
  - a. **FARELESS FRIDAY: BLACK FRIDAY FREE RIDE DAY(A-13-019):** The committee is recommending approval for an endorsed promotional event for a system wide free-ride day on Friday, November 29<sup>th</sup>. The goal for this is to generate more community awareness and to gain additional riders. On this day, ridership is usually lower than most Fridays on both systems. We have the capacity on the buses and the Music City Star to do this and ask for the Board's approval. Motion was made and seconded. There was no discussion and the vote of approval was unanimous.
- V. **OPERATIONS REPORT:** Committee Chair Portland Mayor Ken Wilber reported that the Operations Committee met last week with Dawn Distler reporting. The fiscal year 2014 numbers remain on a positive note with all 4 corridors reporting double digit increases. The RTA bus express and shuttle services for September 2013 were compared to September of 2012 and show a 30.7% increase. The commuter rail and express bus totals were up 13.6% over the same period last year. Total RTA ridership for fiscal year 2014 to date is reported at 214,561 and the early numbers are trending to 850,000 total rides for the fiscal year. We also reported on the combined public transportation numbers for Middle Tennessee

which shows a 3.2% increase when comparing fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2013. Bus service for MTA, RTA, and Franklin Transit all reported increases again for the fiscal year.

The Music City Star showed an increase in ridership in September. We also noted the 13.2% increase in the route 93/Music City Star West End Shuttle. This is attributed to many riders using this service who are not only train riders but riders from other MTA and RTA services. These riders come into the train station on other services and use the 93 to go to destinations along the route including State Offices and Vanderbilt.

Clarksville Mayor Kim McMillan thanked the committee and RTA for supporting the service in her area, which has “exploded” and continues to show increases each period. RTA CEO, Paul Ballard shared numbers with us from a presentation he gave last week which shows the ridership in 2006 was approximately 40,000 and now we are reporting the FY2014 trend at 850,000. This is an amazing increase. Paul thanked the committee for their leadership in growing our services and achieving these numbers.

In closing, Mayor Wilber shared his public transit experience on his recent trip to Seattle and was impressed with the different modes of transportation offered there.

- VI. FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT:** Committee Chair Rutherford County Mayor Ernest Burgess reported that the committee met last week and both our revenue and expenses are within our budget and our payables are current. He then reported on the following item.
- a. TICKET VENDING MACHINE PURCHASE (A-13-020):** The committee recommends that the Board approve the purchase of twelve (12) Genfare Vendstar eCashless Ticket Vending Machines for a cost not to exceed \$623,478.48. This upgrade is much needed and Formula 5307 funds are available for this purchase. Motion was made and seconded. There was no discussion and the vote of approval was unanimous.
- VII. CHAIR’S REPORT:** Chair Dean took this opportunity to recognize Chief Financial Officer Ed Oliphant who was recently named by the Nashville Business Journal as the CFO of the Year in the non-profit category (audience applause). Chair Dean congratulated Mr. Oliphant and stated that they all know that Ed does a great job and now the whole region knows.
- VIII. CEO’S REPORT:** CEO Paul Ballard deferred his time to General Manager Lora Baulsir.
- IX. GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT:** General Manager Lora Baulsir referred to the dues update report included in the packet and encouraged members with outstanding dues to get them in as soon as possible.

Ms. Baulsir then updated the Board concerning the short line railroad equity fund. She noted that the RTA does not receive funds from the equity fund; however, we lease our line for the Music City Star from the Nashville and Eastern Railroad Authority and they do receive funds from the equity fund.

Historically all of the Class I railroads pay a tax on diesel fuel. A portion of that tax was deposited into the equity fund that TDOT administers. The short line railroads use these funds for track rehab projects. Class I railroads filed a lawsuit stating that it was discriminatory for them to have to pay this tax and they won the lawsuit. There is about \$40 million in that fund and TDOT has frozen that money from the short line railroads use.

The immediate problem is that Nashville and Eastern Railroad Authority has a note that is due in January and another note that is due in June and the railroad property is the collateral on the note. We have been working with Nashville and Eastern and we are comfortable that they have a solution where the Music City Star should not be affected. They have had ongoing conversations with the bank and the bank has agreed to work with Nashville and Eastern on a fairly long term basis to receive interest only payments on the note in January and in June. Meanwhile, the short line railroad is going to try and get some new legislation passed that will include wording for the tax assessment similar to what the trucking industry has for the fuel tax they have to pay. In doing this, it will not be considered discriminatory. This will be the long term solution and Ms. Baulsir will keep the Board advised as this progresses.

There was a single issue on the rail line involving five or six intersections in the Donelson/Hermitage area when a power surge caused the railroad arms to come down when a train was not coming through and then not come down when the train was coming through the intersection. Until this was solved, the train was stopping at the intersection to allow time for the arms to come down. NES now has the problem solved.

In closing, she noted that the TV show *Nashville* is taping tonight at the Riverfront Station and that episode will be aired in February.

- X. **OTHER BUSINESS:** Ed Cole noted that on Friday morning, December 6<sup>th</sup>, the next Transit Citizen Leadership Summit will convene in Clarksville hosted by Mayor McMillan and Mayor Bowers and others. Then, on Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, we will be holding the Robertson County Transit Citizen Leadership Summit that will be hosted by Mayor Bradley and Paul Nutting and others. This will complete seven of our summits and we will be working on the remainders in the first of the New Year. He noted his appreciation to General Manager Baulsir and others who come and make this a success.

- XI. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

Respectfully,

*Paula Mansfield*

Governor Appointee  
RTA Secretary