



**MINUTES**  
**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**  
**MAY 21, 2014**

- 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 May 21, 2014. A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m. by RTA Chair Nashville and Davidson County Mayor Karl Dean.
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Chair Dean entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2014 meeting. Proper motion was made and seconded. The vote of approval was unanimous and the minutes were adopted as presented.
- III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Margo Chambers of Nashville asked the Board about federal funding and late payments and the impacts to the budget. She asked about the financial exposure in total dollars to all of the local governments if the Federal Government continues to pay late on promised funding. Ms. Chambers also asked about the financial exposure in total dollars if the Nashville Metropolitan Council cannot continue to financially support mass transit, including the Music City Star and inquired as to what the alternative options were for financing the Star.
- Steve Riter of Nashville read about the Nashville Chamber's Inner-City Visit to Vancouver and that one of the focuses of the trip was how Vancouver deals with their homeless population. As an advocate for the homeless, he was interested in finding out more information.
- There were no other public comments.
- IV. **SOUTHEAST CORRIDOR REPORT:** Dana Richardson, Murfreesboro Alternate, reported that the committee had met and discussed service between Nashville and Murfreesboro, Smyrna, and LaVergne for the southeast corridor. We conducted a passenger survey in April as an attempt to better understand the passenger use of service and to gather input on the age and preferences of the passengers. Approximately 115 surveys were completed; and, based on the results of that survey and our observations, several service changes have been planned to be instituted.

Some of the morning times on the express service between Murfreesboro and Nashville will be shifted to allow for earlier departures and to better distribute the passenger load on the routes. Depending upon Board approval and the public comment period for the proposed changes, it is anticipated that these would take effect September 29<sup>th</sup> of this year.

RTA will be stepping up the marketing for the service with the current ongoing rebranding effort for the system. The service between Nashville, LaVergne, and Smyrna was increased from 16 to 31 trips in October of 2012 and we continue to see substantial increases in ridership.

- V. **OPERATIONS REPORT:** Committee Chair Portland Mayor Ken Wilber noted that they recognized General Manager of Operations and Maintenance Dawn Distler for the good work she had done for the RTA and congratulated her on assuming the position of Director of Transportation with the city of Knoxville.

Continuing, Chair Wilber reported that our express routes are doing very well when we compare March of 2013 with March of 2014. The Montgomery County service had a 57% increase and the Franklin/Brentwood route had a 21% increase. Comparing all the regional transit services - the MTA, RTA, Murfreesboro, and Franklin systems – the increases seen in all the systems ranged from 8% to 23%.

General Manager Lora Baulsir then gave an update on the Dickson County express bus service pilot project. The pilot ran for two weeks and had good ridership numbers. She noted that there were people who were not able to ride because the schedule times did not accommodate their work shifts. Customers completed a survey and when the regular bus service is planned, schedule times will be based on the feedback received from that survey.

Mayor Wilber then presented the following action item:

- a. **DBE Program Plan Update (A-014-007):** Procurement Manager Greta Beard updated the committee with background information on the current Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Plan and what was needed to ensure the plan remained compliant with the Federal Transit Administration's requirements. Copies of the updated DBE plan were made available to the committee and were also made available at the Board meeting.

The Operations Committee recommends this item as presented to the Board for approval. Motion was seconded. There was no discussion and the vote of approval was unanimous.

- VI. **FINANCE REPORT:** Committee member Franklin Mayor Ken Moore reported that the committee met last week with Controller Shelly McElhane reviewing the financials for the month of March 2014. He stated that overall revenues continue to track favorably when compared to budget through the end of the third quarter.

Several action items were presented at the committee. Mayor Moore noted that taking this action now will allow staff to plan ahead for their marketing efforts. He then presented the following items for the Board's consideration:

- a. **Music City Star Fourth of July Train Service (A-14-008):** This has been a sell-out service for the past several years. If approved by the Board, a total of 950 tickets will go on sale in June. Tickets will be sold on-line through the ticket sales vendor used last year for the Wilson County Fair and the New Year's Eve train service. Because of the popularity of the service, the July 4<sup>th</sup> tickets routinely sell out within the first two or three weeks. The price of the ticket last year was \$12 and we are recommending the same price this year.

Weekly or monthly train tickets may not be used for this special events train. The estimated cost for the operation is \$7,650 and there will be an additional expense related to online ticket sales and other marketing materials. The estimated sales are \$10,800. In the past four years, RTA has had a good return on investment for this annual event, with approximately \$3,000 profit per year.

The Finance Committee recommends that the Board approve operation of the Music City Star for the annual Independence Day (July 4) Fireworks Celebration at Nashville's Riverfront Park. Motion was seconded. There was no discussion and the vote of approval was unanimous.

- b. **Wilson County Fair Service (A-014-009):** Last year, we provided train service for the Wilson County fair and over 500 tickets were sold making it a very successful marketing opportunity. This service was sponsored by the Wilson County Fair Board with no cost incurred by the RTA.

Staff proposes that we operate the service for the 2014 Wilson County Fair, again with the understanding that all costs associated with the fair service not recouped through ticket sales would be the responsibility of the City of Lebanon, whether on their own or through public/private partnerships.

The Finance Committee recommends that the Board authorize service to the 2014 Wilson County Fair with the understanding that costs for the service will be covered through a sponsorship provided by the City of Lebanon. Motion was seconded. There was no discussion and the vote of approval was unanimous.

- c. **Fareless Friday: Black Friday Free Ride Day (A-014-010):** In 2013, the RTA partnered with the Nashville MTA for a joint promotional event for a system wide free-ride day on Friday, November 28. This day after Thanksgiving, or "Black Friday," is traditionally recognized as the first day of the holiday shopping season by retailers and consumers. Since many governmental agencies and some businesses are closed on this particular day, weekday ridership is lower than most Fridays on both the MTA and RTA systems.

The committee believes this is a good opportunity to expose new riders to the train with a minimal loss of revenue. Last year we broke train ridership records with more than 1700 passengers for the day. The Finance Committee recommends that the Board approve this request to implement a system-wide Free-Ride Day on Friday, November 28, 2014. Motion was seconded. The question was asked what would be the cost to operate the train on this day beyond the loss of revenue. It was further noted that the train would be operating that day regardless and the publicity and additional benefits gained through a free-ride day far outweighed the slight loss of revenue. There were no other comments or questions and the vote of approval was unanimous.

- d. **New Year's Eve Train Service (A-014-011):** The New Year's Eve train service is another popular train promotion where we bring people into Nashville for the downtown festivities. Last year the ticket sales easily covered the costs. The Finance Committee recommends that the Board approve the operation of the New Year's Eve train as presented within this

action item. Motion was seconded. The question was raised about the cost and it was clarified that the charge for this service is \$12 for a round trip ticket. There were no further questions or comments and the vote of approval was unanimous.

- e. **Country Music Marathon Train Service (A-14-012):** Just a few months ago the Board approved for staff to work with Mayor Hutto to provide train service to the Country Music Marathon in April, 2014. As it turned out, there was not adequate time to get everything in place necessary to provide the service this year. However, staff would like to be able to go ahead and plan for service to the Country Music Marathon in 2015.

The Finance Committee recommends to the Board that they authorize the operation of train service to the County Music Marathon in 2015 provided a sponsorship can be secured for this service ensuring that no cost will be incurred by the RTA. There were no questions or comments and the vote of approval was unanimous.

- f. **Game Day Express Service (A-014-013):** Staff reviewed results from the last four years of operating the Game Day Express and asked the committee for their input on the continuation of this service. The committee agrees that although the Game Day Express has operated at a loss, we believe that ridership is directly tied with the performance of the Titans and the service does have the potential to grow. The committee discussed the benefits of the service as a marketing tool and felt it was worth the investment. Therefore, the Finance Committee recommends that the Board authorize the operation of the Music City Star to the Titans regular season home games. Motion was seconded. There were no questions or comments and the vote of approval was unanimous.

- VII. **INTERIM CEO'S REPORT:** Interim CEO Ed Oliphant noted that next month staff will be presenting to the Finance Committee a continuation budget. The numbers won't be in until the end of June and there is no meeting in July. Therefore, staff will present an action item next month for a continuation budget through August. Then in August, the actual budget for fiscal year 2015 will be submitted for the Board's approval.

Continuing, Mr. Oliphant gave the Board an update on the MTA Board's Search Committee's efforts to find a permanent CEO. He noted that the MTA Board has reported that there have been a number of qualified applicants and that the process could take another 60 to 90 days before that decision is made.

Mr. Oliphant noted that Dawn Distler, General Manager of Operations and Maintenance, had accepted a position as CEO of Knoxville's transit system and her last day was May 8<sup>th</sup>. Charles Mitchell, current Director of Operations, has been selected to serve as Interim GM of Operations and Maintenance. Mr. Mitchell will be taking over Ms. Distler's responsibilities for the Transportation Committee.

Additionally, Jim McAteer, Director of Planning and Grants, has retired. Serving as the Interim Director for Planning and Grants, Mr. Oliphant has chosen Felix

Castrodad, whom everyone knows from his years with the MPO and is now employed with the MTA.

Mr. Oliphant thanked Williamson County Mayor Rogers Anderson and Franklin Mayor Ken Moore for providing a place to meet to discuss the future of the Williamson County service for which the three year Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding is coming to an end. The #91 and #95 routes for Spring Hill and Franklin\Brentwood are already starting to feel the pains of the federal funding going away. He reported that they are looking at how the partners in that corridor are going to be able to hopefully continue the service. Seat drops will be done to inform the passengers that there could be a possibility for some cancellations. More likely, there will be a consolidation of some of the routes in order for those partners to be able to sustain the financial commitment that is needed for that corridor. He noted that we will be addressing this next year with a couple of other corridors as these CMAQ grants go away.

Governor Appointee Ed Cole noted that the Transit Leadership Academy alumni stand ready to help. If there is anything in particular where citizen leaders in Williamson County and along that corridor, and Rutherford County as this continues to unfold, could be of value he asks that they just be notified. They are ready and willing to work with whoever would be appropriate.

**VIII. CHAIR'S REPORT:** Chair Dean announced that the next community meetings about the Amp would take place tonight and tomorrow night (May 21 & 22) at 6:00 p.m. at the Grand Ballroom at the Music City Center. Amp engineers and project team members will share updates for the project made since the design charettes that solicited input from over 1500 Nashvillians. If you are unable to make the meeting, you can watch it by live stream from the Metro You-tube channel or from the Amp page on the Nashville MTA web site. He noted that this is the first time they have live-streamed a public meeting and is one more way to ensure the people throughout the community have an opportunity to participate.

In closing, he reported that the Citizens Advisory Council is looking at a whole variety of issues and will be working to provide feedback and recommendations to the engineers throughout the final design phase. Their first meeting was last month and focused on the committee's mission and its guiding principles. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, at noon at the downtown library. It is open to the public and all are welcome.

**IX. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT:** General Manager Lora Baulsir reported that most of the park and ride locations are in large parking lots like those of Kroger or Wal-Mart. Consequently, we have ordered Park and Ride signs for all of the locations to make it easier for our customers to know exactly where to park. Ms. Baulsir will be talking with the various Board members to ask their help in getting the local public works department's assistance in putting the signs up at the different park and ride locations.

Our next Rebranding Committee meeting will be held this afternoon. We will be receiving results from the survey done on all of our routes. Ms. Baulsir noted that she is proud to report that we scored very highly on professionalism across the board from the contractors to our customer care department.

Continuing, Ms. Baulsir noted that she had a meeting last week with Mayor Dean Dickey in Maury County. They are not currently members of the RTA, but now that they have joined the MPO, they are interested in joining the RTA and starting express bus service in their area. She will continue to work with him.

We have several bids that are out right now. We are currently out to bid for the express bus contract, which is the service Gray Line currently operates, and we will be bringing that to the Board in the next month. We have also received bids in response to the Master Plan RFP and a committee will be reviewing proposals for that service. Additionally, we have received responses to the RFP for the North West Corridor Study and that process will be a bit longer. We will review the bids and then call people in for interviews and make our decision on that.

In closing, Ms. Baulsir stated that this is the time of year when there are a lot of events taking place in downtown Nashville. Gabe Burgess, our supervisor for the RTA, is working hard to make sure that when those events are happening downtown at the Riverfront area that our customers are impacted as little as possible. This is especially hard to do with all the marathons and CMA week.

**X. OTHER BUSINESS:** Ed Cole noted his appreciation to those who helped to initiate the Dickson service. There will be growing pains, but it is off to a terrific start. Additionally, he noted that in the line of transitions that he would be finishing up at the Transit Alliance at the end of June. A search committee has been formed and that process is underway. In the meantime, Carrie Brumfield, who has been with the Transit Alliance for the past three years, will be carrying the duties of the Transit Alliance forward during the process of the search and new leadership. Mr. Cole will continue in his role as Governor's Appointee on the RTA Board, but as of July 1, Carrie will be the point of contact for the Transit Alliance.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

Respectfully,

*Paula Mansfield*

Governor Appointee  
RTA Secretary