



MINUTES
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
OCTOBER 15, 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 October 15, 2014. A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 10:05 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 August 20, 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 who the CEO of the RTA is. There were no other comments at this time and the time for public comments was closed.

Chair Dean, before continuing with the reports, took a moment to introduce the head of the RTA, CEO Stephen Bland, who is joining RTA and the Nashville MTA most recently from Pittsburgh, PA. Chair Dean stated that Steve has a great track record in mass transit and Mayor Dean believes he will do a wonderful job not only for the city but for the entire region. He then asked Steve to introduce his colleagues.

CEO Bland stated that one of the things that he has been impressed about coming to Nashville MTA and RTA is the high caliber of the staff and he would like for the Board to get a sense of the depth of staff that they have available to them. He then introduced Scheduling Manager Dan Freudberg, who will present the Operations Report, and Controller Shelly McElhaney, who will present the Finance and Audit Report.

Chair Dean then recognized Dan Freudberg for the Operations Report.

- IV. **OPERATIONS REPORT:** Mr. Freudberg referenced the Route Performance Indicator Report for the month of August. While there was a small decline in ridership year-over-year, he noted that August 2014 had one less weekday than August 2013, and given that all the RTA routes are weekday exclusive service, the difference of one day does tend to have an impact on our ridership when we analyze the year-over-year comparisons.

The South East Corridor, although seeing similar declines with one less weekday, actually saw an increase on the 96X Murfreesboro. The 94X Clarksville Express

and the 91X Franklin-Brentwood Express also saw increases. There was a somewhat significant decrease on the 87X Gallatin Express service and that will continue to be monitored to see if that is a trend.

The commuter rail service saw a moderate increase for the month which is notable considering the fewer service days. Overall, we are seeing a 2.9% decrease in ridership versus last year but an increase in overall productivity.

In reviewing the Fiscal Year and Month-to-Month Ridership Comparison report, Mr. Freudberg noted that the Music City Star shows modest gains. Express Bus and Shuttle Services, which includes all the services on the previous Performance Indicator Report with the exception of the Music City Star commuter rail, shows about a 5% decrease and staff contributes that to the fewer service days for August. Vanpool, following a similar trend, showed a 6% year-over-year decrease. Mr. Freudberg expects to see stronger ridership numbers as we move into September when we have comparable number of service days. Total RTA ridership including Vanpool is down 3.5% for the month, but for the fiscal year we are actually up 1.9%. While this is just two months so far, this is still a good indicator for ongoing trends for the service.

Referencing the local bus services in the regional service area as reported in the Nashville and Regional Transportation Authority Fiscal Year and Month-to-Month Ridership Comparison, Mr. Freudberg noted that Franklin showed an especially strong 17.1% increase year-over-year for August 2014 compared to August 2013. Overall, area ridership is down slightly. For the month it is down 1.8%; however, the system as a whole is up 1.5%, including those local service providers and the region as a whole.

- V. **FINANCE & AUDIT REPORT:** Controller Shelly McElhaney reviewed the Statement of Operations Compared to Budget for the period ending August 31, 2014. She stated that she was very pleased with where we are for the first two periods of the fiscal year. Our revenues are right on target and expenses are tracking favorably. The large variance in the service category is due to how our budget was spread, including the fact that the Dickson County service was assumed to start in July. However, this had to be postponed until a park-and-ride location could be secured. Turning to the Comparative Balance Sheets through the month of August, Ms. McElhaney highlighted the Note Payable balance was at \$570,000.
- VI. **CEO'S REPORT:** CEO Steve Bland reported that the RTA Master Plan process has been restarted. Mr. Bland and the Nashville MTA staff have been meeting with Michael Skipper and the MPO staff, as well as the consultants, Nelson Nygard. They have restarted the analytical work that is being done and we expect to kick-off the significant public input process concurrent with the first of the year.

Concerning the postponement of service at the Dickson County Park-and-Ride, staff is working with local officials to identify sites, and we are hopeful of getting something lined up fairly quickly.

We are also working in Clarksville. With TDOT construction in the I-24 corridor, we are going to have some temporary disruption to the existing park-and-ride location. Felix Castrodad and staff are working with TDOT, and also those in Clarksville, to identify an alternative.

We are working with Mayor Graves on the Gallatin Park-and-Ride project. Unfortunately, we had to disqualify the low bidder on that project and are now working with the other two bidders to bring the project within budget.

Mr. Bland recently had the opportunity to look at a couple of the on-going transit development sites along the Music City Star line. He visited Hamilton Springs and also Mt. Juliet and found them to be terrific projects with great developer interest. These can become models around the country for how this type of development is done.

Mayor Bradley has recommended a new appointment for the Robertson County's Governor's appointee vacancy. We are working with TDOT to advance that appointment through the state process.

We are doing some restructuring in the Nashville MTA and RTA. One of the things we are working on is beefing up our project management capabilities. The RTA has just about as many capital projects going on as does the Nashville MTA. A lot of the park-and-ride projects will benefit from this.

Mr. Bland stated that he has had the privilege of meeting with 17 mayors to date and has been scheduled to meet with most of the rest over the upcoming few weeks. He appreciates the time that each mayor has spent with him, knowing that their time is scarce. Going out into the counties has given him an appreciation of the distances traveled to come into Nashville for these meetings and he wants to make the most valuable use of their time. Mr. Bland noted that everyone has been extremely accommodating and he has been truly impressed of the level of knowledge of transit issues in the outlying counties, in particular.

In closing, Mr. Bland stated that if he could summarize three common threads that he has heard from all of the mayors it would be these. First, there is a spirit of cooperation from the regional mayors. This is something that Nashville and the region can be very proud of – the recognition that we all sink or swim together. Secondly, there is a recognized need by everyone, that given the growth in the region, that mass transit is going to have to play a role in that mobility, as well as road and bridge improvements. Then third, there is a keen understanding and a very deep concern about what we do long term to fund the RTA systems and services. A lot of the funding of the RTA is based on grants that aren't going to last forever. There really has to be that long term discussion of how this system is funded, particularly as we continue to see growth and demand, as well as growth in ridership. We are going to have to be able to figure out a way to fund that system on a long term and sustainable basis. That is something he knows has been an ongoing dialog with the Mayor's Caucus and with the MPO. As we unleash the RTA and Nashville MTA strategic planning processes, it is going to be an issue that jumps to the forefront.

VII. CHAIR'S REPORT: Chair Dean agrees that there is a regional collaborative attitude in this area and states that they will have a lot of opportunities over the next few months to continue working on this collaboration. The RTA master plan process is an important one and he assures it will be a very open one and everyone is encouraged to participate. We will have opportunities in the upcoming months to talk about the needs for our growing region to have a more robust mass transit system. The Citizens Advisory Council will wrap up in about two weeks, meeting at noon on Tuesday, October 28th, at the downtown library. As always, this meeting is open to the public and everyone is encouraged to attend.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS: There was no other business.

IX. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

Respectfully,

Paula Mansfield

Governor Appointee
RTA Secretary