



MINUTES
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
JANUARY 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 January 15, 2014. A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by RTA Vice-Chair Clarksville Mayor Kim McMillan.
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Vice-Chair McMillan entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the November 20, 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 Chair Governor's Appointee Kelly Dannenfelser reported the Music City Star's New Year's Eve service was very successful with a complete sell-out of seats available. Next month Marketing and Communications Director Patricia Harris-Morehead will provide information to the committee regarding cost estimates for us to begin discussing rebranding with experts.

Vice-Chair McMillan asked if there were any questions or comments and Lebanon Mayor Craighead suggested that since the response to the New Year's Eve train was fully booked with more requests than seats that next year we consider adding another car to that service.

- V. **OPERATIONS REPORT:** Committee Chair Portland Mayor Ken Wilber reported the Operations Committee met last Tuesday, January 7th with Dawn Distler reporting on the operating statistics. The month to month comparison of numbers for November looked very good, especially considering there was one less operating day in 2013 than 2012. Our corridor services all showed outstanding numbers with the passenger per hour numbers all in double digits. The Clarksville bus service enjoyed a 47% increase for November over last year. The commuter rail and express bus totals were up 5.7% over the same period last year. We also received information on the combined public transportation numbers for Middle Tennessee which indicates a 1.1% increase when comparing fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2013. That is an excellent number when you factor in the one less operating day. 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 for the second month in a row. We are glad to see the numbers for this service continuing to rise.

- a. **UPDATE OF SYSTEM SAFETY PROGRAM PLAN (A-14-001):** At the time of the start-up of the Music City Star service, RTA developed a System Safety Program Plan to ensure that the highest level of safety for our customers, employees, contractors, and the general public is promoted. This is a document that provides a comprehensive description of current safety-related policies and procedures to aid in the prevention of and responses to accidents. This plan is used to develop safety goals for contractors, define objectives, identify parties responsible for safety tasks and measure the effectiveness of safety programs. Because of the policies and procedures we have in place as outlined in the Plan, we have maintained an excellent safety record and have a solid process for addressing accidents and incidents as they may occur.

This Plan is reviewed every year and updated as needed so the plan remains true to company goals and current conditions. The current System Safety Program Plan was reviewed by the Committee and is available to all Board members.

The Operations Committee recommends adoption by the Board of the updated System Safety Program Plan. Proper motion was made and seconded. There was no discussion and the vote of approval was unanimous.

- VI. **FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT:** Committee Chair Rutherford County Mayor Ernest Burgess reported the committee received a report on our revenue and our expenses as is customary. This was a favorable report with everything on schedule. Our cash position is good and all the payables were current at the time of our meeting.

- a. **ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT (A-14-002):** Chair Burgess reported that our auditors, Carl, Riggs, and Ingram, presented the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June 30th, 2014 and distributed copies of that report at the committee meeting. (Copies are available upon request to any other RTA Board members.) We are pleased to report to the Board that we have received a “clean” opinion in every respect on the report from our auditors. Proper motion was made to accept the audit, there was no discussion and the vote of approval was unanimous.

- VII. **CHAIR’S REPORT:** Chair Dean was unable to be at the meeting. Vice-Chair McMillan took this opportunity to let the Board know that the Northwest Corridor committee is going to meet on January 31st to begin discussions on a feasibility study for commuter rail service on the existing rail line between Davidson County and Clarksville.

- VIII. **GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT:** General Manager Lora Baulsir reported on the following:

- a. **RTA DUES UPDATE (I-014-001):** Ms. Baulsir noted the list of members with outstanding dues as of December 31st, 2013.

Continuing, Ms. Baulsir reported that CEO Paul Ballard was in Washington, D.C. this week at a conference hosted by the Transportation Research Board and could not be with them today and sends his apologies. This is a really important meeting for him. US Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx is also presenting at that meeting and she expects he will come back with a lot of important information.

Since there was no meeting in December, Ms. Baulsir updated the Board on the Free Friday day that happened the day after Thanksgiving. The express bus services had low ridership since many businesses were closed. However, the response on the train was excellent. We had our record ridership that day with 1700 riding. (Our normal average is about 1100.) In looking at all of the different trips this was a totally different pattern than normal. We had several that rode from Riverfront out of town in the morning; usually the outbound trains in the morning are almost empty. Every one of the afternoon trips into town, which usually have 20 – 30 people on them, each had between 150 and 300 riders. We had a lot of great feedback and quite a number of them were new riders. Based on the enthusiastic response, we think this will be something we will do on an annual basis, at least for the train.

The New Year's Eve train was a great success. Gabe Burgess, the Operations Supervisor, was there to ensure that everything went smoothly. We used Agile tickets to sell tickets on line, which is the company that we used for the Wilson County Fair train.

We are in the middle of the first phase of the track rehab project. We have replaced between three and four thousand wooden ties thus far. We started in the downtown area and are almost to Briley Parkway at this point with that part of the project. We expect it to take about four more months to finish it. This is affecting our on-time performance somewhat. Even though the work is being done in between the morning and afternoon trips and on Saturdays, it is still causing a three to four minute delay on a lot of our trains due to slow orders. The customers have been informed and are understanding of the temporary delays.

Yesterday she sat in on a webinar that focused on campaigning for dedicated funding. The main focus was how to frame the issue, how to poll people, and how to tailor your message based on what you find with the polling. She has a copy of the PowerPoint of that presentation and can provide it to anyone who has an interest.

At last week's committee meeting, she was asked by Mayor Ken Moore if there was any way to Skype into meetings. Our IT department is reviewing Metro's security policies to see if we can make that available in the future for the committee meetings.

Mayor Rogers Anderson asked for information on items that the RTA might have on the agenda for legislators during this year's session. Lora stated there is not anything specifically for RTA. However, there is some legislation proposed related to shortline railroad funding that effects the Nashville and Eastern Railroad.

- IX. OTHER BUSINESS:** Ed Cole noted his appreciation for Lora’s involvement in our county transit summits. Transit Citizen Leadership Academy’s fifth class has a larger facility than in the past, and can accommodate a few more students if Board members have any additional nominations. The first class will be February 5th.

Mayor Scott Foster reported that last month Ed Cole spoke at a Hendersonville Rotary Club meeting and Karl Dean spoke to the Chamber of Commerce. Both presented a strong case for the Amp as a transit solution for the region. He reminded the Board that when the Music City Star first started, one of the biggest discussions was connectivity for train passengers with their employers downtown. We need to continue to support services such as the Amp by involving Ed and Karl in our civic group meetings. Mayor Rogers Anderson noted that Michael skipper is a good source to set the stage for regional transportation as an introduction to Ed or to Karl.

Vice-Chair McMillan agreed noting that we are the Regional Transportation Authority and that we look beyond what we can do in just our counties but what we can do as a region to improve the transportation alternatives and options. This impacts regional commerce.

Mayor Bradley asked to take a moment to congratulate the City of Springfield for an honor they received yesterday and he asked Margot Fosnes to share the details. She informed the Board about an article in Market Watch on line in the Wall Street Journal. It is a series about retirement, and featured four Tennessee cities – Chattanooga, Johnson City, Maryville, and Springfield. It quoted a realtor from the area and quoted some citizens who had relocated from the Northeast to Center Hill in Robertson County and it was just great publicity.

- X. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:23 a.m.

Respectfully,

Paula Mansfield

Governor Appointee
RTA Secretary