



**MINUTES**  
**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**  
**DECEMBER 10, 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 December 10, 2014. A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 10:00 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 November 19, 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 if the RTA Board could tell her if the MPO funds that are being shifted for certain TIPs that were just voted on in the MPO meeting were local funds that would stay within the MPO region area, or are they shifted to the local communities that are getting the funds? This is being asked to figure out who pays for the local funds once they are shifted by the MPO. Continuing, she stated the two projects in question concerning this are the express bus service from Dickson County and then the expansion of regional bus service.
- IV. **MARKETING REPORT:** Committee Member Ed Cole expressed Committee Chair Governor's Appointee Kelly Dannenfels's regrets that she could not be with them this morning. Mr. Cole then continued with the report.

Mr. Cole reported that the Marketing Committee began work about a year ago to look at branding for the RTA – what we call ourselves and how we are interpreted by the public we serve. The committee quickly realized this was a major task and created an ad hoc working group that brought many of our stake holders into the discussion with our committee members.

As that process unfolded, we realized as with any good marketing campaign, what we are dealing with here is our message, our function, our tasks, and how that is viewed by the people we serve and the people we want to serve. Much of the framing of the RTA's mission has been dealt with through the work of the ad hoc committee on behalf of the Marketing Committee and this Board.

Continuing, Mr. Cole reported that Sullivan Branding has been contracted to work with the RTA on this process and that this has been very closely coordinated with the Nashville MTA. A sub-contractor to Sullivan for this project is What They Think Research. He then introduced Jennifer Ervin with What They Think

Research who will speak to the findings that they have to date and the information that will be conveyed to the work that will be undertaken as we engage in our long range plan.

Below is a synopsis of the information presented at the meeting taken from what was included in the Board meeting book for December.

### **Strategic Planning and Brand Discovery Session**

Sullivan Branding facilitated a work session with members of the RTA Marketing Committee and representatives of Middle Tennessee transit systems such as Clarksville Transit Authority, Franklin Transit, City of Murfreesboro Rover, and Nashville MTA to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) to RTA and its services. The results of this session were summarized in a SWOT chart and presented to the ad hoc committee with recommendations for brand development.

### **Brand Awareness Research**

In partnership with What They Think Research, the rebranding team conducted brand awareness research through: a) intercept surveys in order to integrate this data into the name/identity development process; b) providing an understanding of current rider awareness of the RTA brand(s) that provide regional bus and train services, and c) garner the support of constituents for a new service name.

Surveys included an approved, 21-question survey conducted on six RTA bus routes during the morning commute and on the Music City Star in order to gain customer awareness and perceptions of the RTA brand.

Results were presented to the committee prior to proceeding with brand development.

### **Identity & Logo Development**

Sullivan Branding created six identities for the RTA service brand, as well as two logo options for each. These concepts were presented to the committee, and it was determined to move forward with testing four creative options with current riders, Transit Citizen Leadership Academy graduates, and eNews Emma subscribers.

It was at this point that the committee also requested additional research options for reaching potential non-riders to test the proposed brands and to better understand usability of the RTA services.

A proposal was provided for conducting this research through Online Boards, which are similar to focus groups. This option is still being reviewed in consideration with the approaching strategic planning process.

### **Creative Testing Research**

Creative testing was conducted to reach current riders and others through an

online survey to gauge how receptive customers would be to the proposed names/identities. This included an approved, 38-question survey sent to subscribers of the RTA's eNews or Emma list, the TCLA graduates from Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee, and participants from Phase I of the research who agreed to participate in Phase II Creative Testing. The survey received 388 completes, resulting in a margin error of +/- 4 percent, which is a strong basis from which to draw conclusions.

The result of the creative testing overwhelmingly indicated a clear favorite for the name identity and logo design, with two-thirds of respondents choosing:



Likeness of the identity and logo were attributed to the design being simple, easy to read, professional, and its name recognition with Music City Star.

Almost half of respondents indicated the second most appealing identity to be:



Respondents commented that this design is eye catching, modern, simple, and denotes movement or motion.

Other key findings from the research included:

- Changing the name and logo will not affect RTA ridership or perception.
  - Quality and range of service are factors that could affect perception or ridership.
- More than half said their primary reason for taking public transportation is to get to work.

The full report of this research was made available at the meeting and is also available upon request to anyone who would like a copy.

- V. **OPERATIONS REPORT:** Mr. Dan Freudberg reported that October 2014 was another very strong month for regional ridership. RTA commuter rail and bus service totals increased 5.7% year over year compared to October 2013. In particular, he highlighted the #91X Franklin/Brentwood Express, which saw a 17.6% increase year over year, as well as did the #94 Clarksville Express service,

which saw a 10.4% increase year over year. He emphasized that these are very strong numbers.

Continuing, Mr. Freudberg noted that both the #93 Music City Star West End Shuttle that serves as a shuttle to the West End/Vanderbilt area, and the Music City Star commuter rail line saw significant increases in ridership. The Music City Star commuter rail makes up a significant portion of the total RTA ridership with almost over 24,000 riders this month which is a 7.3% increase over last year. This is very encouraging for regional service as a whole.

Total RTA ridership for the region, including van service, October 2014 compared to October 2013 was up 4%. For the fiscal year starting July 2014, total ridership for July, August, September, and October, comparing this year to last year, we saw a 4% increase in ridership. This shows that this month (October) is not an aberration, but is an overall transit increase in productivity, performance, and overall ridership for services as a whole.

Concerning local services in the region comparing October 2013 to October 2014, Nashville MTA local bus service saw a 4.8% increase and local MTA paratransit service saw an 8.9% increase. Again, as reported earlier, Music City Star rail service and RTA regional bus service both saw strong increases. Some broader local service providers in the region including the Murfreesboro ROVER and the Franklin Transit saw an increase. The ROVER saw double digit increase while Franklin Transit saw 66.2% increase over last year. The Clarksville Transit local bus service saw a slight decrease. For the region as a whole, this was an especially strong month and one of the strongest in recent history.

**VI. FINANCE & AUDIT REPORT:** Member Franklin Mayor Ken Moore reported that the Finance Committee met on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and received a monthly financial report that continued to pass favorably. He then presented the two following items that came out of the committee and require action by the RTA Board.

**a. Fiscal Year 2014 Annual Audit Report (A-14-025):** The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2014 has been completed by Carr, Riggs & Ingram and we are pleased to report that the RTA once again received a “clean” opinion on the report from our auditors. There was a minor inventory issue which staff is already working to resolve. We are requesting that the Board accept the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2014. Proper motion was made and seconded. There was no discussion and the vote of approval was unanimous.

**b. Greensboro North Park and Ride Construction (A-14-026):** In March 2014, the Board approved entering into a contract to construct a park and ride facility in Gallatin at a cost not to exceed \$521,613, which represented an estimated construction cost of \$474,194 and a contingency of \$47,419. The project ran into complications related to soil compaction that delayed the project and ultimately resulted in RTA cancelling our construction contract in September 2014. In order to keep the project moving forward, we went back to the other two successful bidders from our Request for Proposal and requested updated bids to complete the park and ride parking lot.

Both remaining eligible contractors submitted new updated proposals which were significantly more than the original prices. The increases related to the soil compaction issue, increased cost of materials as well as the availability of other sub-contractors. After review, the lower bid from Knestric Construction was selected at a cost of \$756,373 which is an increase of \$282,179 over the original contract. We are also recommending that a 10% contingency (\$75,000) be included for any other issues that may arise during construction making the new contract at a cost not to exceed \$831,373. We have discussed the project with the FTA and have received approval to reprogram remaining balances on other grant funding from completed projects to be used on this park and ride project. We will also utilize funding from our current FY 2015 federal 5307 capital funding.

Based on the explanation above, the Finance Committee recommends that the Board give the Chief Executive Officer authority to enter into a contract with Knestric Construction for the completion of the park and ride parking lot in Gallatin. The initial contract total would be for \$756,373, and we request an additional contingency of \$75,000, for a total contract price not to exceed \$831,373. This was put into a motion and was seconded. The vote of approval was unanimous.

**VII. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT:** Chair Dean presented the following report:

- a. Nomination of Officers (I-14-011):** Chair Dean reported that the Executive Committee met this morning and they have a slate of officers that they wish to present to the Board for their consideration. They are:
- Chair – Kim McMillan, City of Clarksville Mayor
  - Vice Chair – Randal Hutto, Wilson County Mayor
  - Secretary – Rutherford County Governor’s Appointee, Paula Mansfield

The actual election will be held at the meeting in January 2015 where nominations from the floor will also be accepted.

**VIII. CEO’S REPORT:** CEO Steve Bland reported that we are advancing with the developer at the Hamilton Springs location to advance the station design and ultimately go into production. The authority’s legal counsel is working on drafting that memorandum of understanding. We hope to have that wrapped up within the next month and then to bring an action item back to the Board in that regard.

As was recorded at the last meeting, we have kicked off the Northwest Corridor study with Parsons Brinckerhoff. We held a kick off meeting; they have submitted a draft project management plan; we have initiated conversations on the public engagement plan to get people along the corridor to get involved in the planning of that project. We have also been in communication with the FTA on how that project will progress.

Due to the property owner wanting to move in a different direction, we are scheduled to lose a LaVergne Park and Ride location in January. We are working with the city of La Vergne to try to identify alternate sites and we hope to do that in a seamless manor which remains to be seen but is our goal.

Concerning the Dickson service, we have provided a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to Walmart where we hope to set up park and ride service. They are currently considering that and we are looking forward to hearing back from them in the next few weeks hopefully in a positive regard. Otherwise, we are working with the city of Dickson on some potentially alternate sites.

Finally, as I reported last month and thanks again to Mayor McMillan, Liza Joffrion, and the folks at TDOT for cooperatively working together on the Clarksville Park and Ride. The focus right now is to try and identify a permanent site. There is no imminent threat to where we are located now, so that service continues uninterrupted. Rather than spend a whole lot of energy on a temporary site, the consultants are beginning to focus on potential permanent locations to work into that project and that seems to be moving along.

**IX. CHAIR'S REPORT:** Chair Dean deferred his report this month.

**X. OTHER BUSINESS:** There was no other business.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

Respectfully,

*Paula Mansfield*

Governor's Appointee  
RTA Secretary