



**MINUTES**  
**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**  
**OCTOBER 21, 2015**

- 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 Wednesday, October 21, 2015. A quorum was established and the meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chair Kim McMillan, Clarksville Mayor.
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Chair McMillan entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2015 meeting. Proper motion was made and seconded. There was no discussion and the vote of approval was unanimous with one abstention.
- III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Chair McMillan opened the floor for public comments and recognized the following members of the public:

**Jo Ann Graves with Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee (TAMT)**

Ms. Graves updated the Board on recent activities of the Transit Alliance:

- Transit Alliance Leadership classes are ongoing at Lipscomb University and will end after three more sessions. Another class will begin after the first of the year they are seeking participation from all counties to continue the diversified representation in each class.

- IV. **MARKETING REPORT:** Committee member Ed Cole reported on the committee's meeting with these highlights:
- The Game Day Express is well under way with significant ridership.
  - September 18 was the ninth anniversary of the Music City Star.
  - The new fare schedule that was approved by the Board has been implemented.

Continuing, Mr. Cole reported that the second major focus of their meeting was the discussion of the nMotion planning process. Also discussed was the developing partnership between the RTA and Cumberland Region Tomorrow (CRT) and the Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee (TAMT) to help move forward with the outreach process in the region. Mr. Cole invited Felix Castrodad, Director of Planning and Grants, to address the Board with comments about the nMotion process.

- a. **NMOTION – TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT SCENARIOS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS (I-15-012):** Mr. Castrodad reported that the nMotion process for the Nashville MTA and the RTA is a 25 year process of how we can accomplish and put

together a transit system that will meet the demands that we are going to see in the future in this region. Transit is on the minds of everyone and is a way to complement how we can address this growth in the future. Mr. Castrodad then introduced the Project Manager, Geoff Slater, who is from Nelson Nygaard, the consulting firm that is helping to develop this plan. Mr. Slater gave a quick overview of the RTA project and how it fits in with the Nashville MTA strategic plan. He focused mostly on the state of the system and the issues that we are addressing as we go forward. Mr. Slater talked about the development of the transit improvement scenarios and how they will put things together to help develop future improvements.

Mr. Cole then presented the following action item for approval by the full Board:

- b. nMOTION 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN SERVICE GUIDANCE PRINCIPLES (A-15-016):** The adoption of the Nashville MTA/RTA service principles is intended as a policy level guidance to direct the development of future services, products and projects. Beneath the core principles will be a set of strategies, milestones, and measures that will become our benchmarks for success. The service guiding principles will provide the policy basis for the strategic plan recommendations and will be key to meet community objectives as part of the process. Based on this, it is the Marketing Committee's recommendation that the RTA Board adopt the nMotion 2015 Service Design Guidance Principles as presented. Motion was properly seconded, there was no discussion, and this action item was adopted.

V. **FINANCE & AUDIT REPORT:** Chair Sumner County Executive Anthony Holt discussed the FY 2016 final budget and presented the following action items:

- a. ADOPTION OF FINAL BUDGET FOR FY 2016 (A-15-017):** The FY 2016 Budget presented is very similar to what the Board tentatively approved in June, but has been adjusted to reflect the fact that the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding for regional bus services was approved for use for an additional 3 years. Consequently, the federal 5307 formula funding is not necessary for the operation of the regional bus services. As a reminder, this budget includes an approved 5% fare increase and the cancellation of one mid-day route on the Route 96 Murfreesboro local service. It also includes additional funding from Franklin in order to maintain all 6 runs on the Franklin Route 91. The tentative FY 2016 budget adopted by the Board in June had originally assumed a reduction of service for the Route 91 Franklin.

As discussed in the September Committee meeting, with the approval of the CMAQ funding, the contributions from our regional partners necessary to operate our regional bus services in FY 2016 decreased to amounts similar to the prior year. Consequently, this budget now includes a proposed reserve of approximately \$336,000 based upon the confirmed amounts committed by all regional partners.

Also discussed in the June Board meeting was the fact that all the partners agreed that the RTA needs to reduce its reliance on CMAQ for ongoing operations. While this year's CMAQ award is commendable, there is no guarantee we'll see such large awards in the future, and we think having a

reserve will ease the transition into a longer-term funding structure. Consequently, we are recommending that this amount be held in reserve while the finance committee and board consider new alternative funding methods for future years.

The proposed commuter rail budget for FY 2016 is approximately \$5.0 million and has now been balanced. It will include continuing the operation of the Titan Game Day Express services. This special event is now being fully sponsored by Miller/Coors and will generate some advertising revenue as well. Nashville and Eastern Railroad is contributing an additional \$15,000. We now know actual liability insurance expense, which decreased approximately \$38,000 from budget estimates, and we are also able to adjust track usage fees by approximately \$50,000 to a more accurate estimate based upon actual results over the past 3 years. Additionally, there was a savings in fuel for the train operation based upon our fuel hedging program.

This proposed budget also assumes that the \$1.5 million line of credit will be available for use throughout the fiscal year. This is for cash flow purposes only.

The Finance Committee recommends to the Board the approval and adoption of the proposed FY 2016 Budgets, including a recommendation to retain the reserve for the region bus operations of approximately \$336,000 until a new funding methodology can be adopted for future years beginning with FY 2017. Motion was properly seconded, there was no discussion, and the motion carried and the budgets were adopted.

- b. **nMOTION – STRATEGIC PLAN REGIONAL OUTREACH PROPOSAL (A-15-018):** nMotion 2015 is the Strategic Plan for RTA and the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Agency (Nashville MTA), a twenty-five year comprehensive plan designed to meet Middle Tennessee’s demands for transit. Currently, the RTA Board has restricted the use of membership dues to be used as supplemental insurance reserve under RTA’s \$30 million liability insurance policy. However, our cash reserve account balance is now over \$1.5 million exceeding the \$1 million reserve required under the insurance policy.

The Finance Committee recommends to the Board the following:

1. The approval to pay Cumberland Region Tomorrow and the Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee \$50,000 each for a total of \$100,000 to have both agencies assist in the public outreach to benefit RTA’s nMotion Strategic Plan project, and
2. The approval of the use of membership dues reserve dollars to pay for these services.

Proper motion was made and seconded. There was brief discussion. It was clarified that these reserves are from prior membership dues and that this was a one-time, non-recurring expense. The metrics of success for the two agencies were discussed. Bridget Jones, Executive Director CRT, and Jo Ann Graves, Executive Director TAMT, briefed the Board on their approach and pending activities for this outreach. There was no further discussion and the vote of approval was unanimous and the action item was adopted.

**VI. OPERATIONS REPORT:** Committee Chair City of Portland Mayor Ken Wilber reported that the committee did not meet this month because there were no action items. He invited India Birdsong, RTA/Nashville MTA Chief Operations Officer, to present the monthly operating statistics to the Board.

Ms. Birdsong reviewed the reports presented and stated that there have been some issues in recent months concerning the fareboxes and capturing ridership numbers correctly. These fareboxes are presently being upgraded with manufacture representatives on site.

Looking at the Music City Star, Ms. Birdsong noted that every Titan's game on the Music City Star has been a sell-out. The overall ridership on the Star is up 2.7% compared to this time last year.

In closing, Ms. Birdsong noted the adverse impact of the instability and changes to the Park-and-Ride lots over the last few months to certain routes. She reported that staff is diligently working towards long-term resolutions for not only these locations but that they are also making sure that all of the Park-and-Ride locations have long-term written contracts in place.

**VII. CEO'S REPORT:** CEO Steve Bland reported on the following projects:

- **RTA Sunset Hearing:** Yesterday, Mr. Bland and Eric Beyer met with the State Legislative Government Operations Joint Subcommittee on Commerce, Labor, Transportation, and Agriculture at the RTA Sunset Hearing before the committee and also followed the State Comptroller's Quantitative report which only had two issues. One was the ongoing budget funding situation, and the other was contract oversight issues with Gray Line, which we have reported to the Board previously. Essentially, Mr. Bland continued, the nature of the Comptroller's report was that the RTA Board and the RTA staff were aggressively pursuing these issues. He reported that the committee is recommending that the RTA be renewed for another five years.
- **Hamilton Springs:** We are finalizing our memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Hamilton Springs developer and anticipate that we will bring the MOU to you next month for execution. Design documents for the station and the Park-and-Ride have been completed. We are working with the City of Lebanon; they are doing a storm water improvement adjacent to the site and have asked that we incorporate the work on site into the project with obvious reimbursement from the City. We are working on finalizing that piece of the design which will also have to run through the federal environmental process. That shouldn't take too long and we expect to wrap this up in the next couple of months.
- **Mt. Juliet:** We are working with the City of Mt. Juliet and have solicited proposals for joint development around the Mt. Juliet station. We have received two very solid proposals and we expect to bring forward a recommendation within the next two months on moving toward a period of exclusive negotiation with one of those developers. Both developers are proposing higher density residential combined with some mixed-use adjacent to the Mt. Juliet station. Apart from the benefits to that specific

station, it could become a real model for transit oriented development in Middle Tennessee, particularly if we explore some of the higher-end transit options moving out into the future.

- **Positive Train Control Plan:** We are continuing to work with the Nashville and Eastern Rail Road (NERR) on their Positive Train Control (PTC) plan. Positive Train Control is a requirement of the federal government emerging a few years ago out of a really serious crash that happened in Southern California about 9 or 10 years ago. The NERR has been working closely with the Federal Railroad Authority (FRA) on getting type approval for a specific approach. We have not received that type approval which is hindering us in moving that project forward.

In the meantime, there has been legislation introduced in Congress to try to push the deadline for PTC back. The deadline is to have it in place by January 1<sup>st</sup>. Clearly, that is not going to happen for us, but it is also not going to happen for the overwhelmingly majority of freight and commuter railroads across the country. There is still some hope for congressional action to push back the deadline, probably along the lines of four to six years. If not, we are going to look for direction from the FRA in how they intend to enforce. These are conversations that are ongoing. There are systems like Long Island Railroad that carry literally millions of commuters a day that are confronting that. Organizations like CSX have said if we don't see a change in regulation, we may very well stop shipping certain products to significant parts of the country. The Star is definitely a tiny piece of that bigger equation. We will keep you up to speed on how that will specifically impact the Star operations.

**VIII. CHAIR'S REPORT:** Chair McMillan thanked County Executive Holt, the members of the Finance and Audit Committee, and the staff for all their hard work in getting the budget ready, prepared, and passed. She also encouraged everyone to work as closely as they can with Cumberland Region Tomorrow and the Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee with the regional meetings and the regional presentation of the nMotion process. This is going to significantly help all of us and all of our counties as we move forward to look for transit options and opportunities that are desperately needed for all of us in the outlying counties outside of Nashville.

**IX. OTHER BUSINESS:** There was no other business to come before the RTA.

**X. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

Respectfully,

*Paula Mansfield*

Governor's Appointee  
RTA Secretary