



## Minutes

### NASHVILLE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

April 28, 2016

---

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The regular meeting of the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority Board of Directors was held in the Music City Central (MCC) Meeting Room, 400 Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, TN on April 28, 2016. Present were: Marian Ott, Chair; Gail Carr Williams, Member; Janet Miller, Member; Walter Searcy, Member; Secretary Margaret Behm, and CEO Stephen G. Bland. A quorum was established and Chair Ott called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Proper motion was made to approve the minutes of the March 24, 2016 Board of Directors meeting. There were no additions or corrections, and the vote of approval was unanimous.
- III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Chair Ott opened the floor for public comments. The public was reminded that comments are limited to three minutes.

Steve Reiter of Nashville had these comments:

- Mr. Reiter shared with the Board his personal knowledge of the Minneapolis transit system, which was the destination of the recent Nashville Chamber of Commerce Inner-City Visit in which one of the MTA Board members and CEO Steve Bland participated. Mr. Reiter noted to the Board that every city has its issues.

John Bull of Nashville had these comments:

- Mr. Bull lives in midtown and rides the bus six – eight times a day.
- He would like to see customer service hours extended into the evening.
- He would also like to see Dunkin' Donuts and the Music City Market stay open longer while the bus services are operating.

Jane Anderson of Nashville had these comments:

- Ms. Anderson works nights and has to transfer from the Nolensville Pike BRT lite 52A to the 52B. The route of the 52B does not return to the stop near her residence at night, which forces her to walk in the street on Harding Road to get back to her home. She explained that there is construction on one side of Harding and a guardrail on the other side that forces her to walk on the street. Consequently, she has had to hire someone to pick her up at work and bring her home. She noted that there are other riders in her complex that also work nights and face the same problem getting home safely.

James Thomas of Nashville had these comments:

- There have been on-time performance issues with the #56 Gallatin Corridor and the #52B Nolensville Pike BRT lite.

Peter O'Connor of Nashville had these comments:

- The bus runs on #52B Nolensville Pike BRT lite that do not come back from the correctional facility make it difficult for residents who live at the end of Tampa drive to get home.
- The security presence needs to be increased at the entrance to MCC at Charlotte and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He believes there is loitering going on there that needs to be scrutinized.

Marie Newsom of Nashville had these comments:

- The discontinuation of the #12 Nolensville has created a hardship for her.
- The new #52 Nolensville BRT lite with fewer stops has created the need for her and other riders to walk longer distances to their destination. While the trips are more frequent, that comes at a price to the regular riders who now have to walk farther because their stops were eliminated.
- In some areas, bus benches have been removed and not replaced, leaving people to stand for long periods of times and sometimes with bags of groceries or other purchases.

There were no other public comments and the time for public comments closed.

- IV. PERFORMANCE & OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE REPORT:** Chair Gail Carr Williams reported that Nashville MTA Controller Shelly McElhaney reported that our financials are looking good, and we will end the year on budget. She also noted that we will be taking out the short-term loan soon to fill in the gap until the federal funding grant dollars are received.

Ms. India Birdsong's report focused on the Nashville MTA Customer Service Quality Control Report. While we look like we have high numbers in customer service and safety, Ms. Birdsong and her staff looked in depth at the complaints, and will continue to do so, to enable them to find the cause of these numbers and then make specific corrections as issues arise.

The committee thanked India and her staff for their quick and professional response to the incident that happened earlier in the week at MCC. Member Walter Searcy acknowledged Patricia Harris-Morehead for her communications coverage of the event, noting that it was nice to hear it first from her.

- V. PLANNING COMMITTEE:** Member Janet Miller reported that the committee received an update from Felix Castrodad and Cortnye Stone on the nMotion project. The community engagement piece is going exceedingly well with more than 17,000 total engagements and almost 90,000 reached digitally. This outreach will continue through May. There are a few consistent themes being heard in the feedback, and they are: frequency, span of service, and crosstown routes.

As we move forward, the community engagement will continue. There will be draft recommendations as we enter the summer, and feedback on those; and, stakeholder evaluation. In late summer, the committee is hopeful to have the final plan; but, all agree

that getting it right is more important than meeting a deadline. Ms. Miller thanked the staff for all their good work and efforts that they put into the staggering number of meetings and surveys that are being done.

- VI. STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT:** Chair Miller presented a broad overview of the vision for this new committee. She stated that the purpose of this committee is for the Staff and the Board to be sure they are looking at things from the customer's and stakeholder's standpoint.

One of the first initiatives that the committee will undertake in the next few months is a stakeholder's assessment document. They will identify stakeholders and assess Nashville MTA's relationship with them – how is it; what should it be; and, what is the work that they needs to be done to get to the right place with all the stakeholders.

Continuing, Chair Miller noted that this committee will focus on surveying customers and doing research to be sure that they are truly hearing the voice of the public. Also discussed was how this committee could better leverage the connectivity of the Nashville MTA Board and other community members to push the transit message out.

The action items that come before this committee will be any activity that needs Board approval that involves external relationships or partnerships. This month there are two items to bring before the Board for approval, and Ms. Miller presented the following:

- a. STATE EASYRIDE CONTRACT RENEWAL (A-16-007):** In 2006, Nashville MTA and the State of Tennessee began a relationship in which the State would pay the work commute transportation cost for all their employees who utilize public transportation. The success of the EasyRide program has been exceptional with consistent and increasing use by State employees over the past several years. The existing contract managed by the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) is scheduled to expire June 30, 2016.

Negotiations with the State have been successful to continue the contract for FY 2017 at a rate per ride of \$2.50 based upon all regional transportation services including both MTA and RTA. AccessRide trips will be billed at \$3.40 per ride. The contract will be between Nashville MTA and TDOT with the RTA receiving its proportional share for rides provided under the program as defined in a separate sub-agreement between Nashville MTA and RTA. The total contract amount is \$1.75 million. The contract term is for 12 months beginning July 1, 2016 with an expiration of June 30, 2017.

The Stakeholders Relations Committee recommends to the Board the approval for Nashville MTA to enter into a contract with TDOT for the EasyRide program at \$2.50 per ride, and \$3.40 for AccessRide with a contract amount of \$1.75 million and a contract term of July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.

Proper motion was made. There was no discussion, and the vote of approval was unanimous.

- b. VANDERBILT EASYRIDE CONTRACT AMENDMENT (A-16-008):** For more than a decade, Nashville MTA and Vanderbilt University have had a rewarding relationship

in which Vanderbilt would pay for faculty, staff, and graduate students to utilize public transportation. This program has been well received by the University since its inception. The existing three-year contract expired June 30, 2015. At the request of Vanderbilt, the contract was extended through September 30, 2015 as they began working through the legal separation of the University and the Medical Center. As we approached the September expiration – due to the scope and complexity of their undertaking – Vanderbilt requested that the partnership be continued on a month-to-month basis after September 30, 2015 under the current contract terms until they could determine which legal entity would house the EasyRide program.

Effective on or about April 30, 2016, Vanderbilt University and its medical center will separate into two distinct legal institutions: Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC). For the purposes of the separation, they have requested that we formally amend the date of the contract through June 30, 2016 and allow the contract with Nashville MTA and Vanderbilt University to be assigned to VUMC. This will allow Vanderbilt to complete their transition and give us time to renegotiate a new contract to be effective July 1, 2016.

The Stakeholders Relations Committee recommends to the Board the approval for the CEO to enter into an amendment with Vanderbilt University to amend the date of the contract through June 30, 2016 and allow the contract with Nashville MTA and Vanderbilt University to be assigned to VUMC.

Proper motion was made. The vote of approval was unanimous with member Gail Carr Williams abstaining from the vote as an employee of Vanderbilt University. Chair Ott noted that her husband is an employee of Vanderbilt but that employment does not affect her ability to vote.

- VII. CHAIR'S REPORT:** Chair Marian Ott stated that it has been a difficult week for Nashville MTA. As a public utility, we serve all Nashvillians, which means our customers are a reflection of our city, and which is mostly great, but sometimes sad. The tragic event on Monday was not a reflection of the Nashville MTA, but more sadly on our city.

As Chair, she stated that she is very proud of our system and employees. Nashville MTA had good policies, and physical and personnel infrastructure in place to respond. We responded as well, and as appropriately, as could be. Ms. Ott thanked all the staff for their professionalism in dealing with this event and she hopes that each one is taking care of themselves and taking advantage of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) resources. She noted to all other Nashville MTA staff that were not at MCC that they should take credit for the professional response because this is a culture we have, how we deal with people, and how we respond to things. She is so very proud of staff. Concluding, Chair Ott stated that the Board has nothing but admiration and respect for the professionalism and the quality of the work that is done by staff.

- VIII. CEO'S REPORT:** CEO Steve Bland reported the following:

1. MCC Incident of 4/25 –
  - a. At 3:30 p.m. on Monday, April 25 there was a shooting incident at MCC involving one gunman injuring four individuals, one seriously. Metro Police have identified a prime suspect in the shooting, and the victims are recovering.

- b. The incident occurred during the peak period of school student transfer activity, and there were literally hundreds of students in the building, as well as other customers and dozens of Nashville MTA employees.
- c. The public reaction, shock, and outrage at this incident is indicative of the overall safe and secure history of MCC. This was, by far, the most serious incident in the eight-year history of the facility, a period during which we estimate that more than 30 million people have been through the facility.
- d. We continue to review the incident within the Nashville MTA and with community partners like the Metro Nashville Police Department and Metro Nashville Public Schools to determine how we can even further enhance security at MCC and on the broader transit system.
- e. Without a doubt, this event was traumatic to our customers, our employees and the community as a whole. Beyond those who were in the facility at the time of the shooting, the tens of thousands who use MCC regularly had to be affected by it.
- f. However, it is important to note:
  - i. Thanks to an ongoing active security presence under Security Manager Mike Moore, on-site police and security personnel responded within eight seconds of the incident. At the time of the incident, our normal complement of three security officers and five uniformed commissioned Metro Police Officers were on site. Since the incident, the Commander of the Central Precinct has supplemented our normal presence with additional officers through his flex teams. In many ways, MCC could be considered the most secure public facility in Nashville.
    - 1. In fact, this is so widely recognized that, in many cases, individuals come to MCC specifically to report a crime that happened elsewhere, or to be arrested themselves when that is the safest option they have. Last night, in follow up reporting to Monday's incident, a local news station inaccurately reported that a rape was reported at MCC based on a review of police reports associated with the building. In point of fact, the rape occurred elsewhere in the City, and the victim boarded a bus to MCC, where she reported the crime to Metro Police on duty there.
  - ii. On an average weekday, 15,000-17,000 people pass through MCC, including 4,500 Metro Nashville Public School Students enrolled in the StrIDe program. The overwhelming majority of these individuals act in a responsible manner, and experience a safe trip. On a monthly basis, over 57,000 bus trips originate from MCC.
  - iii. In addition to an active security and police presence during all hours of operation, the facility is live monitored by a network of 44 surveillance cameras. These cameras serve as both a deterrent to criminal behavior and as an important investigative tool when incidents do occur.

- iv. Beyond the formal measures we have in place, we rely and depend on the eyes and ears of our employees and 33,000 daily customers to report suspicious activity to uniformed personnel. The simple national saying is, “if you see something, say something.” Historically, our customers and employees have been the best preventive measure against incidents like this one, and we expect that will remain the case.
  - g. This incident also showed the commitment and professionalism of our partners and the depth of resilience in the Greater Nashville community. Metro Police and other first responders were instant, skilled and professional in their response. The Metro Nashville Public School District reached out immediately and was crucial in communicating facts about the incident to school personnel, students, and parents. In many instances, school principals boarded buses the following day to talk about the incident and offer counseling to students who may have been affected by the event. The Oasis Center – one of Nashville’s jewels with respect to youth empowerment and a key partner of Nashville MTA – hosted a peace rally for youth in the plaza between MCC and the Municipal Auditorium. This empowering event was a tremendous healing opportunity and was highlighted by music and a recitation by Nashville’s Youth Poet Laureate.
  - h. Finally, I want to thank and express my admiration to our own Nashville MTA employees, contracted security staff, and the leadership of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1235. While experiencing the trauma of the event themselves, our employees remained calm and professional in assisting victims and other customers, and in relocating our massive transit operation out of the building to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues so that Metro Police could conduct a proper investigation. In partnership, the Union and our Human Resources department made employees aware of EAP resources available to them, and our customer care staff professionally handled a tremendous increase in call volume as a result of reports of the incident. Patricia Harris-Morehead and our Marketing and Communications staff handled dozens of inquiries from local and national media outlets, and coordinated marvelously with Public Information staff from related entities like the Police Department, Schools and the Mayor’s Office. They were also responsible for putting together – in short order – the briefing information that we provided to you, and our broader community base.
  - i. There is much to be learned from an incident like this. One thing for sure that I relearned is the professionalism and dedication of Nashville MTA employees and our many community partners.
2. Chamber Transit Study Trip to Minneapolis – Thanks to Board Member Walter Searcy for participating in this trip. We observed what the Twin Cities has done with respect to what they’ve done (light rail, arterial bus rapid transit , and bus on shoulder), as well as how they’ve done it, including neighborhood and community engagement and the political process to develop their funding sources and project advancement.
  3. Rita Roberts Turner will be joining our leadership team next week as Chief Administrative Officer. Rita is currently the Chief of Staff to the General Counsel at

Vanderbilt. When on board, she will oversee our Human Resources, IT, and Procurement functions; and, will also work closely with Margaret Behm on legal issues.

4. Julie Navarrete will join us in June as Chief Development Officer. Julie will be coming to us from Hampton Roads Transit in the Norfolk region of Virginia where she serves in a similar function as Transit Development Manager. Julie will oversee our Planning, Project Development, Marketing, and Community Relations functions.
5. nMotion Engagement –
  - a. Marian and I participated in a Metro Council Work session on transit planning and project advancement. This session was initiated by several Council members who want to become more engaged in the development process. Representatives of the Mayor’s Office, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and the Transit Alliance also participated.
  - b. Thanks to Gail for spearheading a lunch panel discussion at Vanderbilt. In addition to myself, TDOT, the MPO and the Mayor’s Office were represented and it was a good discussion of the multi-modal approaches we’ll need to adopt as a region.
6. Local and regional forums – As usual, I participated in a number of local and regional forums on transit and transportation, including sessions conducted by Moving Forward, the United Way, Hume Fogg High School, Felix and I presented at the Hermitage Donelson Economic Development Committee, Forward Sumner County Leadership Committee, Brentwood Rotary Club, Eric and I attended Councilman Pulley’s Green Hills Neighborhood Meeting, Northwest Corridor Project Advisory Committee, public meetings hosted by Moving Forward on issues of equity surrounding transit in Antioch and North Nashville, Williamson County nMotion meeting, Wilson County Chamber of Commerce, a briefing of the full Metro Council on nMotion, NPT Televisions transportation public forum, and a Transit Citizens Leadership Academy alumni event.
7. TDOT – Earlier this week, I met with TDOT Commissioner John Schroer to discuss issues of mutual interest. Among other topics, we discussed the formation of joint project teams to identify short-term bus on shoulder opportunities in Middle Tennessee, and we discussed pending major TDOT projects where transit facilities might be incorporated. (Donelson Pike – Airport, Bell Road at I-24).
8. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) – This past month, we met with our FTA liaisons in Atlanta to review significant issues and project. Specific attention was paid to the Murfreesboro Pike Transit Signal Priority project that we are in partnership with Metro Public Works. You will be getting a detailed briefing on that project at your May Committee Meetings. Also in May, Mike White will be doing a capital project update bringing you up to speed on the summary some of our significant issues. India reported that we will be doing a deep dive on the complaint issues. She will have a maintenance action plan update; and she will be working on our quarterly ridership review with some revised formatting.

9. Budget – We continue to move through Metro’s budget process, with presentations on our overall budget request and Public Improvement Plan proposals. We anticipate hearing more about Mayor Barry’s emphasis areas at tomorrow’s State of Metro address.

10. State Legislation –

- a. Bus-on-Shoulder Legislation – Senate Bill 1953 (Yarbro, Ketron, Harper) and House Bill 2022 (Beck, Clemmons, Steward, Gilmore, Powell) – Passed both houses and was signed by the Governor. This allows TDOT to construct upgrades to facilitate bus on shoulder operations and enter agreements with mass transit providers to operate service on shoulders.
- b. Public Private Partnership (PPP) Legislation – Senate Bill 2093 (Ketron, Yarbro, Dickerson, Tracy) and House Bill 2407 (Sargent, Clemmons, Powell, Stewart, Jernigan) – Passed both houses of the Legislature, and was signed into law by the Governor. This bill authorizes the use of public private partnerships in the development of mass transit facilities. It was modeled from similar (and successful) legislation in Virginia. On May 19 at Lipscomb University, a workshop will be held that outlines how PPP’s can work – what they can and can’t do. This is being offered under the sponsorship of the Moving Forward transit advocacy effort.

**IX. Other Business:** There was no other business to come before the Board.

**X. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 2:04 p.m.