

Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority

Board of Directors Meeting

November 20, 2025

I. **Call to Order:** The regular meeting of the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (Nashville MTA) Board of Directors was held at the Tennessee Bankers Association located at 211 Athens Way, Nashville, TN 37228, on Thursday, November 20, 2025.

II. **Roll Call of Persons Present:**

Gail Carr Williams, Chair	Debbie Frank, DCEO of Growth & Development
Kathryn Hays, Member	Amanda Vandegrift, DCEO of Finance & Admin.
Jeff Haynes, Member	Nick Oldham, Chief Safety & Security Officer
Margaret Behm, Board Secretary	Vince Malone, COSA
Steve Bland, CEO	Andy Burke, COO
Monica Howse, Sr. Exec. Asst & Bd. Liaison	Katie Freudberg, Director of Service Development

A quorum was established, and Chair Carr Williams called the meeting to order at 2:34 p.m.

III. **Recognition of the 2025 WeGo Public Transit Rodeo Team:** Board Chair Carr Williams highlighted that WeGo honors its top performers each year with a systemwide Rodeo competition, where bus operators and mechanics showcase their skills in obstacle courses and defect repairs. To participate, contestants must have excellent records in safety, attendance, and customer service.

This past month, WeGo's top performers competed at the Tennessee Public Transportation Association Rodeo in Knoxville, representing the organization with pride. The winners include:

- Cutaway Van Division: Joyce Banks (1st place, "Big Wheel" Award), Scott Wallace (2nd place)
- 30' Bus Division: Mark Johnson (3rd place)
- Bus Maintenance Division: Pedro Ochoa (1st place, "Big Wrench" Award), Troy Willis (2nd place)
- Van Maintenance Division: Winston Francis (3rd place)

The winners were celebrated with applause and photos, and recognition was given to all participants, as well as their families and supporters. Looking ahead, the top finishers will represent WeGo at the American Public Transportation Association Rodeo in Salt Lake City next spring.

IV. **Journey Pass Update:** Chair Carr Williams provided the following update:

WeGo, in collaboration with the Mayor's Office and social service partners, has been piloting the Journey Pass program, which offers free bus passes to income-eligible individuals and families. This initiative is a key part of Mayor Freddie O'Connell's Choose How You Move Transit Improvement Program, approved by Davidson County voters last year.

Over the past eight months, WeGo staff, led by Amanda Vandegrift and Zeda Riggs, worked with several agencies to design and roll out the program. A pilot phase was launched earlier this year, and its urgency grew when the Federal Government shutdown on November 1 resulted in a loss of SNAP benefits for thousands of Davidson County residents. In response, WeGo and its partners quickly expanded distribution efforts, reaching thousands of individuals in just two days.

By October 31, 2,500 passes were distributed, and by mid-November, the number had more than doubled to over 5,000 passes. More than 70,000 trips have been taken using the Journey Pass,

and feedback from users has been overwhelmingly positive, with many describing the program as transformational and life changing.

WeGo's swift and effective response earned national recognition for its efforts. Although the federal shutdown ended and SNAP benefits have resumed, the Journey Pass will continue to provide significant benefits for thousands of residents in the years to come.

V. Approval of Minutes: Ms. Hays made a motion to approve the minutes of the Nashville MTA Board meeting held on October 23, 2025. Mr. Haynes seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved the minutes.

VI. Public Comments: Chair Carr Williams opened the floor for public comments. The public was reminded that comments were limited to two minutes. The following members of the public gave public remarks:

- Council Member Quin Evans-Segall
- Adam Nicholson

VII. Informational Items: The following items were presented for the board members' review:

1. Monthly Financial Report Compared to Budget – No questions
2. Monthly Operating Statistics – No questions
3. Upcoming Procurements – No questions

VIII. Consent Agenda Items: There were no consent agenda items this month.

IX. Operations & Finance Committee Report: Board Chair Carr Williams introduced the following items for discussion and action:

a. Quarterly Route Performance (OF-D-25-007): Director of Service Development Katie Freudberg presented the following item for discussion:

The Quarterly Route Performance Report for July–September 2025 shows continued ridership growth across WeGo services. Overall ridership increased 3.5% compared to the same quarter last year and was about 5% higher than the previous quarter.

Frequent network ridership rose around 2%, led by a 9% increase on Route 56 (Gallatin Pike), driven by steady demand, enhanced weekend frequency implemented in July 2025, and free service to Titans home games. Connector Service saw especially strong performance, with ridership up 28% year-over-year.

Student ridership was slightly higher at the start of the school year, necessitating minor schedule and vehicle assignment adjustments to address peak-time capacity.

Ms. Freudberg then made a presentation summarizing the early results from a pilot project to provide dedicated transit lanes along 4th Avenue through Downtown Nashville on weekend nights when congestion is extremely heavy. Ms. Freudberg indicated that the pilot project was a collaboration among WeGo Public Transit, the Nashville Department of Transportation and Multimodal Infrastructure, and the Metro Nashville Police Department. The pilot has been adjusted several times over the course of a number of weekends, but the early results are extremely promising in terms of reduced travel times for buses through the downtown core.

Ms. Hays remarked that this is an incredibly challenging area of Nashville to navigate and expressed appreciation for the partnerships being built with NDOT and MNPD to address it.

She added that the ability to adjust the pilot in real time is invaluable and that she truly appreciates that flexibility. She concluded by offering hats off to everyone involved.

b. Award of Strategic Planning On Call Contracts (M-A-25-050): Chief of Staff and Administration Vince Malone presented the following item for action:

WeGo Public Transit initiated a major procurement to establish a pool of consulting firms to support its strategic planning and organizational development—particularly as the agency prepares for increased growth under Mayor O’Connell’s Choose How You Move initiative. A Statement of Work defined fifteen service areas ranging from strategic planning and performance management to organizational structure, leadership development, customer experience, technology optimization, and succession planning.

An RFP was issued on February 27, 2025, allowing firms to submit proposals for any combination of the fifteen scopes. A pre-proposal meeting drew over 100 attendees. Throughout the process, WeGo Procurement published five addenda to clarify requirements and extend deadlines. Thirty proposals were received; nineteen were deemed responsive, and several of the eleven disqualified proposers filed protests, which disqualifications were ultimately upheld.

The Evaluation Committee interviewed five firms and added three more based on prior experience. After multiple evaluation meetings, eight firms were selected for contract awards:

- Cushion Employer Services Corp. – \$292,500
- Deloitte Consulting, LLP – \$1,255,950
- E3 Performance Group, LLC – \$907,650
- Evision Partners, Inc. – \$1,487,250
- Guidehouse – \$1,955,250
- Marine Tiger Technologies – \$1,566,450
- Transpro Consulting – \$917,550
- WSP USA, Inc. – \$1,382,400

Contract values represent ceiling amounts, not guaranteed expenditure. WeGo allocated these values proportionally based on firms’ evaluation scores and the scopes for which they proposed, ensuring a fair, data-driven, and audit-defensible distribution.

Under task orders, selected consultants will assist WeGo staff and the Board with best practices, organizational assessment, strategy development, process improvement, and implementation support across the identified service areas.

WeGo staff recommended awarding three-year contracts with two one-year renewal options. Intent-to-Award notices were issued on October 28, 2025, with contracts to be finalized following Board approval.

For On-Call Comprehensive Strategic Planning and Organizational Development Support, the staff recommended that the Board authorize the Chief Executive Officer to enter into contracts with the aforementioned contractors and amounts outlined above, with a total not-to-exceed the amount of \$9,765,000.00 over a three-year base term and two (2) one-year renewal options.

Ms. Hays asked whether task orders are returned to the Board for approval based on their value or if they are handled internally once the main contract is approved. Mr. Malone responded that after the Board approves the contract, task orders do not come back to the Board and are managed internally by WeGo staff.

CEO Bland added that the exception would be any task order exceeding the purchasing threshold. He explained that anything over \$300,000 must be returned to the Board for approval. This process allows staff to work with the approved firms to obtain quotes for specific scopes of work, similar to the approach used last month with facilities and other services. If a task order falls within the scope and remains under the threshold, staff can proceed internally. Greater efforts, such as a \$3 million project, require separate procurement, while task orders are intended for smaller, more discrete blocks of work.

Ms. Hays made a motion to approve the Award of Strategic Planning On Call Contracts action item. The motion was seconded by Mr. Haynes and unanimously approved by the board.

c. Authorization to Dispose of Real Property at 4016 Andrew Jackson Way (M-A-25-051): Chief of Staff and Administration Vince Malone, presented the following item for action:

In 1996, the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) purchased a 1.049-acre parcel at 4016 Andrew Jackson Way using federal, state, and local funds, intending to develop it as a park-and-ride lot. The lot was never built. Soon after, the Regional Transportation Authority opened the nearby Hermitage Station with its own park-and-ride facility, eliminating the need for the original site. The property has remained unused for nearly three decades.

Over the past two years, the site became occupied by unhoused individuals, prompting coordinated cleanup, fencing, posting, and an environmental review—costing MTA approximately \$154,000. With no future transit use anticipated, the property is considered surplus.

The Nashville Department of Waste Services (NDWS) has expressed interest in purchasing the parcel to develop a neighborhood recycling center, a use supported by the local Metro Council representative. MTA commissioned an appraisal and review appraisal in compliance with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements; both concluded a fair market value of \$170,000. NDWS has already begun preliminary site development planning.

If the MTA Board approves of the disposition of this property as surplus, MTA will seek FTA's preliminary approval to sell the property at its appraised value and apply the net proceeds toward eligible capital projects, following FTA Circular 5010.1F.

The Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority staff respectfully requested the Board to approve a request to FTA for real property disposition, and subsequently (if approved by FTA) approve transfer of the real property located at 4016 Andrew Jackson Way, Hermitage, Tennessee to the Nashville Department of Waste Services (NDWS), a division of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, for its appraised fair market value of \$170,000, proceeds of which are to be applied to the MTA Capital Plan in a manner approved by FTA.

Mr. Haynes made a motion to approve the Authorization to Dispose of Real Property at 4016 Andrew Jackson Way action item. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hays and unanimously approved by the board.

X. New Initiative & Community Engagement Committee Report: Board Chair Carr Williams introduced the following items for discussion for action in the absence of Committee Chair Aron Thompson:

a. Innovative Finance & Asset Concession Grant Implementation Contract Award (M-A-25-052): DCEO of Growth and Development Debbie Frank presented the following item for action:

In 2024, WeGo Public Transit was selected as one of 27 recipients of the U.S. DOT Build America Bureau's Innovative Finance and Asset Concession Grant, which provides technical

assistance to help public agencies evaluate and leverage their real estate assets and explore innovative financing and partnership opportunities.

To implement this grant, WeGo issued RFP #2025210 on August 6, 2025, seeking a qualified contractor to support its real estate asset management initiative. The initiative aims to:

- Assess current real estate assets for enhanced value creation,
- Evaluate potential future assets,
- Develop a comprehensive asset management policy framework (including transit-oriented development strategies), and
- Establish a new staff position to manage the program.

Three responsive proposals were received by the September 1, 2025 deadline—from Greystone Real Estate Advisory Group, HR&A Advisors, and Ernst & Young LLP—each offering fair and reasonable pricing.

Proposals were evaluated on qualifications, understanding of the scope, work plan and representative projects, and cost. After an initial review on September 26, 2025, the Evaluation Committee requested clarifications, which were provided on October 7, 2025. Following final scoring, the committee recommended awarding the contract to Greystone Real Estate Advisory Group.

Ms. Hays congratulated the team on securing the grant and expressed her approval of the proposal. However, she requested clarification on whether the grant fully covers the contract. Ms. Frank confirmed, “Yes.”

Mr. Haynes, expressing his enthusiasm for real estate consulting, shared that it excites him like a child in a candy store. He inquired about Greystone’s location and their experience with transportation projects. Ms. Frank clarified that Greystone is based in New York City, with a project manager located in Nashville, and assured him that they have significant experience with transportation projects. Mr. Haynes stated that he is eager to be involved and looks forward to working with them.

Staff recommended Board approval to authorize the Chief Executive Officer to execute a contract with Greystone Real Estate Advisory Group for the Innovative Finance and Asset Concession Grant Implementation Consultant award. The agreement will include a term of twenty-four (24) months in keeping with the grant period for a total contract amount not to exceed \$999,400.00 of the total grant award.

Mr. Haynes made a motion to approve the Approval of the Innovative Finance & Asset Concession Grant Implementation Contract Award action item. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hays and unanimously approved by the board.

- b. **Donelson Station Joint Development Update (NICE -D-25-008)**: DCEO of Growth and Development Debbie Frank presented the following item for discussion:

In June 2022, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) received an unsolicited proposal from H.G. Hill and Southeast Venture to lease part of the RTA-owned property at Donelson Station for a mixed-use development featuring housing, commercial, and retail space. The proposal aims to enhance the station area, maintain rail-patron parking, and improve station functionality. It also includes a new transit center to support airport-bound bus service and expanded WeGo Public Transit routes—an increasingly important need under Mayor O’Connell’s *Choose How You Move* initiative.

The RTA Board granted the developers an exclusive negotiation period (later extended) to refine designs and business terms. Significant progress has since been made, including market and parking studies, design and programming work, property acquisition agreements with the Nashville & Eastern Railroad Authority, and required appraisals. RTA has secured more than \$29 million in local, state, and federal funding for related public infrastructure improvements such as station upgrades, transit center construction, quiet-zone work, and intersection improvements. Supporting infrastructure design has reached 60% completion, with final design and construction bidding planned for 2026.

While the joint development agreement is an RTA Board responsibility, the resulting transit center will play a crucial role in expanding WeGo services in eastern Davidson County.

There was no further discussion.

XI. Approval of the 2026 MTA Board Meeting Calendar (M-A-25-053): Board Secretary & General Counsel Margaret Behm presented the following item for action:

The proposed schedule for the 2026 committee and board meetings includes two date adjustments:

- November meeting: Moved to November 19 since Thanksgiving falls on the fourth Thursday.
- December meeting: Set for December 17, continuing the recent practice of meeting earlier in December to accommodate holiday travel and family plans for Board members and staff.

An updated meeting schedule reflecting these changes is attached.

Staff recommended that the proposed 2026 meeting dates be adopted and approved by the Board.

Ms. Hays made a motion to approve the Approval of the 2026 MTA Board Meeting Calendar action item. The motion was seconded by Mr. Haynes and unanimously approved by the board.

XII. CEO's Report: CEO Bland provided the following report:

1. CEO Bland joined Gail in extending accolades to Zeda Riggs, her staff, and all WeGo team members who supported the rapid ramp-up of Journey Pass distribution. He noted that he had the privilege of observing distribution activities at The Elizabeth Duff Transit Center at WeGo Central, where he witnessed firsthand the gratitude expressed by recipients—one of whom shared that the pass was truly life-changing for her.
2. CEO Bland added his congratulations to WeGo's highly successful 2025 Roadeo Team. He emphasized that WeGo competes at a disadvantage in the State Bus Roadeo, as the competition uses 30-foot buses—vehicles common in smaller urban systems but not operated by WeGo. Despite this unfamiliarity, the team achieved an impressive finish.

In addition to the Big Wrench and Big Wheel Award winners, CEO Bland highlighted another honor received at the TPTA Awards Banquet: Katie Freudberg was named Tennessee's Urban Transit System Support Employee of the Year. He noted that Board members are well aware of Katie's leadership of the service development team, and TPTA recognized her for designing the service expansion plan incorporated into Mayor O'Connell's *Choose How You Move* Transit Improvement Plan—work she completed under tight deadlines while fulfilling her regular duties. Ms. Hays congratulated Katie on the award and thanked her for the excellent work, noting how fantastic it was.

3. During the past month, Nashville hosted the Board and leadership of Accelerator for America, an organization supporting cities and regions in generating funding for infrastructure projects. They played a key role in planning for the *Choose How You Move* ballot initiative, and Mayor O'Connell was recently named to their Advisory Council. As part of the visit, CEO Bland attended sessions and receptions and co-led a bus tour with the mayor that included the Dr. Ernest Rip Patton Jr. North Nashville Transit Center and future East Bank transit investment sites. He remarked that if the mayor ever leaves politics, he will make an excellent tour guide.
4. On October 30, CEO Bland and several others attended the Transit Alliance Breakfast for Better Mobility. The well-attended event recognized outstanding contributors and featured an engaging guest speaker. CEO Bland congratulated MTA Board Member Jessica Dauphin for a successful event and thanked Gail and Aron Thompson for representing MTA.
5. CEO Bland attended a joint meeting of the Metropolitan Council Budget & Finance and Transportation & Infrastructure Committees to support Sabrina Sussman of the Mayor's Office as she briefed the committees on the status of the *Choose How You Move* initiative. He also participated in addressing committee questions.
6. The Board of Directors of the Women's Transportation Seminar held its meeting in Nashville earlier this month. Their program included a visit to the Elizabeth Duff Transit Center at WeGo Central, a presentation about WeGo from Amanda Vandegriff, and a reception attended by several WeGo representatives. CEO Bland noted the importance of WTS's mission to advance the transportation industry and the women who lead it.
7. On November 5, CEO Bland joined Mayor O'Connell in celebrating the first anniversary of the *Choose How You Move* ballot initiative. The event also included the ribbon-cutting for a new queue jump on Murfreesboro Pike. He explained that the project resulted from years of collaboration between WeGo staff and the Nashville Department of Transportation and Intermodal Infrastructure to improve service reliability on congested corridors. CEO Bland thanked NDOT Director Diana Alorcan and her team for their partnership.
8. CEO Bland reported continued strong ridership on WeGo services during Titans home games and described his participation in a Leadership Tennessee panel on coordinating large infrastructure projects. Joining Mayor O'Connell and Titans representative Haley Davidson, he emphasized the need to align major investments—such as the *Choose How You Move* Transit Improvement Program—with projects like the new Nissan Stadium.
9. On November 13, WeGo and the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development celebrated Signing Day for six new participants in the Maintenance Apprenticeship Program, created in partnership with ATU Local 1235. CEO Bland reminded the Board that previous graduates have been recognized and expressed enthusiasm for recognizing the new apprentices when they graduate in approximately three years.

10. RTA Updates

- a. Work continues on the City of Murfreesboro Park and Ride facility. The project will go before the City Council for site plan and zoning approval, and an MOU is in development for ongoing operations and maintenance. Construction bidding is expected shortly after the beginning of the year, with completion anticipated by year-end.
- b. The RTA Board approved the purchase of 10 new over-the-road coaches for regional services operated by Anchor Transportation. With delivery next year, the RTA will own the entire fleet used for its services, eliminating the need to lease equipment from its contractor.

XIII. Chair's Report: Chair Carr Williams thanked Steve for the acknowledgement of her award and expressed appreciation to Katie for a job well done. She wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and shared that she is deeply grateful for the work that has been accomplished. She added that grace and kindness lead to all good things.

XIV. Other Business:

XV. Adjournment: With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

Attested:

Gail Carr Williams
Chair

Margaret L. Behm
Board Secretary