

Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority

Board of Directors Meeting

June 26, 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, June 26, 2025.

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

Gail Carr Williams, Chair

Jessica Dauphin, Member

Aron Thompson, Member

Margaret Behm, Board Secretary

Stephen Bland CEO

Monica Howse, Sr. Exec. Asst. & Bd. Liaison

Debbie Frank, DCEO of Growth & Dev

Vince Malone, Chief of Staff & Administration

Nick Oldham, Chief Safety & Security Officer

Lydia Benda, Dir. Of Eng., Construction & Proj. Mgmt.

A quorum was established, and Board Chair Carr Williams called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

Chair Carr Williams took a moment to welcome and introduce Ms. Sabrina Sussman, Chief Program Officer, for Choose How You Move. Sabrina Sussman arrives in Nashville after two years at the U.S. Department of Transportation, where she served as Chief of Staff to Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg and as Senior Advisor to Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg.

Ms. Sussman has worked on the leading edge of transportation policy for nearly two decades, has executed operations for public and private organizations, has a deep understanding of public policy and funding, and has demonstrated talent for engaging with people from all walks of life. Her experience dots both the federal and local landscapes with experience working in the city government in New York, the federal government in D.C., and coalition-building between public and private enterprises.

Ms. Sussman is a strong advocate for the north star of safety, encompassed by Vision Zero, with a deep personal passion for pedestrian safety. She holds a master's degree in political management from The George Washington University and a bachelor's degree in communications from American University.

We are also pleased that Michael Briggs has returned to the Mayor's Office and will serve in the Deputy Chief Program Officer role.

- III. **Approval of Minutes:** Ms. Dauphin made a motion to approve the minutes of the Nashville MTA Board meeting held on May 22, 2025. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved the minutes.

IV. **Resolution Recognizing the WeGo Public Transit 2025 International Bus Rodeo Team (M-A-25-022):** Chair Carr Williams presented the following action item:

The Metropolitan Transit Authority Board formally recognizes the 2025 WeGo Public Transit Rodeo Team for their outstanding performance at the International Bus Rodeo Competition hosted by APTA on April 8, 2025, in Austin, Texas. Competing against top transit professionals from across North America, Bus Operator Kevin Sentes placed 22nd out of 75, the Maintenance Team ranked 15th out of 52, and WeGo placed 13th overall out of 44 teams. This success builds on their strong showing at the Tennessee state competition in Franklin, where they placed first in most categories. The Board commends the Rodeo Team and their supporting staff for their professionalism, skill, and daily commitment to serving the people of Davidson County.

Ms. Dauphin moved to approve the Resolution Recognizing the WeGo Public Transit 2025 International Bus Roadeo Team. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thompson and unanimously approved by the board. The audience responded with applause, and photos were taken with the team and board members to commemorate the occasion.

- V. **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:

- Darius Knight

- VI. **Informational Items:** The following items were presented for the board members' review:

- **Monthly Financial Report Compared to Budget** – Mr. Thompson inquired whether the organization is still utilizing COVID-19 relief funds. CEO Bland responded that the pandemic relief funding has been fully depleted. He added that he would provide further details during the NICE Committee portion of the meeting, during the staff presentation of the proposed FY2025-26 Operating Budget.
- **Monthly Operating Statistics** – No questions
- **Upcoming Procurements** – No question

- VII. **Consent Agenda Items:**

- **M-A-25-023 – StrIDE MOU Program Year 2025-2026**
- **M-A-25-024 – MTA/RTA WeGo Ride Program Revenue Sharing Agreement**
- **M-A-25-025 – MTA/RTA Contract Renewal for Regional Transit Services**
- **M-A-25-026 – MTA/RTA Management Contract Renewal**

Mr. Thompson moved to approve the consent agenda action items. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dauphin and unanimously approved by the board.

- VIII. **Operations & Finance Committee Report:** Committee Chair Dauphin introduced the following items for action:

- a. **Contract Award for Capital Project Management Services (MA-25-027):** Deputy CEO of Growth & Development Debbie Frank presented the following item for action:

WeGo Public Transit issued RFP #2024183 to procure a Capital Project Management (CPM) consultant to support the delivery of major transit infrastructure projects under its capital improvement program. The selected consultant will provide strategic oversight, planning, budgeting, construction support, and stakeholder coordination across WeGo's capital portfolio, acting as a lead advisor and "force multiplier" to internal teams. This role excludes direct design or delivery work and precludes firms on the CPM team from bidding on future related procurements.

The RFP was advertised on December 18, 2024, with outreach to over 80 firms, including small and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs). Following an extended proposal deadline and an in-person pre-proposal conference, four proposals were received. After evaluation and interviews, Fairpointe Planning, a certified DBE, was awarded the contract. Their team includes Hatch, Jacobs, MP&F, Wilmot, and Tyler Construction Engineers. Fairpointe exceeded the DBE goal with a 50% participation rate. Contractual exceptions were negotiated and resolved prior to the award.

Staff recommended Board approval to authorize the Chief Executive Officer to execute a contract with Fairpointe Planning for Capital Project Management services. The agreement will

include an initial term of three (3) years, with the option to extend for up to two (2) additional one-year periods, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$20,000,000. Funding for this contract will be assigned through the Authority's Capital Investment Planning process, utilizing a combination of project management funding and funding for individual projects contained within the Capital Plan.

There was a general discussion of the scope of work.

The Operations and Finance Committee presented a motion to approve the Contract Award for Capital Project Management Services action item. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved it.

- b. Oracle Unifier Project Controls Software Modification Change Order 2 (M-A-25-028):** Lydia Benda, Director of Engineering, Construction & Project Management, presented the following item for action.

In May 2024, the WeGo Board approved action (M-A-24-010) to implement the Oracle Unifier Project Controls Project Management System as the core platform for managing capital project delivery, with a total budget not to exceed \$1.55 million (including 15% contingency). The breakdown included:

- Oracle (\$550,000) – system modification and implementation
- eVision (\$256,000) – project management, training, and change management
- Kemper (\$144,000) – systems integration with Sage financial software
- WeGo Project Management (\$300,000) – internal staff support
- Oracle Licenses (\$300,000) – three-year license cost

Key features of the system include a centralized project repository, tools for planning, budgeting, risk management, document control, and advanced reporting for internal and funding agency needs.

In February 2025, Change Order 1 used approximately \$93,000 of the contingency to cover additional integration work with Sage/Norming software, which had not been included in the original scope.

As WeGo collaborates with Oracle, eVision, and Kemper, adjustments are being made to align the system with evolving project management workflows, especially with new consultant project managers joining. In June 2025, staff planned to request an on-call A&E Project Management firm to assist with managing WeGo's growing project portfolio.

Change Order 2 supports that effort by:

- Modifying workflows to enhance oversight of consultant project managers
- Adding staff training for future system adjustments
- Funding additional Oracle hours for custom report development
- Providing post-launch support for system stabilization

These changes are expected to extend the system's full readiness to late September 2025.

Staff recommended action by the Board to add additional funds for Change Order 2 for \$110,000 to modify and implement the Oracle Unifier Project Controls Project Management System as the backbone software for our capital project delivery systems. Staff recommended the board provide authorization for the Chief Executive Officer to approve Change Order 2, for an amount not to exceed \$110,000 (including 25% contingency).

Funding for this project will come from Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 formula funds with 10% State and 10% Local matching funds.

The Operations and Finance Committee presented a motion to approve the Oracle Unifier Project Controls Software Modification Change Order 2_action item. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thompson and unanimously approved by the board.

- c. **Marine Tiger Security Plan Award (M-A-25-029)**: Chief Safety & Security Officer Nick Oldham presented the following item for action.

In December 2023, WeGo Public Transit contracted Marine Tiger Technologies (MTT) to conduct a comprehensive security assessment of its transit system. The completed assessment identified key vulnerabilities and opportunities for improvement. Based on MTT's transit security expertise and familiarity with WeGo's operations, the staff proposed a sole-source continuation of the contract to implement a modernized, agency-wide Security Program.

The proposed next phase includes:

- Security Program Buildout (\$750,000): Development of a Safety and Security ConOps Plan, updated protocols, integrated technology and outreach, coordination with departments and MNPd, and creation of performance metrics.
- Transit-Focused Policing Unit Deployment Plan (\$400,000): Design and strategy for a dedicated MNPd Transit Policing Unit, including role definitions, patrol models, MOU development, and alignment with community policing.

Timeline: June 27, 2025 – June 2026

Justification for Sole-Source Procurement: Continuity of expertise, efficiency, specialized knowledge, and alignment with new MNPd initiatives. Procurement has reviewed and confirmed compliance with sole-source criteria.

MTT's contract also includes a 12-month extension option to support continued implementation.

Staff recommended that the Board provide the Chief Executive Officer with authority to sign an agreement with Marine Tiger Technologies in the amount not to exceed \$1,150,000 to complete the buildout of WeGo's Security Program and to develop a comprehensive plan for deploying the agency's first dedicated transit policing unit. This project would utilize the Choose How You Move Program (100% local) funding for security upgrades, which have already been appropriated by the Metropolitan Council.

There was a general discussion.

The Operations and Finance Committee presented a motion to approve the Marine Tiger Security Plan Award action item. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thompson and unanimously approved by the board.

- d. **Auto Damage/Catastrophic Insurance Renewal (M-A-25-030)**: Chief of Staff & Administration Vince Malone presented the following item for action:

Each year, WeGo Public Transit renews its auto damage and catastrophic insurance policy through its broker, maintaining a \$100,000 deductible per incident. In response to industry-wide trends of increasing catastrophic losses, MTA implemented a layered insurance structure two years ago. This structure includes nine carriers and provides coverage up to a \$50 million

policy limit. It currently ensures a portion of WeGo's \$97.6 million fleet, leaving a potential exposure of \$47.6 million in the event of a worst-case catastrophic loss.

For Fiscal Year 2025, the annual premium is \$1,174,832 — a modest decrease of \$1,390 from the previous year.

Although coverage does not extend beyond \$50 million, the risk is mitigated by several factors:

- The probability of a total fleet loss is low, as vehicles are only vulnerable during the 1–4 a.m. storage window at the Nestor facility.
- Flood evacuation procedures have been effectively executed twice since 2019.
- During the 2010 flood, fleet replacement costs were covered through federal aid rather than traditional insurance.

Staff requested that the Board approve MTA's auto damage and catastrophic insurance coverage as presented here for a premium cost of \$1,174,832 for the period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.

The Operations and Finance Committee presented a motion to approve the Auto Damage/Catastrophic Insurance Renewal action item. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thompson and unanimously approved by the board.

IX. New Initiative & Community Engagement Committee Report: Committee Chair Thompson introduced the following items for action:

- a. **FY2025-026 Proposed Operating Budget (M-A-25-031):** CEO Steve Bland presented the following action item in the absence of Deputy CEO of Finance & Administration Amanda Vandegrift:

The proposed FY2026 operating budget for WeGo Public Transit, presented as Action Item M-A-25-031 beginning on page 32 of the board packet, marks the first full fiscal year that includes revenues generated through Mayor Freddie O'Connell's *Choose How You Move* (CHYM) transportation initiative. While the current year's budget reflected some supplemental CHYM funding approved by Metro Council, FY2026 represents a significant shift, with notable changes across nearly every revenue and expenditure category. If approved, the proposed \$157.67 million operating budget would represent a 23%—or nearly \$30 million—increase over the FY2024-25 budget.

On the revenue side, one of the most notable developments is the introduction of the low-income fare subsidy program funded through CHYM. Staff have been collaborating with the Mayor's Office and social service agencies to design the program, which is expected to launch before the end of the calendar year. While traditional passenger fare revenue is projected to decrease, based on the estimate that up to 75% of existing riders may qualify for the reduced fare, the lost revenue will be offset by reimbursement through the CHYM program. In addition, the budget includes reimbursement for previously unfunded programs like the Connector Card and Cold Weather Card, which together will account for nearly one million rides this year.

Another major change is the establishment of an operating reserve fund under CHYM, which replaces WeGo's reliance on an annual line of credit for short-term cash flow needs. Investment in income from this reserve is now reflected in the "Other Operating Revenues" line. Funding categories have also been updated to distinguish between general fund support and dedicated CHYM funding. While general fund support sees a slight decline, \$11.6 million in baseline costs have shifted to CHYM, more than offsetting the reduction. At the state level, Governor Lee's FY2026 budget includes a 16% increase in state operating assistance, which now accounts for about 4% of WeGo's total operating budget.

Importantly, all federal COVID-19 relief funds have been exhausted. Thanks to CHYM support, WeGo does not need to revert to pre-pandemic practices of using federal formula funds to cover operations. Instead, a growing percentage of these funds will be redirected to the agency's state of good repair capital program, enhancing long-term infrastructure maintenance and reducing the need for Metro capital funding for routine state of good repair projects.

The local funding breakdown on page 33 highlights a \$2 million allocation for the new Low-Income Fare program, which will cover both traditional fare losses and previously unreimbursed rides for homeless service programs. It also includes \$3.54 million for the new MNPd Transit Policing Unit. While these funds will be managed by Metro Finance, WeGo will report them as part of its operating expenditures for federal tracking and accountability. Additionally, the reserve fund's projected balance is expected to grow steadily throughout the fiscal year.

On the expenditure side, increases in labor and fringe benefits reflect both service expansion and staffing readiness. This includes hiring and training new operating staff and expanding recruiting efforts. In July 2025, WeGo will roll out its first wave of CHYM-funded fixed route service enhancements, including off-peak improvements on five routes and added school-year service for Glenclyff and McGavock High Schools. A second wave of service expansion is planned for January 2026. Services-related expenses also increase significantly, especially in areas related to security, such as launching a Transit Ambassador program, expanding mobile security patrols, and funding the new MNPd Transit Policing Unit. Paratransit and Access on Demand services will also see major cost increases as additional zones and weekend coverage are implemented.

In summary, the FY2026 operating budget positions WeGo for transformative service improvements and increased system resiliency, fueled by new CHYM funding, increased state support, and a stronger financial foundation through reserve planning and reduced reliance on federal and general fund sources.

Ms. Dauphin inquired why fuel costs are projected to decrease by approximately \$60,000 despite plans to provide increased service. CEO Bland explained that the projection is based on the agency's fuel hedge strategy, which accounts for anticipated price stabilization.

Mr. Thompson inquired about the discrepancy between the FY2026 line item for the MNPd Transit Police Unit listed at \$3,540,000 and the total expenses of \$5,555,800 shown on page 34 of the report. CEO Bland explained that the difference includes both the direct transit policing unit and the secondary employment coverage with MNPd. He noted that the figures for the Police Unit are projections and will depend on the pace of recruitment and program ramp-up. Over time, you will see a transition where the police unit expenses will go up and the secondary employment will go down as they staff out that unit and transition over completely.

Staff requested that the Board adopt the proposed FY2026 operating budget as presented.

The NICE Committee presented a motion to approve the FY2025-026 Proposed Operating Budget action item. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dauphin and unanimously approved by the board.

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

1. On June 17, the Metro Council officially adopted its operating budget, which included the full recommended funding allocations for both MTA and RTA as proposed in Mayor O'Connell's original budget.
2. With coordination from Mayor O'Connell's Office, WeGo has engaged a number of local social service agencies and advocacy groups to help shape the new low-income fare program funded

through *Choose How You Move*. These conversations will guide the final program design, which staff expect to bring before the Board for approval later this summer. The goal is to begin rolling out the program before the end of the year.

3. The supplemental funding provided in May has allowed WeGo to significantly expand its recruitment and training capacity. As a result, 62 new operators are currently in various stages of training, with 13 more scheduled to begin next week. While some attrition during training is expected, this influx of personnel will help address staffing needs as the fixed-route service expands starting July 6. We anticipate some initial service reliability challenges, but these should improve quickly as new operators complete training.
4. Dawn Mason recently joined WeGo as Director of Procurement and Business Diversity. She brings extensive private-sector experience in procurement and supply chain operations and will play a key role in strengthening these functions at WeGo.
5. WeGo participated in the inaugural meeting of the *Choose How You Move* Advisory Committee, a 15-member group representing a cross-section of the Nashville community. The committee intends to guide and support the broader CHYM initiative.
6. Earlier this month, the CEO attended the Tennessee Public Transportation Association's annual strategy session in Murfreesboro. The group focused on key issues facing transit agencies across the state. Participants also toured Murfreesboro Transit's newly opened bus operations and transfer facility.
7. RTA Project Updates:
 - Design is underway on several public infrastructure upgrades at Donelson Station, including a 6-bay transit center, a new traffic signal, relocation of utilities and the access road, and quiet zone improvements at two rail crossings. The RTA Board has approved the purchase of a key parcel from the Nashville and Eastern Railroad Authority to support this project, with closing currently being arranged.
 - The Board also approved the purchase of a property in Murfreesboro, formerly home to a disbanded church, for a new park-and-ride facility. Located next to the city's new transit center and with easy access to I-24, the site is well situated. The closing is scheduled for next week, followed by demolition and site planning.
 - RTA staff are working closely with Anchor Bus as they take over regional bus operations from Gray Line, the long-time provider. Anchor Bus will begin service this weekend. We appreciate Gray Line's many years of partnership and their professionalism during this transition.

- XI. **Chair's Report:** Chair Carr Williams expressed pride in the Rodeo Team, highlighting their ongoing participation as a reflection of WeGo's values—excellence, safety, teamwork, and dedication. She emphasized that the team's representation speaks to the organization's identity and commitment.

She celebrated the passing of the budget as a significant milestone and an opportunity for growth. Chair Williams also expressed enthusiasm about the partnership with the Mayor's Office and welcomed the presence of Sabrina Sussman at the meeting.

She encouraged a brief rest over the July 4th holiday but reminded the Board and staff that Nashville is rapidly growing, and continued momentum is essential. She concluded by commending both the staff and Board for their collective effort in making WeGo a national and now international example of excellence in public transit. Let's roll with WeGo!

XII. **Other Business:**

- a. **WeGo Liability Insurance Renewal (M-A-25-032):** Chief of Staff & Administration Vince Malone presented the following item for action:

Each year WeGo Public Transit's (WeGo) insurance broker shops the insurance market for renewal of the MTA's \$3 million liability policy with auto liability deductible of \$250,000 per occurrence and general liability deductible of \$100,000 per occurrence. Our broker made inquiries across their nationwide network, which resulted in a change in the insurance provider to Obsidian Insurance Company and savings in our liability coverage premium costs.

Last year, the general liability coverage was through Chubb Insurance, which saw an increase in premium of 17.6% compared to the previous year in the amount of \$1,058,000.00. During the renewal period this year, Chubb provided a delayed renewal quote for \$1,477,750.00 for 2025-2026 in mid-June 2025. The quote was approximately a 40% increase from the previous year. Additionally, the Chubb renewal also reduced the policy limits to \$2 million with an increased auto liability deductible to \$350,000 and no change with the general liability deductible of \$100,000. The Chubb increase is potentially due to new underwriting guidelines by the insurance carrier and a previous 2023 automobile liability claim that still has open claims and is currently in litigation.

Our new insurance carrier for the 2025-2026 liability policy period is Obsidian Insurance Company, which has an excellent "A" rating by AM Best. Obsidian submitted a quote for \$1,051,750.00 for the 2025-2026 policy period. Obsidian's renewal for liability coverage will have a \$3 million limit with a \$250,000 auto liability deductible and \$100,000 general liability deductible per occurrence.

The total premium cost for the coverage period of July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, is based on the number of vehicles expected to be on hand on July 1, 2025.

Liability Coverage	Current Chubb (2024-25)	Proposed Obsidian (2025-26)
Premiums	\$1,058,000.00	\$1,051,750.00

This represents \$6,250.00 savings compared to last year. The premium will vary slightly depending on the number of vehicles and vehicle types WeGo may have in the fleet at any given time.

Staff requested for the Board to authorize the CEO to enter a contract with Obsidian Insurance Company for our liability coverage for the period effective July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, for \$3 million in coverage with a \$250,000 auto liability deductible and a \$100,000 general liability deductible for an annual premium of approximately \$1,051,750.00.

There was a general discussion.

Ms. Jessica Dauphin moved to approve the WeGo Liability Insurance Renewal. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thompson and unanimously approved by the Board.

- XIII. **Adjournment:** With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

Attested:

Gail Carr Williams
Chair

Margaret L. Behm
Secretary