Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority

Board of Directors Meeting

August 28, 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, August 28, 2025.

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

Gail Carr Williams, Chair	Amanda Vandegrift, DCEO of Finance & Admin.
Jessica Dauphin, Member	Andy Burke, Chief Operating Officer
Kathryn Hays, Member	Vince Malone, Chief of Staff & Administration
Jeff Haynes, Member	Nick Oldham, Chief Safety & Security Officer
Margaret Behm, Board Secretary	Katie Freudberg, Director of Service Dev.
Steve Bland, CEO	Rob McElhaney, Director of IT
Monica Howse, Sr. Exec. Asst. & Bd. Liaison	Shelly McElhaney, Director of Finance

A quorum was established, and Chair Carr Williams called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

III. **Approval of Minutes:** Ms. Dauphin made a motion to approve the minutes of the Nashville MTA Board meeting held on July 24, 2025. Mr. Haynes seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved the minutes.

IV. **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:

- Wesley Smith
- Peter Robinson
- Peter O'Connor
- Darius Knight

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

- Monthly Financial Report Compared to Budget – No questions
- Monthly Operating Statistics – No questions
- Upcoming Procurements – No questions

VI. **Consent Agenda Items:**

a. **TriStar Digital Connections Service Contract Increase (M-A-25-033):** Staff requested the Board authorize the CEO to add $100,000 to the existing TriStar Digital Connections contract, bringing the total contract value to $375,000 for the purchase, installation, and support of audio-visual hardware and services. Funding for this contract will be provided through the Authority's annual approved capital and operating budgets.

Ms. Hays made a motion to approve the TriStar Digital Connections Service Contract Increase action item. The motion was seconded by Mr. Haynes and unanimously approved by the board.

VII. **Operations & Finance Committee Report:** Committee Chair Dauphin introduced the following items for discussion and action:

a. **Claims Management Third Party Administrative Services Contract Modification (M-A-25-034):** Chief of Staff & Administration Vince Malone presented the following item for action:

In September 2023, the Board approved a $671,500 contract with Charles Taylor for Auto, General Liability, and Workers' Compensation claims management over five years, including a $61,000 contingency. The initial contract value was $610,500. However, due to a major accident in August 2023, first-year costs were significantly higher than expected. While claim volumes have declined in the second year, total spending is now projected to exceed the budget by $130,000—$100,000 for Auto and General Liability claims and $30,000 for Workers' Compensation claims.

Staff requested the Board authorize the Chief Executive Officer to add $100,000 for Auto and General Liability claims processing and $30,000 for the Worker's Compensation claims processing with Charles Taylor, increasing the overall total contract value to $801,500. Funding for these contracts will be assigned through the Authority's operating budget.

The Operations & Finance Committee recommended a motion to approve the Claims Management Third Party Administrative Services Contract Modification action item. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hays and unanimously approved by the board.

b. **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Consultant Services (M-A-25-035):** Director of Finance Shelly McElhaney presented the following item for action:

WeGo's current accounting system, Sage 300, is outdated and labor-intensive, causing inefficiencies in financial reporting, payments, and asset management. To modernize operations, WeGo sought a consultant to guide the transition to a modern ERP system—assessing business processes, developing RFP documents, evaluating proposals, overseeing implementation, and supporting organizational change.

Following March 7, 2025, RFP for ERP Consultant Services, six proposals were received. eVision Partners, Inc. was selected as the top-scoring firm, exceeding the 7% DBE goal with a 19.47% commitment. Cost proposals ranged from ~$637K to $4.3M (average ~$2M); eVision's Best and Final Offer was $1,097,145, considered fair and reasonable.

eVision brings relevant transit ERP experience and prior familiarity with WeGo through their EAM assessment. Their plan anticipates completing the needs assessment in ~90 days, issuing an ERP RFP within six months, and beginning implementation within one year—providing significant time and cost efficiencies.

Staff requested Board approval authorizing the CEO to enter a contract with eVision for ERP Consultant Services: a three-year agreement with two one-year extension options, for a total not-to-exceed amount of $1,097,145. Funding is allocated in the FY2025–2029 Capital Plan, with $150,000 programmed for Task 1 using federal, state, and local funds.

The Operations & Finance Committee recommended a motion to approve the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Consultant Services action item. The motion was seconded by Mr. Haynes and unanimously approved by the board.

c. **Quarterly Route Performance Report (OF-D-25-005):** Director of Service Development Katie Freudberg presented the following item for action:

The Quarterly Route Performance Report for April–June 2025 shows a 2% increase in ridership compared to the same quarter last year and a 9% increase over the previous quarter. This seasonal rise is typical due to factors like weather, school schedules, and holidays. Ms. Freudberg noted that service levels for this quarter were nearly identical to service levels for the prior year quarter, as service expansion accompanying the opening of the Dr. Ernest Rip Patton Jr. North Nashville Center had been implemented before April 1, 2024, and our most recent round of service expansion funded by the Choose How You Move initiative did not begin until after July 1, 2025.

Frequent network ridership was slightly down year-over-year, while local network ridership rose by 3.8%. Connector routes saw a significant 30%+ increase—marking the first valid year-over-year comparison since the opening of the Ernest Rip Patton Jr. North Nashville Transit Center.

Previous issues with on-time performance data have been largely resolved through software updates, allowing staff to more accurately assess and address operational and scheduling challenges.

There was a general discussion of the report among the Members.

VIII. **New Initiative & Community Engagement Committee Report:** In the absence of Committee Chair Aron Thompson, Chair Carr Williams introduced the following items for discussion:

a. Journey Pass Program Overview (M-A-25-022): Deputy CEO of Finance & Administration Amanda Vandegrift presented the following information:

Since the approval of *Choose How You Move* in November 2024, WeGo staff have been working with the mayor's office and Metro departments to advance 11 key projects, including the Journey Pass Program—a free transit initiative for income-eligible Davidson County residents. The program aims to maximize access, simplify use, and prevent misuse.

Planning began in spring 2025, with rollout expected by year-end. Four stakeholder meetings were held over the summer, followed by individual meetings with potential distribution partners to define roles and needs.

The Journey Pass will launch in phases:

- **Phase 1 (October):** Partner with Metro departments to verify need and distribute passes.
- **Phase 2:** Expand distribution through additional agencies.
- **Future Phase:** Full launch with income verification via online or in-person methods.

This phased rollout is designed to reduce risk, ease administration, and allow for adjustments based on real-time feedback and impact monitoring.

Ms. Hays asked whether part of the development would include specifications or requirements that partners would use to determine Journey Pass eligibility. Ms. Vandegrift responded that this is still in development and will vary depending on the partner. For example, MDHA has specific programs that may automatically qualify participants without additional income verification. Certain programs would simply be designated as Journey Pass-eligible for that partner. Since this is an expensive program, each partner relationship will be reviewed individually to determine eligible programs and participants.

Ms. Hays also asked how long Journey Pass eligibility would remain valid once someone is approved, and whether that period would be determined by the partner organization or still under planning. Ms. Vandegrift explained that this is part of the framework under discussion, and feedback from partners suggests a potential qualification period of around three years. This timeframe aligns with design goals by limiting administrative burden while reducing the risk of misuse. Final decisions on recertification and qualification length have not yet been made.

Ms. Carr Williams asked about riders who are not affiliated with any partner organizations, how they would submit information, who would process it, and what would happen with their data. Ms. Vandegrift explained that during the soft launch, there will not yet be a public enrollment option, but this will be added in a later expansion phase. Non-partner participants would use this option once available, and WeGo would administer the process through customer care portals.

Ms. Hays asked whether WeGo would collect any economic or personal information from individuals. In response, Ms. Vandegrift explained that the goal is to keep the process as simple as possible. At this time, only basic identifying details—first name, last name, and date of birth—will be collected to ensure each applicant is unique and to prevent misuse of the program. CEO Bland added that in other states, similar programs often allow applicants to self-certify their participation in income-based assistance programs with a simple checkbox, eliminating the need for extensive documentation. Ms. Vandegrift also emphasized the importance of limiting the amount of personal data stored during program development.

Ms. Dauphin asked whether there would be a limit on the number of participants once maximum enrollment is reached. Ms. Vandegrift said that no cap has been set at this time, but partners are providing early estimates to assist with planning efforts.

Ms. Hays also inquired whether Journey Pass holders would receive standard QuickTickets. Ms. Vandegrift confirmed that the cards will be identical in appearance and functionality to regular QuickTickets, with the Journey Pass designation stored electronically and not visible to others—an intentional design choice to avoid stigma. She added that coordination with Dan Freudberg's team will ensure that when tapped, the card will behave exactly like a standard QuickTicket.

Finally, Carr Williams asked whether Journey Pass holders would need to reload their cards. CEO Bland clarified that as long as participants use their designated Journey Pass card, reloading will not be necessary.

Ms. Vandegrift reported that the proposed Journey Pass program design will be included in the MTA's current public engagement and Title VI process, and the final program design recommendations will be presented to the Board for consideration and adoption in October, concurrent with proposed January service changes.

IX. **<u>CEO's Report</u>**: CEO Bland provided the following report:

1. Following the successful launch of the first phase of service expansion funded through the Choose How You Move initiative over the past two months, WeGo's Planning and Service Development staff have been actively preparing for the next phase of expansion, scheduled for implementation in January. The recommended changes will be presented for your approval at the October meeting. Since we will still be operating with the current fleet size at that time, these improvements will focus on off-peak hours. Key recommendations include:

- Expanding Sunday service hours to match the Monday–Saturday span
- Increasing mid-day frequency on Routes 3 and 52
- Adding a new WeGo Link zone (bringing the total to 19)
- Improving evening and weekend frequency on Route 7

2. Earlier this month, WeGo joined Mayor O'Connell to announce the launch of the open payment system. This enhancement allows riders to pay fares using contactless credit cards, debit cards, and mobile wallets (Visa, Mastercard, Discover, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Samsung Pay). By using the same payment method for each transaction, riders will receive the same fare capping benefits currently available to Quick Ticket users. Special thanks to Jessica for representing the Board at this event.

3. In August, WeGo hosted a delegation from MetroLink Tulsa for a full-day visit. The group toured our major facilities, exchanged program information, and connected with peers. This visit was a valuable opportunity to reflect on our progress and learn from Tulsa's innovations as we continue advancing our services.

4. Eric Beyer and CEO Bland were pleased to accompany Ms. Kathryn Hays to her reappointment interview before the Council's Rules Committee this month. Ms. Hays responded to their questions with excellence, resulting in a unanimous recommendation for reappointment and unanimous confirmation by the full Council for another five-year term on the Board.

5. CEO Bland was honored to participate in two events hosted by the Transit Alliance this month. Several of us attended the Transit Champions reception with graduates of the Transit Citizens Leadership Academy (TCLA) and the new class. Additionally, he joined peers from Clarksville and Murfreesboro Transit to discuss regional transit efforts with the new TCLA class. Many thanks to Jessica for the invitation.

6. Several members of WeGo's leadership team joined staff from the Mayor's Office Choose How You Move program for a day-long tour of Metro Nashville Police Department (MNPD) facilities. The tour, facilitated by MNPD Transit Liaison Captain Brian Williams, provided a deeper understanding of MNPD's capacity and training and included introductions to several members of the MNPD Command Team.

7. WeGo also held a productive meeting with MNPD to begin defining the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MTA and MNPD, outlining roles and responsibilities for the new Transit Policing Unit. Vince Malone is coordinating this effort with Board Secretary and General Counsel Margaret Behm, Metro Legal, and WeGo anticipates bringing the final MOU to the Board for approval within the next several months.

8. RTA Updates:

   - Donelson Station: Design work continues on public improvements, including a six-bay transit center, relocation of the access road and above-ground utilities, installation of a new traffic signal, and quiet zone improvements at two grade crossings.

   - Murfreesboro Park & Ride: Following last month's property acquisition, the church structure on-site has been demolished and the area cleared. We are now in the design phase for the park-and-ride facility, located adjacent to Murfreesboro Transit's new Transit Center, which will streamline regional–local service connections. Debbie Frank is representing WeGo Public Transit at today's dedication ceremony for the new transit center.

   - VanStar Program: WeGo met with staff from the TMA Group to discuss the VanStar vanpool program and explore opportunities for program expansion under the RTA umbrella.

X. **Chair's Report:** Chair Carr Williams congratulated Kathryn Hays on her reappointment to the MTA Board and expressed appreciation to the Council and the Mayor's Office for their support.

Chair Williams also commented that the meeting was very productive, particularly with the updates on the new systems. She noted that she would follow up with Shelly McElhaney after the upgrade to see how things are progressing.

She concluded by wishing everyone a safe and happy Labor Day weekend.

XI. **Other Business:** Mr. Haynes informed the board that 30 acres of land east of Nestor have recently come on the market. He suggested that this may be a strategic opportunity worth considering as the board continues discussions around future investments at the Nestor location. CEO Bland acknowledged the update and indicated that he would follow up on the matter.

XII. **Adjournment**: With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:37 p.m.

Attested:

______________________________	______________________________
Gail Carr Williams	**Margaret L. Behm**
Chair	**Board Secretary**