



MINUTES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

February 18, 2026

1. **Call to Order:** The regular meeting of the Executive Committee of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) of Middle Tennessee was convened on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at the Greater Nashville Regional Council, located at 44 Vantage Way, Suite 450, Nashville, TN 37228. The Executive Committee meeting was officially called to order by Board Chair, Mayor Randall Hutto, at 9:30 a.m.

Executive Committee Members in Attendance:

Mayor Randall Hutto – Wilson County, Chair
Mayor Paige Brown – City of Gallatin, Vice Chair
Mayor Ken Moore – City of Franklin
Mayor Rick Bell – City of Lebanon
Mayor Freddie O’Connell – Davidson County
Mayor Billy Vogle – Robertson County
Ed Cole – Davidson County (Gov. Appt.)
Kelly Dannenfelser – Williamson County (Gov. Appt.)
Ken Davis – Wilson County (Gov. Appt.)
Nicole Rowan – Sumner County (Gov Appt.)

Others Present:

Mayor Nelson Andrews – City of Brentwood
Jason Gage – City of Brentwood (Alt.)
Gerald Herman – City of White House (Alt.)
Mayor Jamie Clary – City of Hendersonville
Ed Elam – Rutherford County (Gov. Appt.)
Ray Render - Congressman John Rose Office - 6th District, TN
Howard Bradley – Robertson County (Gov. Appt.)
Jim Kerr – City of Murfreesboro (Alt.)
Denise Geminden – City of Murfreesboro

2. **Approval of Minutes:** A. Approval of Minutes: Ken Davis made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2026, Executive Committee meeting. Mayor Ken Moore seconded the motion, and the Executive Committee unanimously approved the minutes.
3. **Public Comments:** NO members of the public requested time to speak.
4. **Audit Committee Report:** Mayor Ken Moore introduced the following items for discussion and action:
 - **Annual Audit Report (R-A-003):** Mayor Ken Moore introduced Mark England and Jennifer Manternach from Crosslin to review the Annual Audit Report. Mayor Moore indicated that the Audit Committee had earlier reviewed the report and said that it is a clean report from the auditors. Jennifer Manternach said that it is their opinion that based on our audit we did have a clean audit. Mark England said that the auditors encountered no problems dealing in conducting the audit and had disagreements with management regarding any accounting policies or adoption of accounting policies. The auditors reviewed the required audit communications to the Board and reviewed the overall financial position of the Authority.

The auditors asked if there were any questions. None were asked. Mayor Moore thanked the auditors for the report, and concluded the Audit Committee report. Mayor Hutto asked for a motion to approve the Annual Audit Report under item R-A-003 of the agenda. Ed Cole made the motion, Mayor Rick Bell seconded, and the Executive Committee unanimously approved the report.

Ed Cole made the comment that when we approved the motion on the community audit I would just like for the minutes to reflect thanks to Amanda's team. To have the kind of audit findings that we talked about earlier in the agenda with no findings that doesn't happen automatically that is great staff work.

5. **Finance Committee Report:** Mayor Ken Moore introduced the following items for discussion and action:

- **Monthly Financial Report Compared to Budget (R-D-26-006)** Mayor Ken Moore presented the Statement of Operations for December 2025. Ms. Vandegrift was present and available to answer questions, but there were none.
- **Donelson Transit Center Design Contract (R-A-004):** Debbie Frank DCEO of Growth and Development reported on this proposed action item. She said that the RTA has been working on improvements to Donaldson Station for several years, and that sufficient funding has been obtained to advance the project. Today we are asking Executive Committee to approve a Phase 2 design contract award. In the earlier design phase, work was completed to develop designs for associated infrastructure improvements including a new signalized intersection on Donelson Pike and quiet zone improvements where the Nashville and Eastern Railroad tracks cross Donelson Pike and Old Lebanon Pike. In phase 2, on-site surface level transit infrastructure will be designed to accommodate a 6-bay bus transit center adjacent to the rail station. The Wendel Architectural firm, who is part of RTA's on call consultant team, will continue with Phase 2 to reach 100% design completion this summer. Later this spring, staff will issue an RFQ to select a design firm to complete the design and construction drawings as well as permitting for the transit center building itself. Executive Committee approval is being requested to authorize the Phase II design contract award.

Staff recommends Board action to authorize the Chief Executive Officer to enter a Task Order agreement with the consultant, Wendel Architecture, PC, for a total project expense not to exceed \$427,300 (including a 15% contingency), for design services for the Donelson Transit Center Infrastructure Phase II. To date, RTA has secured local, state. And federal funding of \$25.5 million to advance the public infrastructure improvements. State IMPROVE funds with a 20% local match will be used for this portion of the work.

Mayor Bell made a motion to approve R-A-004, Nicole Rowan seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved for Action Item R-A-004 by the Executive Committee.

6. **Operations Committee Report:** Mayor Rick Bell introduced the following items for discussion and action:

- **RTA Monthly Operating Statistics (R-D-26-007):** Nick Pecenka, Director of Operations said that December reflected some expected seasonal softness in ridership levels but metrics remained strong. December ridership was up 7.2% year over year and that was driven by the WeGo Star whose ridership was up 16.9% year over year for the month of December and an impressive 23.1% for the fiscal year to date. Bus ridership remains a little bit more of a challenge and was slightly down at 3.5%.

Safety performance remains strong in December for both our vendors Anchor and TSG operating injury free and accident free. MTA operated routes experienced 2 minor accidents with fixed objects and no injuries. Reliability and service quality was also strong, with a trip completion rate of 99.93% for bus and 100% for rail. On time performance was 82.7% for bus and 98.5% for rail. The RTA operated WeGo Star service to the New Year's Eve festivities in Downtown Nashville. For this service, the WeGo Star carried 481 riders..

With respect to Winter Storm Fern, impacts on RTA Services were significant, as Star service was cancelled on both Monday and Tuesday as TSG needed to clear more than 30 trees before they could operate the train. Bus service was not able to resume until later in the week.

Mayor Freddie O'Connell asked if we were examining additional special events services at the regional level as traditional commuter work trips were still depressed. CEO Steve Bland answered yes and pointed to the Titans Express service to Sumner County and express service to Murfreesboro for Nashville SC weekend games as examples. The current WeGo Forward service planning effort will examine additional opportunities to expand on these partnerships.

- **FY2026-FY2030 Capital Investment Plan (R-A-005):** Billy Higgins, Director of Grants Management and Compliance presented the recommended RTA Capital Investment Plan. The Regional Transportation Authority of middle Tennessee's (RTA) Capital Investment Plan prioritizes needs, identifies funding sources, and sets timelines for RTA's capital projects over a five-year period. The plan outlines regulatory, state-of-good-repair, and growth and expansion needs that guide the RTA's future project development activity. Generally, projects identified in the first year of the plan are relatively firm in scope and budget, while projects in out-years are likely more conceptual.

Staff is presenting a recommended Capital Investment Plan for the period of FY2026-2030. Overall, investments totaling \$35,208,355 are recommended in Year One of the plan (FY2026), with a total project investment recommendation of \$146,516,094 over the life of the plan, including prior year investments that have not yet been encumbered or spent. Projects identified in FY2026 have been access to full funding.

Mayor Freddie O'Connell asked if we were expecting CMAQ funding beyond FY2027. Ms. Higgins said we are projecting a continuation of CMAQ for regional bus operations, but that the Federal Law authorizing it is set to expire this year and we will need to assure that this use remains eligible in the new legislation. She indicated that previously allocated CMAQ funding is sufficient to carry us through FY2027.

With no further questions, Mayor Vogel moved approval of item **R-A-005**, Ed Cole seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

- **RTA Vanpool Program Update R-D-25-009:** Debbie Frank, DCEO of Growth & Development introduced Stanton Higgs, Chief Operating Officer at The TMA Group, to provide a Vanpool Program update to the RTA Board.

Mr. Higgs reported that the vanpool program model provides agency-owned vans to groups of employees who collectively operate and share costs for commuting. The flexibility and affordability of this model have historically made it an attractive alternative for long-distance commuters, when sufficient numbers of people making the same trips at the same time can be identified.

In recent years, coordination and management of the vanpool program has been contracted to The TMA Group and supported by Williamson County under the brand **VanStar**. Additional vehicles were acquired through Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding, with contributions from TDOT and local sources (FTA 80%, TDOT 10%, Local Match 10%).

The vanpool program has long been a vital component of the regional transit system, a cost-effective, flexible transportation solution for employees with longer commutes. However, recent shifts in travel patterns, employment locations, and the rise of remote and hybrid work models, along with an aging vehicle fleet, have significantly impacted participation in the vanpool program. Mr. Higgs reported on vanpool usage trends, with a VanStar presence in most counties in Middle Tennessee, including several outside the RTA service area. Davidson County was the dominant destination for most trips.

As part of the **WeGo Forward** strategic planning process, RTA will take a closer look at vanpool services as an essential tool for improving regional network integration and addressing mobility needs across

Middle Tennessee. For instance, WeGo Ride focuses on fixed-route, affordability, and sustainability of vanpools as part of the regional mobility solution.

Mayor Freddie O'Connell asked why there has been such a significant decline in usage, particularly for RTA provided vanpool services compared to Williamson County. Mr. Higgs reported that, apart from the changes in travel patterns that accelerated during the pandemic reducing group trip opportunities, RTA has not funded new vehicles in recent years, and Williamson County has assumed this responsibility. As older RTA vans are retired and replaced with Williamson County vans, these trips transition over.

7. **CEO's Report:** CEO Bland presented the following report:

- With respect to the City of Murfreesboro Park and Ride facility, we are working through a Memorandum of Understanding with the City regarding the ongoing operation and maintenance of the facility that we expect to bring before the Board in the next two months. In addition, we opened construction bids last week for the project last week and received a significant number of bids that appear responsive and responsible, so we anticipate bringing a construction contract award recommendation to your March meeting.
- We have also continued meetings with a developer in the Cool Springs area of Franklin toward a potential park-and-ride project on their property, with promising progress. We are still exchanging materials like shelter design concepts, photos of similar facilities in the region, and sample memoranda of understanding, and hope to have an agreement to bring before you in the coming months.
- At prior meetings of the RTA Board, you've met Captain Brian Williams of the Metro Nashville Police Department who is the appointed Transit Liaison for MNPD, and who will lead the emerging Transit Police Unit within the Department. For the past several months, we have been working with MNPD, Metro Legal and our MTA General Counsel on an MOU that outlines the structure of the arrangement. As this unit will also have jurisdiction over RTA properties within Davidson County, we are also reviewing it with RTA's General Counsel with an intention to bring it to the RTA Board when it is complete.
- Monica Howse recently announced that she is leaving WeGo Public Transit for another opportunity. The Executive Assistant Position is now posted. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to myself or Lindsey Ganson, our Chief of Staff, for any needs you have that might otherwise have gone to Monica and let us know if you're aware of any good candidates.

8. **Chair's Report:** Mayor Hutton had no additional information to report to the Committee.

9. **Other Business:** No other business came before the Executive Committee.

10. **Adjournment:** With no further business, Mayor Hutto called for a motion to adjourn. Ed Cole motioned to adjourn the meeting, which was adjourned at 10:23 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Ed Cole, RTA Secretary & Davidson County
Governor Appointee