



**MINUTES**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**

**April 19, 2023**

- I. **Call to Order:** The regular meeting of the Regional Transportation Authority of Middle Tennessee (RTA) Executive Committee was held at the Tennessee State Archives & Library, located at 1001 Rep. John Lewis Way N., Nashville, TN 37219 on Wednesday, April 19, 2023. A quorum of the Executive Committee was established, and the meeting was called to order at 9:31 a.m. by Chair, Mayor Randall Hutto.

**Executive Committee Members in Attendance:**

Board Chair Mayor Randall Hutto – Wilson County  
Ed Cole – Davidson County (Gov. Appt.)  
Mayor Ken Moore – City of Franklin  
Mayor Billy Vogle – Robertson County  
Kelly Dannenfelser – Williamson County (Gov. Appt.)  
Ken Davis – Wilson County (Gov. Appt.)

**Others Present:**

Mayor Jamie Clary – City of Hendersonville  
Gerald Herman – White House (Alt.)  
Diana Alarcon – Davidson County (Alt.)  
Ray Render – Deputy District Director of Congressman John Rose 6<sup>th</sup> District, TN

- II. **Approval of Minutes:**  
Ken Davis made a motion to approve the March 15, 2023 meeting minutes, the motion was seconded by Ed Cole and unanimously approved by the Executive Committee.
- III. **Public Comments:**  
Jessica Dauphin, President and CEO of the Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee said that the Transit Alliance has hosted a round of community engagement/listening sessions in Nashville called “Transit Together”. So far, there have been six sessions with close to 120 people in attendance. Regional Transit ranked high with some of the populations that she has spoken to and people are still interested in thinking about regional transportation access throughout the Middle Tennessee region via transit. She thanked everyone for the work that they are doing and asked everyone to keep doing what they are doing in representing their constituents well.
- IV. **Operations Committee Report:** Chief Operating Officer Andy Burke presented the following items for discussion and action:
- a. **Monthly Operating Statistics (R-D-23-007):** Chief Operating Officer Andy Burke reviewed the RTA Monthly Dashboard Report through the month of February 28, 2023, with the Executive Committee. Andy Burke was available for any questions and there were no additional questions or further discussion.

Mayor Hutto said that Gabriel Burgess made him aware that over 60 people had signed up for the Marathon Train. RJ Corman is a sponsor of that train; and as a fundraiser,

all ticket proceeds will go to St. Jude's Hospital. He thanked everyone involved for making this happen.

- b. **2023 WeGo Star Future Direction Study Update (R-A-23-008)**: Director of Planning & Grants Felix Castrodad and Dave Genova, the Project Manager from the Hatch group presented the following update:

The Star Future Direction Study will evaluate the most effective use of the line to meet current needs while building a consensus as to how to best position the Star to offer future enhanced service by evaluating options for short, medium, and long-term investments predicated on a "business case approach" that considers funding availability and regional demand. It is anticipated that the study's final recommendations for flexible strategies to tailor service to ridership demand may also be applied to regional bus service.

The study encompassed an assessment of Star's passenger market, both current and future potential, the regional freight market to evaluate how passenger and freight use of the infrastructure can work in synergy, financial analysis to consider how Star can maximize the opportunity for grant-related funding while also generating sufficient revenue to fund operating and certain capital needs, and scenario planning to envision how regional changes may affect demand for Star service. The project includes an optional task for station area visioning which may be exercised if the communities along the line seek to participate in the task. To date, all three municipalities along the line (Nashville, Mt. Juliet, and Lebanon) have expressed an interest in this task.

Hatch LTK, the consulting firm assisting RTA with the study, met in January with the RTA Operations Committee members to discuss the project approach and key elements for future decision-making. More recently, the Hatch team has advanced several tasks of the study including background work on the corridor and station area visioning and initial scenario planning work focused on potential capital and operational investments.

Ed Cole asked if the limited service waiver for positive train control is limited to 12 trips or is there any flexibility. CEO Bland said that the 12 trips are the cap in the regulation. Very few railroads have the waiver in place due to this strict limitation, and restrictions on the amount of freight tonnage that can be transported in the corridor annually. Mayor Hutto asked if there is a specific timeline that the waiver to get the PTC in place. CEO Bland said no there is no timeline for the waiver, and that it would remain in place unless the RTA commits to installing positive train control.

Ed Cole suggested that there be an informational session among the leadership of Montgomery, Davidson, Cheatham, and the Cheatham County Rail Authority towards the end of the public engagement period. He reminded the Committee of the Northwest Corridor Study that RTA commissioned several years ago, and potential opportunities for advancing passenger rail in that corridor. Depending on the direction of the project, interest in the Northwest Corridor might be rekindled. CEO Bland said that we could arrange such a meeting and that staff would work with Mr. Cole to identify the appropriate time and audience.

CEO Bland asked what post-pandemic trip patterns and rail operations the Hatch Group has seen across the country. Mr. Genova said a part of their marketing assessment is looking at the various kinds of trends and somewhere around 2015-16, they started seeing a slight decline in ridership in the US, across all modes. The pandemic obviously brought on drastic drops in ridership. While ridership is returning to varying degrees at different transit systems, typical office trips are still way down due to the continued prevalence of remote work arrangements. Mr. Genova stated that, beyond ridership, communities should

examine other metrics associated with the benefits of public transportation such as accessibility and economic development.

Mayor Hutto thanked Felix Castrodad and the Hatch group for a great report.

- V. Audit Committee Report:** There were no items for the Audit **committee** this month.
- VI. Finance Committee Report:** Committee Chair Mayor Ken Moore presented the following for discussion:
- a. Monthly Financial Report Compared to Budget (R-D-23-009):** Chief Financial Officer Ed Oliphant presented the Monthly Financials for the month of February 2023 compared to the budget and a balance sheet as of February 28, 2023. CFO Oliphant was available for questions from the floor and there were none.
- VII. CEO's Report:** CEO Bland provided the following report:
- a.** The Federal Transit Administration has continued its Triennial Review of the RTA. The review was delayed for a year by the pandemic and will include a compliance review of all aspects of the RTA's compliance with Federal requirements under its funding agreements. They have completed their initial desk review, and we are now in the process of replying to their questions. We expect this process to be completed later this spring.
- b.** Following up on Andy Burke's reports, Mr. Bland thanked the staff of WeGo, TSG, RJ Corman, and our first responders for their excellent cooperation on our mock disaster drill on the Star last week. As you all know in your own communities, the purpose of these exercises is for us to polish skills we hope we never need to use.
- c.** Background work continues on the Donelson Station joint development project, as we have our engineers on board to examine options for modifying the intersection of Donelson Pike and Lebanon Pike, and we received the preliminary appraisal report for the land.
- d.** Finally, we are in the process of recruiting for a new Chief Development Officer, as Trey Walker left us to accept a senior position with the transit agency in Dallas, TX. Please let me know if you know of anyone who might be a good fit for this position.
- CEO Bland concluded his remarks and was available for any questions from the floor and there were none.
- VIII. Chair's Report:** Chair Hutto said that he had nothing to report out this month and moved to adjournment.
- IX. Adjournment:** With no further business, Mayor Hutto called for a motion to adjourn, Mayor Ken Moore made a motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

---

Ed Cole, RTA Secretary &  
Davidson County Governor Appointee