

**NASHVILLE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**October 27, 2022**

- 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, October 27, 2022.
- II. **Roll Call of Persons Present:** Gail Carr Williams, Chair; Janet Miller, Vice Chair; Walter Searcy, Member; Jessica Dauphin, Member; Mary Griffin Member; Tyler Yarbrow, Board Secretary Designee; Chief Executive Officer, Stephen Bland; Chief Operating Officer, Andy Burke; Chief Development Officer, Trey Walker; Director of Planning & Grants, Felix Castrodad; Capital Grants Administrator, Billy Higgins; Director of System Safety & Risk Management, Nick Oldham; Director of Procurement and Business Diversity, Denise Richardson; and Sr. Executive Assistant & Board Liaison, Monica Howse

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

- III. **Approval of Minutes:** Mary Griffin made a motion to approve the September 22, 2022, MTA Board minutes with a typo correction to Page 4/Section 8a. under the East Bank Vision Plan Overview/Paragraph 4; the correction was noted, and the motion was seconded by Jessica Dauphin, and unanimously approved by the Board.
- IV. **Public Comments:** Chair Gail Carr Williams opened the floor for public comments. The public was reminded that comments were limited to three minutes. The following members of the public had these comments:

**Darius Knight**

Mr. Darius Knight submitted written comments that were provided to the Board.

- V. **Informational Items:** The following items were presented for the board members' review. If any members had questions, they were asked to reach out to the staff for the specific item.
- Monthly Financial Report Compared to Budget
  - Monthly Operating Statistics
  - Upcoming Procurement Projects List
- VI. **Consent Agenda Items:** There were no items on the consent agenda this month.
- VII. **New Initiative & Community Engagement Committee Report:** Vice-Chair Janet presented the following item for discussion:
- a. **Grant Funding Primer (NICE-D-22-021):** Director of Planning and Grants Felix Castrodad along with Capital Grants Administrator Billy Higgins led a discussion of the factors and strategies associated with the various funding sources, how we go about lining up funding for various projects, and how we go about deciding whether or not a particular competitive grant opportunity is worth pursuing or not. The presentation was presented at the request of several MTA Members who expressed an interest in learning a bit more about the strategy and processes associated with our grant funding.

Felix Castrodad said in addition to fares and other operating income, WeGo Public Transit relies on grants and other funding agreements from Federal, State, and Local Governments to sustain ongoing operations and to undertake various capital projects. On an annual basis, staff reviews these sources as part of the annual operating budget development and approval process, and the annual capital improvement plan development and approval process. Historically, we have been funded by literally dozens of different grant programs from multiple agencies. Some sources are repetitive and reliable, while others are more competitive and

“fleeting.” Some sources have fairly general use conditions, and some are highly restrictive, for very specific purposes.

At the State level, the passage of the IMPROVE Act in 2017 opened a new source of competitive capital funding that we have taken advantage of to advance several critical projects, including the Dr. Ernest Rip Patton Jr. North Nashville Transit Center. Similarly, the recently passed Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) at the Federal level simultaneously added billions of dollars to our existing funding programs and created a multitude of new grant categories that we might consider for specific initiatives.

The programs and processes necessary to access these funds can be quite complex, and the conditions associated with their use can be quite burdensome, so it is essential that transit agencies act very strategically and with intent – based on carefully developed strategic plans like our nMotion Strategic Service Plan and our capital improvement plans – as they seek out these opportunities.

There were no additional questions or further discussions at this time.

**VIII. Operations & Finance Committee Report:** Committee Chair Walter Searcy presented the following for discussion and action:

**a. MTA Agency Safety Plan Update (OF-D-22-022):** Director of System Safety & Risk Management Nick Oldham provided a brief high-level overview of the expected updates to our Agency Safety Plan:

Nick Oldham said the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law amends FTA’s safety program at 49 U.S.C. § 5329(d) by adding to the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) requirements. Under this new law, transit agencies that receive Section 5307 funds and serve an urbanized area with a population of 200,000 or more are required to establish a joint labor-management Safety Committee, a risk reduction program, new safety training requirements, and strategies to minimize exposure to infectious diseases consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines or a State health authority.

MTA will continue to move forward with the implementation of its Safety Management System by following the guidelines set forth in our Agency Safety Plan as we update the plan with the new requirements. The Agency Safety Plan sets a framework to support and complement the existing approach to public transportation safety, identifies deficiencies, and promotes improvements in transit safety performance. This plan sets a proactive approach to safety risk management that is outcome-focused and emphasizes an overall improved safety culture.

There were no additional questions or further discussions at this time.

**b. Transit Asset Management Plan Update (OF-D-22-023):** Chief Development Officer Trey Walker presented this item for discussion.

A TAM Plan is a strategic and systematic planning tool to manage transit capital assets based on careful planning and improved decision-making. It uses transit asset conditions to guide how to manage capital assets and prioritize funding to improve or maintain the overall transit fleet and facilities to a target level of State of Good Repair (SGR) defined as “the condition in which an asset is able to operate at a full level of performance.”

WeGo staff has been working with a team of consultants from CDM Smith on asset condition assessments and the TAM Plan update for the agency. The plan update process spanned several months, and the final document incorporates the following elements:

- Inventory of capital assets

- Condition assessment of the assets
- TAM & SGR Policy
- Decision Support Tool
- Investment Prioritization & Implementation Strategy
- List of Key Activities & Resources
- Evaluation & Monitoring Plan

The Transit Asset Management Plan for WeGo was completed and certified by the Accountable Executive (CEO) in time to meet the October federal deadline. Staff will make a brief presentation about the TAM Plan process and the development of performance targets at the meeting. The complete current plan is accessible to the Board and the general public on the agency's website at <https://www.wegotransit.com/publications/>.

There were no additional questions or further discussions at this time.

**IX. CEO's Report:** CEO Steve Bland provided the following report:

1. With respect to the North Nashville project, please mark your calendars for 10:00 am on Thursday, November 10 for a groundbreaking ceremony for the Dr. Ernest Rip Patton Jr. North Nashville Transit Center. At long last, we will officially be turning over this project to our capable contracting team to get construction underway. We anticipate substantial completion in time for our April 2024 Spring Service Changes.
2. CEO Bland said that he was pleased to report that an offer has been extended to the new Chief of Staff and Administration and he has accepted and will begin his employment with us at the end of November. Vince Malone will be coming to us from TDOT, where he currently serves as the Director of the Civil Rights Division. In this role, he oversees Title VI, Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action, Environmental Justice, and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise efforts for the Department. Prior to joining TDOT, Vince had extensive private sector experience in Human Resources, Risk Management, and Safety. Fortunately, his departure from TDOT was amicable, and several of their senior leaders have spoken very highly of him. Concurrent with Vince starting his position, we will also be elevating Nick Oldham to Chief Safety Officer and Renuka Christoph to Chief Communications Officer.
3. The staff has continued to meet with NDOT, Metro Planning, and representatives of Oracle to advance plans to incorporate transit into the northern sections of East Bank Boulevard enumerated in the East Bank Vision Plan as Oracle works on designs for their campus.
4. Last month, CEO Bland announced the winners from the local Bus Rodeo in August. This month, he reported the team that participated in the Statewide Rodeo held by the Tennessee Public Transportation Association in Franklin, as usual, did quite well. Pedro Ochoa took first place and Troy Willis took second place in the Bus Maintenance competition. Mark Johnson placed first in the Bus Rodeo competition, and Scott Wallace placed second in the cutaway van competition. In addition, Senior Safety Manager Earl Rhodes was recognized by TPTA as the Urban Support Employee of the Year. In addition to the amazing work Earl does for us day in and day out, Earl is one of the key organizers of the statewide rodeo, and his efforts are very much appreciated by transit agencies throughout Tennessee.
5. On the RTA side:
  - a. We anticipate recommending a contract award for the Star Future Vision Study to the RTA Board at their November meeting. This has been a long process for a good reason, as we received 7 very solid proposals.

- b. At their October meeting, the RTA Board approved a period of exclusive negotiation for a potential Joint Development project at Donelson Station. We will be working with a development team composed of HG Hill and Southeast Venture to advance this agreement.
- c. The Titans Express continues to operate to all home Titans games and, so far, it has been very successful as the trains so far have sold out. I would encourage anyone who plans to attend any of the upcoming games to go to our website for access to train tickets.

CEO Bland availed himself of questions and there were none at this time.

**X. Chair's Report:** Chair Carr Williams provided the following report:

Chair Carr Williams thanked the board members for reviewing the East Bank support letter that was sent to planning and for the efforts of everybody working together from the beginning, not only for East Bank but for all our projects.

Chair Carr Williams welcomed Mr. Vince Malone in his new role as Chief of Staff and Administration. Additionally, she congratulated Nick Oldham and Renuka Christoph on their promotions as Chief Safety & Security Officer and Chief Communications Officer. She said both have really worked hard to get to this point as they continue to grow and enhance WeGo Public Transit. She said that she looks forward to their continued efforts and said that they both have her support.

Chair Williams thanked Jessica Dauphin for inviting her to the Transit Alliance Citizen Leadership Academy. She said that she was proud of Jessica Dauphin's leadership and enjoyed watching her train and expand the conversations of transit regionally and how she's teaching people about transit. She said that she was grateful to have so many people in our community that want and support transit.

**XI. Other Business:**

There was no other business to conduct at this time.

**XII. Adjournment:** With no further business, Chair Carr Williams called for a motion to adjourn the meeting, a proper motion was made and seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

**Attested:**

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**Gail Carr Williams**  
*Chair*

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**Margaret L. Behm**  
*Secretary*