

NASHVILLE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY
Board of Directors Meeting
December 15, 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, November 17, 2022.
- II. **Roll Call of Persons Present:** Gail Carr Williams, Chair; Janet Miller, Vice Chair; Walter Searcy, Member; Jessica Dauphin, Member; Mary Griffin Member; Margaret Behm, Board Secretary; Chief Executive Officer, Stephen Bland; Chief Financial Officer, Ed Oliphant; Chief Operating Officer, Andy Burke; Chief Development Officer, Trey Walker; Chief Safety & Security Officer, Nick Oldham; Chief Communication Officer, Renuka Christoph; Chief of Staff & Administration, Vince Malone, Director of Planning & Grants, Felix Castrodad; Transit Business Intelligence Analyst, Hannah Schaefer; Project Manager, Kia Lewis; and Sr. Executive Assistant & Board Liaison, Monica Howse.
- A quorum was established, and Chair Gail Carr Williams called the meeting to order at 2:36 p.m.
- III. **Approval of Minutes:** Jessica Dauphin made a motion to approve the November 17, 2022, MTA Board minutes, the motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Janet Miller and unanimously approved by the Board.
- **Public Comments:** Chair Gail Carr Williams opened the floor for public comments. The public was reminded that comments were limited to three minutes. There were no public comments at this meeting.
- IV. **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. No questions or observations were raised by Members at this time.
- Monthly Financial Report Compared to Budget
 - Upcoming Procurement Projects List
- V. **Consent Agenda Items:** Walter Searcy made a motion to approve the following consent agenda items, Mary Griffin seconded the motion, and the items were unanimously approved by the board.
- a. Armored Car Contract Award (M-A-22-037):
 - b. WeGo Central Dunkin Donuts Lease Assignment (M-A-22-038):
- VI. **Operations & Finance Committee Report:** There were no discussions or action items presented this month.
- VII. **New Initiative & Community Engagement Committee Report:** Vice-Chair Janet Miller presented the following item for discussion and action:
- a. **WeGo Central Renaming Signage Update (NICE-D-22-022):** Kia Lewis, Engineering & Construction Project Manager, and Renuka Christoph, Chief Communications Officer provided a presentation highlighting the signage concepts for board consideration and discussion during the New Initiatives and Community Engagement committee meeting.

Earlier this year, concurrent with the naming of the Dr. Ernest Rip Patton, Jr. North Nashville Transit Center, the MTA Board recommended, and subsequently Metro Council voted to rename WeGo Central the Elizabeth Duff Transit Center at WeGo Central. To commemorate the name change, WeGo staff have worked internally and with the design consultant team to provide visuals for typical location and signage concepts. Considered signage concepts for

WeGo Central include exterior signage as well as internal displays that highlight Elizabeth Duff's contributions to transportation in Nashville.

Kia Lewis, along with Board members and staff expressed their appreciation to the Duff family for being present at the meeting and for providing information about Elizabeth Duff to aid in the renaming of WeGo Central.

Committee Chair Janet Miller asked members of the family if they would like to make remarks. Viripi Duff who is the daughter of Elizabeth Duff recalled a time when their father called them in to see their mother on television. She said many people didn't believe her when she said that her mother was the first African American female bus driver, but the renaming of WeGo Central is proof to all of those people. She thanked the Board members and staff and said that she was proud of her mother and that it was an honor to be a part of her legacy, and this history-making event.

Chair Janet Miller asked that we have permanent memorialization that she was the first African American female bus driver.

Walter Searcy asked how the pictures of Carlton Petway and Elizabeth Duff would complement each other in that space, CEO Bland clarified by saying that Elizabeth Duff's pictures would be placed in the lobby area adjacent to Dunk'n Donuts, not in the waiting area named after Mr. Petway.

Ms. Lewis and Ms. Christoph reviewed signage concepts – including permanent external building signage and interior commemoration options, including fixed v. digital options and potential locations for placement. One of the concepts reviewed included images of Ms. Duff alongside photos of current WeGo Public Transit Employees to illustrate the connection between past and present. There was a general discussion about the concepts, and the Board expressed interest in seeing future iterations. Mr. Bland indicated that we would come back as concepts advanced, but that the Board should share any reservations about the external signage concepts now, as we needed to move those toward production due to the long lead times involved. There was general agreement that the permanent exterior signage should move forward as presented.

Chair Janet Miller thanked Ms. Lewis and Ms. Christoph for their presentation, and she also thanked the members of the Duff family in attendance.

- b. **2022 Title VI Program Update Adoption (M-A-22-039):** Hannah Schaeffer, Business Intelligence Analyst, presented information relative to updates to the Authority's Title VI Plan update. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance". The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires all recipients of federal funding to adopt and submit an agency Title VI Program every three years. The MTA Board approved the current MTA Title VI Program in September 2019, and the Program was submitted to the FTA in October 2019. The updated Title VI Program is required to be submitted to FTA in January 2023 upon approval by the recipient's board of directors or appropriate governing entity or official(s) responsible for policy decisions.

Ms. Schaeffer reported that staff had followed the various FTA requirements with respect to the development of the Title VI plan update, including the publication of the draft plan and an opportunity for public comment. Public comment opportunities included one in-person public hearing at WeGo Central and a virtual public hearing opportunity. Only one comment was received from the public and it was addressed in the plan update.

The NICE Committee made a recommendation to approve the 2022 Title VI Program Update Adoption item as presented by staff and it was unanimously approved by the Board. Chair Janet Miller thanked Ms. Schaeffer for her excellent work.

- c. **Connect Downtown Study Update (NICE-D-22-023)**: Director of Planning & Grants Felix Castrodad and Marty Sewell, Transportation Planning Director for the Nashville Department of Transportation and Connect Downtown Project Manager provided an extensive presentation on the status of the study. Mr. Sewell emphasized that, while the overall Connect Downtown effort would broadly examine all aspects of downtown mobility, there was a primary emphasis on developing strategies that would help improve the reliability of bus service to and through the Downtown core. He reported that project consultants were currently developing several scenarios to provide stakeholders and the general public the opportunity to examine the impacts of various potential strategies in combination with each other.

Finally, Mr. Sewell introduced Ms. Meghan Mathson to the Board. Ms. Mathson has recently joined the Nashville Department of Transportation to coordinate its travel demand management programs. In this role, she will be working closely with WeGo Public Transit staff to encourage more people to travel by means other than single-occupant autos.

- d. **FY2024 Operating Budget Discussion Kick-off (NICE-D-22-024)**: Chief Executive Officer Steve Bland and Chief Financial Officer Ed Oliphant presented information with respect to financial and operating trends and key initiatives entering the FY2023-2024 budget season. The intent was to generate sufficient discussion to provide staff direction in assembling the FY2024 operating budget request to Metro Finance and the Mayor's Office. All feedback will be used to provide the board with an update on our funding request at your January meeting, in advance of the anticipated budget submission deadline in February.

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

1. As just discussed, FY2023-24 budget discussions have begun in earnest. Metro Nashville anticipates the budget call either late this month or early in January, and we anticipate a February due date. Finance staff has already been meeting with Department heads to review various trends and potential initiatives, and Planning has issued the request for projects for our update to the Capital Improvement Plan.
2. This month, CEO Bland had the opportunity to participate in a panel discussion with several of his peers for Leadership APTA on the topic of public-private partnerships. Leadership APTA is the executive development program of our national trade association, the American Public Transportation, and it provides an intensive year-long training and networking opportunity for young leaders in our industry to ascend in their careers. We're very proud that one of the members of this year's class is our own Trey Walker.
3. Vince Malone started this month and has certainly hit the ground running. In addition to taking on quite a few issues that were waiting for him, Vince has been terrific about getting around the system and meeting people.
4. With respect to East Bank planning, CEO Bland participated in a briefing of Davidson County's State Legislative Delegation conducted by Mayor Cooper and various members of his staff. The transportation elements of the plan were of specific interest, and we plan to conduct a follow-up briefing with the delegation regarding broader transportation issues in the upcoming session.
5. We are planning to initiate public engagement on our spring service changes in January. While we continue to make headway in recruiting new operators, there are several emerging factors that will require that we defer most of our planned Better Bus improvements to the Fall. These include increasing demand on WeGo Access requiring that we add more operator runs to paratransit, increasing ridership and traffic congestion on several routes mandating more

service be added to routes 4, 52, and 55 to support improved reliability. To the point Marty and Felix made in the Connect Downtown, if we are not able to get priority treatment of transit through Downtown Nashville, this will be an ongoing and worsening problem. Frankly, as we expand our services, it will be crucial that we do so in a sustainable way that prioritizes the quality of our services.

6. Holiday parties were held for operating staff at Nestor, Myatt, and Central. Mr. Bland thanked Zeda Riggs and the Employee Engagement Committee for their leadership in putting these together, and the leadership staff who helped serve.
7. On the RTA side, Mr. Bland reported:
 - a. We kicked off discussions with the development team for the Donelson Station joint development project. Both RTA and the developer have some follow-up actions necessary prior to active negotiations. We'll need to get property appraisals and undertake a baseline market assessment of the property, and the development team will be contacting adjacent property owners about the potential inclusion of their parcels in the project.
 - b. 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. CEO Bland 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 welcomed Chief of Staff & Administration Vince Malone to WeGo Public Transit. She also welcomed Ms. Mathson to the city of Nashville and the Nashville Department of Transportation.

Chair Carr Williams shouted out to Zeda for working so hard on the Employee Engagement activities and for the smile and warm spirit that she brings to the team. She also thanked Felix Castrodad and Marty Sewell for their Connect Downtown Study presentation; Kia Lewis & Renuka Christoph for their WeGo Central Renaming Signage Update presentation. She acknowledged that this was Kia's first time presenting to the board and thought she did an amazing job.

Chair Carr Williams gave special thanks to the Duff family. She said that she loves the fact that the family and staff are working together in partnership to honor Elizabeth Duff.

Lastly, Gail said that it was great working with this board, and she loves the synergy at the table about what our work is going to look like next year and that we're taking transit to the next level. She said that she has a deeper appreciation for the work that we all do and much gratitude for how we take care of the citizens of Nashville.

In closing, she wished everyone Happy Holidays and encouraged everyone to be safe.

XI. Other Business: There was no other business to come before this board.

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 4:04 p.m.

Attested:

Gail Carr Williams
Chair

Margaret L. Behm
Secretary