

**NASHVILLE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**September 28, 2023**

I. **Call to Order:** The regular meeting of the Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (Nashville MTA) Board of Directors was held at the Tennessee State Library & Archives, located at 1001 Rep. John Lewis Way N., Nashville, TN 37219, on Thursday, September 28, 2023.

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

Gail Carr Williams, Board Chair	Andy Burke, COO
Janet Miller, Vice-Chair	Vince Malone, COSA
Jessica Dauphin, Member	Nick Oldham, CSSO
Aron Thompson, Member	Felix Castrodad, Director of Planning & Grants
Margaret Behm, Board Secretary	Patrick Hester, Facilities Manager
Stephen Bland, CEO	Billy Higgins, Capital Grants Administrator
Monica Howse, Sr. Exec. Asst. & Board Liaison	

A quorum was established, and Board Chair Carr Williams called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m.

III. **Approval of Minutes:** Vice-Chair Janet Miller moved to approve the August 24 Nashville MTA Board minutes. Aron Thompson seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved the minutes.

IV. **Public Comments:** Board Chair 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 gave public comments:

- John Bull
- Darius Knight
- Jeremiah Wooten

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 Procurement Projects List – No questions

VI. **Consent Agenda Items:**

- Resolution for FY2024 Annual Grant Application

Jessica Dauphin motioned to approve the Resolution for the FY2024 Annual Grant Application; Aron Thompson seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved this action item.

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

a. **MTA Legal Services (M-A-23-009):** Chief of Staff & Administration Vince Malone provided the following report:

Staff requested the Board to provide the Chief Executive Officer the authority to enter the following contracts, each with a five-year duration:

- Board Secretary and MTA General Counsel to Services Dodson Parker Behm and Capparella in an amount not to exceed \$500,000 over the 5-year contract period.

- Legal Services to Bradley Arant Boult Cummings in an amount not to exceed \$450,000 over the 5-year contract period.

Funding for these services will be incorporated into annual operating and capital budgets as required.

There was general discussion. Members of the Board expressed their overall appreciation of the great work WeGo has received from General Counsel Margaret Behm.

Aron Thompson asked for clarification on WeGo's terms of agreement. Specifically, if five years was the standard term or not. Mr. Malone said it is standard terms and what WeGo has done the last few times in the procurement process. He said that it helps build continuity and allows WeGo to continuously work with the Counsel to take care of matters that sometimes roll over from year to year. CEO Bland said a five-year term is pretty much the maximum term that the Federal Transit Administration looks at, and it's not that they would invalidate something longer, but they raise their eyebrows if you go beyond five years. Some of WeGo's other professional services are contracted on a three-year term with two one-year renewal options.

Jessica Dauphin motioned to approve the MTA Legal Services; Janet Miller seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved this action item.

Margaret Behm thanked Board members and staff for the opportunity to provide MTA legal services. She values the work that she does with MTA (WeGo) and the relationships that have been established, and she looks forward to serving another five years.

Chair Carr Williams acknowledged the presence of Attorney Richard Warren; he said he was glad to be present and grateful for the opportunity to work with MTA (WeGo) as well.

- b. **MTA Third Party Administrator Services (M-A-23-030)**: Chief of Staff & Administration Vince Malone provided the following report:

Staff requested the Board to authorize the Chief Executive Officer to enter into a contract with Charles Taylor in the amount \$610,500.00 to provide Third Party Administrator services for accident and third-party liability claims with a duration of three years plus two additional one-year extension options for a total contract term of five years. Staff also requested a contingency for \$61,000 to be used solely at the agency's discretion if additional reporting and claims administration services are required. The total project budget of \$671,500 will be funded through annual operating funds over the five years.

There was no further discussion.

Jessica Dauphin motioned to approve the MTA Third Party Administrator Services; Aron Thompson seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved this action item.

- c. **Nestor Facility Eastside Sewer Line Contract Amendment (M-A-23-031)**: Facilities Manager Patrick Hester provided the following report:

Staff requested the Board to approve an increase of \$35,000.00 for additional sewer lines and pavement for the Nestor Facility Eastside Sewer Line Contract, resulting in a total contract value of \$370,000. Funds utilized for this project are a federal 5339 formula, with 10% state and 10% local match.

Janet Miller asked if this would be the end of the change orders. Patrick Hester said yes. Aron Thompson asked if WeGo was leveraging this for future projects, if those cost savings that WeGo is identifying, or if a contractor has identified those costs as he sees prices starting to

de-escalate, or if WeGo will be saving anything knowing that the prices are now beginning to either level steady or drop. Patrick Hester said WeGo would save for the underground storage tank removal project alone. Now that WeGo has the underground storage tank team on site instead of an additional plumbing or utility service on-site, it's a further mobilization; it's another manhole that we saved getting installed along with other piping, so we'd be saving and designing with it as well and would have to design the sewer to be moved as well instead of this to underground storage tank team.

Aron Thompson asked if the amendment was to the existing contract, and Patrick Hester answered yes.

Jessica Dauphin motioned to approve the Nestor Facility Eastside Sewer Line Contract Amendment; Janet Miller seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved this action item.

- d. **System Security Assessment Contract (M-A-23-032)**: Chief Safety & Security Officer Nick Oldham provided the following report:

Staff requested the Board to provide the Chief Executive Officer the authority to enter into a contract with Marine Tiger Technologies for \$614,567.38 and a duration of 24 months, with a milestone for final recommendations at 12 months. Staff also requests a contingency for \$61,456.74 to be used solely at the agency's discretion to assist in implementing final recommendations for a total project budget of \$676,024.12. This project was part of the FY 2023 Capital Plan and will utilize Federal 5307 formula funding with 10% State and 10% local match.

There was a general discussion. The Board Chair asked if this was WeGo's first time doing anything like this. Nick Oldham said yes. Janet Miller asked if the ask was only for the consultant phase and at a later time, more funds would be requested for equipment and operation impacts. Nick Oldham said yes.

Jessica Dauphin motioned to approve the System Security Assessment Contract; Aron Thompson seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved this action item.

- VIII. **New Initiative & Community Engagement Committee Report**: Committee Chair Janet Miller introduced the following items for discussion and action:

- a. **Adoption of the FY2024-2028 Capital Investment Plan (M-A-23-033)**: Director of Planning & Grants Felix Castrodad presented the following:

The Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA) Capital Investment Plan prioritizes needs, identifies funding sources, and sets timelines for MTA's capital projects over a five-year period. The plan outlines regulatory, state of good repair, and growth and expansion needs that guide the Authority's future project development activity. Generally, projects identified in the plan's first year are relatively firm in scope and budget, while out-year projects are likely more conceptual.

Staff presented a recommended Capital Investment Plan for the period of FY2024-2028. Investments totaling approximately \$96 million are recommended in Year One (FY2024) of the plan, with a total project investment recommendation of \$321.2 million over the life of the plan. Projects identified in year One have access to full funding. Staff projects a balanced capital budget over five years while being relatively conservative in estimating future resources.

Staff requested the Board to adopt the attached FY2024-2028 Capital Investment Plan formally.

There was a general discussion.

Janet Miller motioned to approve the Adoption of the FY20242028 Capital Investment Plan; Jessica Dauphin seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved this action item.

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

1. Fall service changes will go into effect this coming Sunday, including more frequent service on four routes, longer service hours on 11 routes plus access, and five new WeGo Link zones. As a reminder, on October 1, WeGo will discontinue issuing magnetic fare media. Riders will still be able to ride with cash but will need exact fares and will only have access to free transfers and pass media through QuickTicket.
2. Work also continues at a good pace at the Ernest Rip Patton Jr. North Nashville Transit Center, with much activity visible. On Tuesday, October 24, WeGo will host a community meeting at the Bordeaux Public Library to report progress on the project and have the artist team discuss their preliminary designs. Kia Lewis will update everyone on this project at the October Board meeting.
3. CEO Bland thanked Board Members Gail Carr Williams and Jessica Dauphin for attending the FTA Region IV Celebration in Antioch on September 12. WeGo was joined by quite a few dignitaries and community residents to celebrate the \$5 million competitive grant that WeGo received from the Federal Transit Administration. Among the speakers were Federal Transit Regional Administrator Yvette Taylor, Mayor Cooper, Deputy Governor and TDOT Commissioner Butch Eley, and District Council Member Joy Styles. The next steps in this project involve the formal definition of site boundaries and a property agreement with Metro, after which WeGo can begin a community-engaged design process. While Dr. Yvette Taylor and the FTA were in town, WeGo also met with them on several ongoing projects and initiatives and were also able to perform site visits to the Ernest Rip Patton Jr. North Nashville Transit Center, East Bank, SoBro Transit Center Site, Murfreesboro Pike Corridor, the Antioch Transit Center site, and the completed Hillsboro Transit Center.
4. Regarding the transition to a new Mayor and Council, CEO Bland presented to the new Council Orientation session this past Saturday at the Music City Center—many thanks to Vice Mayor Angie Henderson for the invitation. After the orientation, WeGo attended a reception and got to meet many of the new members. Next week, CEO Bland will meet with the Mayor and some of his staff relative to transit issues and the Mayor's transition team for mobility.
5. In addition to the larger meetings, WeGo has begun meeting one-on-one with several new Council Members based on their interest. Thanks to Monica Howse and Eric Beyer for coordinating these meetings.
6. Things have been a bit busy in Nashville lately, so unfortunately, CEO Bland had to miss the Tennessee Public Transportation Association annual meeting in Memphis. There was another strong showing at the Rodeo, although WeGo allowed the home team to walk off with some hardware. CEO Bland also reported that, fresh off her triumphant FTA Triennial Review, WeGo's own Grants Administrator Billy Higgins was awarded the "Urban Transit Support Employee of the Year" by TPTA. At this year's Rodeo, Scott Wallace won 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the cutaway van division, Joyce Banks placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the cutaway van division, Keven Sentes placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 30-foot bus division, and Troy Willis placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Bus Maintenance Division.
7. CEO Bland completed his service on the evaluation committee for Metro's East Bank Development Team Request for Proposals. The committee unanimously recommended Fallon Partners out of Boston to advance these projects.

8. CEO Bland joined Brent Elrod from Urban Housing Solutions and Evan Holladay of Holladay Properties – two leading affordable housing developers - at a panel discussion for a visiting delegation from Greenville, South Carolina, to discuss the linkages between affordable housing and public transportation.
9. CEO Bland thanked Working Group co-chair Aron Thompson for allowing WeGo to host a meeting of the Housing Affordability of the Urban Land Institute at WeGo Central this past month and inviting him to participate on this committee.
10. CEO Bland said that he was honored and delighted to attend the Annual Breakfast of Neighborhood Health at Belmont University this morning. Neighborhood Health is a non-profit committed to providing accessible, affordable, and comprehensive healthcare services to everyone. Still, it focuses on those in our society with the least access to traditional healthcare services. Beyond connecting with new and old friends, learning more about their mission, and hearing some truly inspirational stories, he was very proud to be joined by WeGo's PIO, Eric Melcher, and Operations Supervisor, David Eyer, to accept the award in recognition of the support WeGo Public Transit provided during the pandemic to help their client base access COVID Testing and Vaccination services, and to the homeless population of Nashville through our Cold Weather Card program. Thanks to Neighborhood Health CEO Brian Haile and their Board of Directors for this honor.

11. On the RTA side:

- a. WeGo continues to advance work on negotiations for a joint development project at the RTA's Donelson Station site with an HG Hill and Southeast Ventures development team. We are working with our attorneys at Bradley and our Real Estate Advisors at Jones Long LaSalle to develop term sheets associated with negotiations while the developer advances other property acquisitions adjacent to the site. WeGo is also discussing a potential intersection realignment with this development team for a project across Donelson Pike, Metro Planning, and NDOT.
- b. WeGo continues to advance land acquisition toward a permanent park-and-ride location in Murfreesboro. Earlier this month, WeGo received final environmental clearance from FTA on the project, allowing WeGo to enter real estate acquisition and design.
- c. If Saturday wasn't exciting enough, with the Mayor's Inauguration, the Festival of Service, Transit Treks, and a free-fare day. It will be the first Nashville SC Game where WeGo is piloting direct service from Murfreesboro and Antioch to the game. More information is available on our web page.
- d. The RTA's sunset hearing before the State Legislature's Commerce, Labor, Transportation, and Agriculture Joint Subcommittee of Government Operations will be held on October 19 at 9:00 a.m. Staff will accompany RTA Board Leadership to testify before the committee and to answer questions.
- e. Usage of the WeGo Star to Tennessee Titans games was strong, with over 900 riders for the first home game.

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

Chair Carr Williams talked a bit about the Antioch celebration, and she said seeing so many people in Nashville enjoying the planning and everything WeGo is doing was exciting. Of those in attendance were Councilwoman Joy Styles and Dr Yvette Taylor. She said she had the distinct pleasure of sitting next to Dr. Taylor during that meeting and was proud to hear her say Steve Bland is an example for so many other CEOs she works with within the regional FDA, not only Steve

but Ms. Higgins and the staff. Dr. Taylor spoke highly of Ms. Higgins, how easy it was to work with her, and how she pays attention to details. She said that it is a pure joy to work with her. Chair Carr Williams acknowledged Ms. Higgins and said, on behalf of the Board and the staff, that she was glad that Ms. Higgins was given an award so that she could have a chance to see how people celebrate her excellent work. The Board and staff gave Ms. Billy Higgins a standing ovation for her outstanding work.

Chair Carr Williams said Nashville has a new administration of Mayor-Elect O'Connell. The Mayor's Inauguration will occur on Saturday, September 30 at the Diane Nash Plaza, adjacent to the courthouse, just across the street from WeGo, the Elizabeth Duff Transit Center.

In conclusion, Chair Carr Williams expressed how proud she was of Mayor-Elect O'Connell and remembered very distinctly him coming onto the MTA Board and serving as Board Chair. It feels like he's been under the wing but is flying quite well right now. Hence, it's great to be able to think all can go and support him and that WeGo can do Transit a free day and also celebrate the work that he has done in this city for Transit, his support of Transit as a council person, his support of Transit as a board member has done us well. This is a good way of WeGo wishing him well as he embarks on this time as leading the city,

Chair Carr Williams recommended the Board approve September 30, 2023, as "Transit Free Fare Day." throughout the entire We Go Public Transit system in Davidson County. Jessica Dauphin seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved this action item.

- XI. **Other Business:** There was no further business to come before this Board.
- XII. **Adjournment:** With no further business, Board Chair Carr Williams moved to adjourn the meeting, which adjourned at 3:59 p.m.

**Attested:**

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**Gail Carr Williams**  
*Chair*

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**Margaret L. Behm**  
*Secretary*