

**NASHVILLE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**

**May 23, 2024**

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, May 23, 2024.

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

Gail Carr Williams, Chair	Nick Oldham, CSSO
Janet Miller, Vice Chair	Renuka Christoph, CCO
Jessica Dauphin, Member	Vince Malone, COSA
Kathryn Hays Sasser, Member	Felix Castrodad, Director of Planning & Grants
Aron Thompson, Member	Marilyn Yokley, Access Manager
Tyler Yarbrow, Board Secretary	
Stephen Bland, CEO	
Monica Howse, Sr. Exec. Asst. & Board Liaison	

A quorum was established, and Board Chair Carr Williams called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

III. **Approval of Minutes:** Ms. Jessica Dauphin made a motion to approve the February 22, 2024, Nashville MTA Board minutes. Vice Chair Janet Miller seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved the minutes.

IV. **Safety Update:** Board Chair Carr Williams began the meeting by saying WeGo takes the safety of its drivers and passengers to heart and expressed her sympathy to the driver who was recently assaulted this week. She said WeGo takes these matters very seriously, so in light of the two recent incidents that have happened, she asked CEO Bland to update the board on the Safety standards and measures that WeGo has taken historically and what is emerging.

CEO Bland acknowledged Chief Safety & Security Officer Nick Oldham for leading WeGo through this process, including the initial response to both of the incidents, as well as follow-up activities with employee meetings, debriefings, and the excellent cooperation that WeGo has with MNPD and the security contractor.

CEO Bland reported the following:

At approximately Noon on Monday, May 20, 2024, a female passenger boarded the Route 56 – Gallatin Pike bus near the intersection of Broadmore and Gallatin. She boarded the bus in what appeared to be an agitated state, speaking loudly on her cellular phone. The passenger and Bus Operator exchanged a few words upon her entry. Still, the exchange did not appear to be in any way hostile, and the Bus Operator took no actions that could be considered provocative. The passenger began yelling at the Bus Operator, pulled out a knife, reached around the operator's protective barrier, and began to assault her with the knife, inflicting cuts on her hands and arms. The Bus Operator somehow managed to secure the bus and alert radio control via the on-board emergency alert system. Emergency Medical Services, Metro Nashville Police, and WeGo Public Transit Security and Operations supervisory staff were on the scene within 7 minutes for first responders and 15 minutes for supervisory staff. Police quickly identified the assailant and arrested her. The Bus Operator was transported to the hospital, where she was treated for her wounds and released on the same day. Following this incident, CSSO Nick Oldham and COO Andy Burke held employee meetings at the Nestor Operations facility to convey information to employees, listen to their concerns, and offer the services of the agency's Critical Incident Support Services as part of our broader Employee Assistance Program to those affected by the events. There were approximately 40-50 Operators that were in attendance.

This incident followed another completely unrelated security incident on Thursday, May 16, when two men engaged in an argument on the steps outside The Elizabeth Duff Transit Center at WeGo Central, with the argument resulting in one man shooting the other – no uninvolved parties were injured. Within 2 minutes, on-site security and Metro Police staff responded to the incident, and police officers quickly apprehended the gunman, and the gunshot victim was transported to the hospital.

The proximity in time of these two extremely serious and disturbing incidents is highly unusual and not accurately reflective of the overall safety of a system that carries approximately 30,000 riders each day or a facility (The Elizabeth Duff Transit Center at WeGo Central) that serves approximately 15,000 visitors each day.

With that said, the two unrelated incidents certainly raise the level of public awareness of issues surrounding the operation of public transportation in what is becoming a major city. As such, a review of ongoing and pending system security measures is worthwhile.

#### Historical Efforts:

1. Overall, incidents of crime and security are extremely rare in WeGo's system. Over the past year, almost 10 million rides were taken on the WeGo Public transit system, and over 700,00 hours of service were operated. Approximately 55 arrests were made on the system, and 24 operator security incidents (physical assaults and verbal threats) occurred.
2. To promote a secure environment, we count on the active engagement of our riders and employees in the National "If You See Something, Say Something Campaign." We also rely on our working relationship with the Metro Nashville Police Department and our contracted security firm, Allied Universal. Through both our contracted police services and the active relationships that we have with various Precinct Commanders in our heaviest service areas, we've always experienced a rapid and comprehensive response by MNPD and other First Responders.
3. In the case of these two incidents, First Responders were on the scene at the remote service location within seven minutes of the first notification, and in the incident that took place at WeGo Central, Police and Security were on the scene within two minutes.
4. There is a security presence at the Elizabeth Duff Transit Center at WeGo Central 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
5. Overall, our spending on system security has doubled over the past seven years, and in the budget, we'll present it at next month's board meeting for the board's consideration for FY2025. We'll propose to add another 42% to those line items, essentially accompanying the opening of the Dr. Ernest Rip Patton Jr. North Nashville Transit Center.
6. The human security presence is augmented through the deployment of an extensive digital video surveillance system. WeGo Public Transit facilities currently deploy 283 digital cameras at the Elizabeth Duff Transit Center at WeGo Central, Hillsboro Transit Center, and its operating facilities at Nestor Street and Myatt Drive. All facility camera systems are monitored from a central control center at the Elizabeth Duff Transit Center at WeGo Central.
7. In addition to facility video surveillance, WeGo Public Transit deploys video and audio recording on board its entire fleet. Each bus contains 3 – 16 cameras, depending on the size of the bus, that record all events that take place on the bus.
8. In 2020, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, WeGo Public Transit initiated the installation of protective shields in Bus Operator Compartments on board its vehicles to protect operators from the spread of the virus but also as a deterrent from hostility toward operators. These shields also provide some level of protection against physical assault. Over the ensuing years, the design of these devices has evolved with the active engagement of our Employee

Safety Committee. This same committee also recommended and developed a program of de-escalation that all of our operators take to provide them with the tools to help diffuse potential hostile engagements.

9. In 2023, WeGo Public Transit engaged the services of Marine Tiger Technologies, a nationally known firm in the field of public transportation security and policing, to examine all of our security practices and make recommendations to security staff regarding deployment procedures and the appropriate use of technology. This work is ongoing, and we anticipate receiving their recommendations in the coming months. This project is being done in close collaboration with Chief Drake and the Metro Nashville Police Department, who were actively engaged in helping us develop the scope of the project and selecting the vendor. They are now active through their engagement.
10. Each security incident is unacceptable, and WeGo will continue to work with all of its partners to enhance its practices in this regard. However, as disturbing as the two incidents were on their own and the fact that they occurred in close proximity, they are an anomaly, and WeGo's system remains exceptionally safe.

V. **Public Comments:** Board Chair Gail Carr Williams opened the floor for public comments. The public was reminded that comments were limited to two minutes. The following members of the public gave public comments:

- James Brown
- Roger Womack
- Patricia Valladarez
- Cristalynne Dupree
- Ryan Smith
- Darius Knight
- Jeremiah Wooten
- Emily Grooms
- Annette Keel
- Janna Jackson
- Natasha Wilkinson

VI. **Acknowledgment of the Bus Rodeo Participants:**

The International Bus Rodeo was held in Portland, OR, on May 26-30, 2024. This year's WeGo team finished strong, with bus operator Joyce Banks finishing 30th in Operations. The maintenance team (Winston Frances, Troy Willis, and Pedro Ochoa) took tenth place out of 47 maintenance teams, and Joyce Banks finished 30<sup>th</sup> out of over 75 operators. This year's team finished the highest it has ever finished!

The audience gave a standing ovation to the operators and maintenance team, and pictures were taken with all of the winners, CEO Bland, and Board Members.

VII. **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

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

a. **Quarterly Route Performance Report Award (OF-D-24-006):** Scheduling & Service Planning Manager Katie Freudberg presented the following item for discussion:

Mr. Thompson asked if there was a way to track weather delays in the report. Katie Freudberg said she and Bryan Williams are currently working on adding weather delays to the report.

There was no further discussion.

- b. **40' Clean Diesel Bus Purchase (M-A-24-009)**: Director of Maintenance Carl Rokos presented the following item for action:

Staff recommended that the Board provide the Chief Executive Officer authority to approve the purchase of Twelve (12) 40' buses from Gillig Corporation for vehicles used in Fixed route service. The requested contract authorization is for a not-to-exceed price of \$658,324 per bus plus an additional \$12,000 per bus for tools and training.

The total not-to-exceed purchase authorization for this acquisition is \$8,043,888.

Staff will return to the Board in future years for specific authorization to acquire equipment under the remainder of this contract. Funding for this acquisition is already in place, with \$8,600,000 in Metro Nashville FY 2024 Capital Spending Plan funds for bus replacement funds.

Mr. Thompson asked what the fleet count would be. CEO Bland said it would be between 250-260 range. CEO Bland said we order buses every 12 years, as we're on a 12-year replacement cycle.

The Operations and Finance Committee made a motion to approve the 40' Clean Diesel Bus Purchase. Ms. Janet Miller seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved it.

- c. **Project Management Software Modification & Implementation (M-A-24-010)**: Director of Engineering, Construction & Project Management Lydia Benda presented the following item for action:

Staff recommended several interrelated actions by the Board to implement the Oracle Unifier Project Controls Project Management System as the backbone software for its capital project delivery systems:

1. Approval of an amendment to the most recently adopted capital plan (FY2024-2028) to move \$750,000 plus \$300,000 for licenses for a total of \$1,050,000 from the Enterprise Asset Management System line item (currently budgeted at \$2.5 million) and reassigning these funds to the Project Management Software Line Item, for a total authorized amount of \$1.55 Million. The most significant project remaining in the Enterprise Asset Management System is a Fleet Maintenance Information System. This system is currently being evaluated as part of the overall Enterprise Asset Management Systems study by eVision. It will be considered for inclusion in upcoming capital improvement plans with a more detailed cost estimate.
2. Authorization for the Chief Executive Officer to enter purchase agreements for a total project expense not to exceed \$1,550,000 as follows (including 15% contingency) as follows:
  - a. Oracle - \$550,000 for modification and implementation of the Oracle Unifier Project Controls Project Management Software.
  - b. eVision - \$256,000 to provide project management, testing, change management, and training services to support this implementation.
  - c. Kemper - \$144,000 to develop, test, and successfully implement systems integration tools between the Oracle Unifier Project Controls Project Management System and our Sage Accounting/Financial Management Software.
  - d. WeGo Project Management - \$300,000 for staff to manage the project and work with the consultants and staff to modify and implement the software.
  - e. Oracle licenses - \$300,000 for three years of Oracle licenses.

Funding for this project will come from a combination of Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 Funds with State and Local matching Capital Grants.

This system is anticipated to result in ongoing annual operating expenses of approximately \$104,000 for annual licenses and product support starting in year 4, July 2028, which will be incorporated into our annual operating budgets in FY 2028 and beyond.

The Operations and Finance Committee made a motion to approve the Project Management Software Modification & Implementation action item. Ms. Janet Miller seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved it.

- d. **Vehicle Lifts & Garage Equipment Purchase (M-A-24-011)**: Deputy COO - Assets & Infrastructure Patrick Hester presented the following item for discussion:

Vehicle lifts are essential for inspecting, maintaining, and repairing the transit fleet. They are indispensable for the protection of our mechanics while preserving efficiency and overall accessibility for different types of vehicles. The agency currently owns ninety-six (96) Steril-Koni Lifts. Scoping and purchasing a product that is compatible with its current lifts is essential to ensure safety, training, and interchangeability.

The agency identified a contract to purchase an additional forty-eight (48) Steril-Koni lifts, which was competitively procured following Federal regulations by Louisiana State on behalf of the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO ValuePoint). The Master Agreement is in effect until March 31, 2028, and is beneficial to the replacement program.

The Procurement Department complied with the FAST Act requirements by guaranteeing that the State of Louisiana's contract was awarded under full and open competition and exempt from any geographical preferences. The vendor has signed the necessary Buy America Certificate, and all additional federal clauses will accompany the purchase order.

If approved, the first truckload of lifts will arrive within four to six weeks, and the subsequent truck will arrive within the following six-week timeframe.

The staff requested the Board provide the Chief Executive Officer authorization to use the Louisiana State contract on behalf of the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO ValuePoint) to procure forty-eight (48) Steril-Koni Heavy Duty Lifts directly from Steril-Koni USA, Inc. at \$660,721.02 for a not to exceed the amount of \$865,000. This purchase will be funded by Federal 5307 funds with State and local match.

The Operations and Finance Committee made a motion to approve the Vehicle Lifts & Garage Equipment Purchase action item. Ms. Hays Sasser seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved it.

- e. **Multimodal Mobility Plan Contract Award (M-A-24-012)**: Director of Planning & Grants Felix Casrodad presented the following item for discussion:

In preparation for this joint effort, the MTA Board of Directors, during their December 21st, 2023, meeting, authorized the CEO to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the Nashville Department of Transportation & Multimodal Infrastructure, the Metro Planning Department, and the Regional Transportation Authority for carrying out the work activities of the Multimodal Mobility Plan and updating the nMotion plan and the MCSP. The agencies have agreed to extend this collaboration to the development of their plans to optimize public engagement opportunities and maximize the coordination of necessary elements for both agencies within the scope of work. Under this approach, the projects were combined under one solicitation and an overall scope of work. However, specific elements pertaining to each agency's needs have been clearly identified under detailed separate tasks to accommodate the particular analysis and deliverables of each plan. Each participating agency shall remain in full control of the elements of the multimodal plan specific to that agency. The MTA

conducted the solicitation of professional services for the project and will serve as the contracting agency for consulting services. MTA will be reimbursed by other participating partners for their respective share of project expenses in accordance with the consultant's pricing schedule.

On December 8th, 2023, the MTA Procurement Department announced a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) on WeGo's website and Transit Talent and reached out to more than 20 firms via email. Our marketing team and NDOT also utilize platforms like LinkedIn, the American Planning Association, and Planetizen. By the closing date of February 13th, 2024, WeGo had received submissions from three firms: Kimley-Horn, SSR, and AECOM.

WeGo encouraged Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation, either as prime contractors or subcontractors, aiming for a 20% overall contract-specific goal for DBE participation.

For contracting Architectural & Engineering (A&E) services, WeGo followed the Brooks Act method, using qualification-based procurement procedures. Evaluation criteria included project approach, work methodology, availability, qualifications, and experience of the firm, project team, and key personnel. An evaluation committee comprised of representatives from the respective partner agencies met on March 6th, 2024, to evaluate and score proposals. The evaluation committee found Kimley-Horn's submission to be the most favorable, leading to further discussions/interviews and a request for a cost proposal for all tasks.

Kimley-Horn has committed to meeting or exceeding the 20% DBE goal for this project through their subcontractors on the project, Burch Transportation, Fairpointe Planning, and Foursquare ITP.

Staff requested that the Board of Directors provide the Chief Executive Officer the authority to enter a professional services contract with Kimley-Horn to conduct the Multimodal Mobility Plan for \$2,250,000. That includes \$1,998,990 for the base proposal, \$73,500 for Option 1 of Choice Lane integration with transit (no transportation modeling), and a contingency of \$177,510. The total contract term is 24 months, with a milestone for final recommendations at 18 months. Funding for the study includes FTA 5307 funds identified in the Capital Plan, FTA 5303 Metropolitan Planning funds through GNRC, and Local funds from Metro Government through NDOT and Metro Planning Department.

The Operations and Finance Committee made a motion to approve the Multimodal Mobility Plant Contract Award. Ms. Janet Miller seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved it.

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

**a. WeGo Link Program Update (NICE-D-24-03):** Transit Business Analyst Hannah Schaffer and Transit Planner Robert Johnson provided the following item for discussion:

Since the launch of the pilot zone in Antioch, 12 more zones have been established throughout Davidson County to expand the reach of the program and extend these benefits to other communities in Nashville. In determining areas for WeGo Link zones, staff established a few criteria factors for prioritization:

- Areas without fixed-route transit coverage that can connect to relatively robust transit services like a high-frequency corridor.
- Areas with suitable transfer locations that are ADA accessible.

- Areas with clusters of higher concentration of transit propensity characteristics such as low-income population, minority population, zero or low car households, and higher employment density.

The expansion of the program during the last few years has seen many areas that meet these characteristics receive a WeGo Link zone. Although the current bus network offers relatively good coverage for such a big service area like Davidson County, riders in other areas continue to need transit service.

During recent months, staff received a few requests for adjustments to current zones as well as the addition of new WeGo Link zones in areas that were not prioritized initially based on the criteria above but that we believe merit consideration. Based on this and considering the proposed Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) announced by Mayor O'Connell that includes WeGo Link expansion, the staff is proposing to have a discussion with the Board of Directors about the current program operation, emerging needs, and potential future direction moving forward.

There was a general discussion.

Committee Chair Miller thanked Hannah and Robert for a great report and proposed having a more extensive discussion on the WeGo Link zones in the future.

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

1. CEO Bland covered the two major security incidents over the last week pretty extensively earlier in the meeting, but he gave special recognition to Nick Oldham for his leadership in these events, and particularly his empathy to our operator who was attacked in meeting with her while she was still in the hospital to advance our support in her recovery, and in leading employee meetings at the Nestor facility.
2. CEO Bland thanked everyone for their support while he was away for a bit over a week. In particular, he thanked the Operations team, specifically Gabriel Burgess and Carl Rokos, for supporting the "backdrop" for Mayor O'Connell's State of Metro Address at the Fairgrounds. They provided two WeGo vehicles that served as background for the Mayor's address, which certainly had a heavy focus on public transportation. CEO Bland thanked Board Chair Carr Williams for representing WeGo in his absence.
3. This past month, the Mayor also released his recommended budget to the Metro Council. The Mayor's budget recommends an increase in our annual operating support of \$2,675,000. This was below our baseline budget request of \$6.5 million but reflects a bit of a tightening in Metro's revenue projections for the upcoming year. The proposal does not fund any of our service expansion investment requests. We will be able to present the Board with a balanced budget at your June meeting that holds fare and service levels steady by allocating additional Federal capital funding toward our preventive maintenance expenses, but WeGo will not be proposing to add any significant service hours next year. WeGo is comfortable allocating federal dollars thanks to a very robust allocation from Metro in the most recent capital spending plan for the bus and van replacement program, which provides more flexibility with available federal formula funds. However, it does create a structural deficit that WeGo will need to address in future years. If the Mayor's "Choose How You Move" initiative passes in November, this will be the easiest solution. Otherwise, WeGo will need to seek additional funding in next year's General Fund budget request.
4. Yesterday afternoon, staff participated in a hearing on the Mayor's proposed budget allocation to MTA before the Metro Council's Budget and Finance Committee. Members of the Committee and other council members present asked a lot of excellent questions, and the

overall tone of the meeting was very positive. CEO Bland thanked Board Chair Carr Williams and Mr. Oliphant for joining him at the front of the room.

5. WeGo continues to provide support for the Mayor's Choose How You Move initiative through participation in meetings, briefings, and transit talks. This past month, we joined other departments in briefing Metro Council's Transportation Committee on the program. Also of note, the independent auditors tasked with reviewing the financial plan supporting the program have signed off on it, allowing the full plan to be released to Council for consideration for inclusion on the November ballot.

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

Board Chair Carr Williams expressed gratitude towards CEO Bland for the opportunity to accompany him at the Metro Council's Budget hearing, where transit received high praise. She commended CEO Bland for his excellent presentation and acknowledged CFO Oliphant for his significant contributions to the budget over the years. She thought Mayor O'Connell's State of Metro Address was commendable, and she praised Mr. Gabriel Burgess and his team for their work and delivery of the WeGo bus backdrop.

Acknowledging recent challenges, Board Chair Carr Williams thanked all WeGo staff for ensuring safety and supporting employees and passengers during difficult times. She observed their kindness and care towards APAC citizens, emphasizing WeGo's commitment to Nashville's citizens.

Concluding her remarks, Board Chair Carr Williams thanked CEO Bland and CFO Oliphant for their preparedness at the Metro Budget hearing and extended special thanks to Mr. Oliphant for his 20 years of service. CEO Bland acknowledged Mr. Oliphant's retirement with appreciation for his precise financial reports and extensive contributions to WeGo, emphasizing his impact and the respect he received from retirees at his retirement party.

**XII. Other Business:** There was no further business to come before this Board.

**XIII. Adjournment:** With no further business, Vice Chair Miller moved to adjourn the meeting, which adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

**Attested:**

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**Gail Carr Williams**  
*Chair*

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**Margaret L. Behm**  
*Secretary*