



MINUTES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

March 20, 2024

- I. **Call to Order:** The regular meeting of the Regional Transportation Authority of Middle Tennessee (RTA) Executive Committee was held at the Greater Nashville Regional Council Office located at 44 Vantage Way, Ste. 450, Nashville, TN 37228, on Wednesday, March 20, 2024. A quorum of the RTA Executive Committee was established, and the meeting was called to order at 9:38 a.m. by Mayor Randall Hutto.

Executive Committee Members in Attendance:

Mayor Randall Hutto – Wilson County, Chair
Mayor Paige Brown – City of Gallatin, Vice-Chair
Mayor Freddie O'Connell – Davidson County
Ed Cole – Davidson County (Gov. Appt.)
Mayor Billy Vogle – Robertson County
Ken Davis – Wilson County (Gov. Appt.)
Kelly Dannenfelser – Williamson County (Gov. Appt.)

Others Present:

Mayor Wes Golden – Montgomery County
Matthew White – City of Mt. Juliet (Alt.)
Jim Kerr – City of Murfreesboro (Alt.)
Mayor Mike Callis – City of Portland
Gerald Herman – City of White House (Alt.)
Ed Elam – Rutherford County (Gov. Appt.)

- II. **Approval of Minutes:**
Ed Cole motioned to approve the February 21, 2024, meeting minutes; Ken Davis seconded the motion, and the Executive Committee unanimously approved it.
- III. **Public Comments:** The following members of the public gave remarks:
- Matthew Studer
- IV. **Audit Committee Report:** There were no items for the Audit committee this month.
- V. **Finance Committee Report:** Chief Financial Officer Ed Oliphant presented the following for discussion:
- a. **Monthly Financial Report Compared to Budget (R-D-24-004):** Chief Financial Officer Ed Oliphant presented the Monthly Financials for the month of January 2024, compared to the budget and a balance sheet as of January 31, 2024, with the Executive Committee and was available for questions, and there were no questions or further discussions.
- VI. **Operations Committee Report:** Committee Chair Mayor Rick Bell presented the following items for discussion and action:
- a. **Monthly Operating Statistics (R-D-24-005):** COO Andy Burke reviewed the RTA Monthly Dashboard Report through the month of January 2024 with the Executive Committee and was available for questions, and there were no questions or further discussions.

- b. **Star Cab & Parts Contract Award (R-A-24-005)**: Chief Operating Officer Andy Burke presented the following:

RTA operates two trainsets daily in the morning and afternoon peak time slots. A trainset consists of a locomotive, a cab car, and several passenger cars driven by ridership and events.

RTA purchased eight rebuilt BUDD passenger cars (2 cabs and six coaches) in 2019 to improve the safety and reliability of the rail service. The initial passenger car purchase included a 3rd cab car, which the seller reduced to 2 at the submission of the Best and Final Offer. RTA had to keep existing units 401 (cab) and 504 (coach) to use for a spare trainset.

The limitation with the above fleet is the lack of an additional cab car. It requires RTA to keep 2 Pullman passenger cars (401 & 504) in the active fleet that require an extensive rebuild per the HATCH (LTK) Passenger Car Inspection Report.

There was ultimately one bidder, which was the Great Lakes Central Railroad (GLCR). Research indicated this is likely the outcome as GLCR is the only known contractor to possess this specific vehicle and spare parts - which must be compatible with our current stock. There is no DBE Interest.

Staff recommended the RTA Board approve a purchase contract in the amount of \$400,000.00 for the acquisition of one (1) cab car, \$200,000.00 for a coach car to be used for spare parts, and \$75,000.00 for the installation of associated equipment and modifications necessary to commission this cab car into operation on the STAR. The total authorization is \$675,000.00. This project is fully funded through Federal Section 5337 funds from the remaining contingency of the Locomotive Overhaul Contract completed in April of 2022.

Ed Cole asked Mr. Burke to explain the cab car. Terry Bebout, Manager of the Star for RJ Corman, said the locomotive is on one end of the train and includes control systems for the Engineer as well as the diesel engines that power the train. A cab car is a passenger car deployed as the last car on the train opposite the locomotive, but which has a full set of operator controls at the end. When the train operates in reverse direction, the Engineer sits in the cab car and has full access to all necessary controls, as well as a view of the track in front of the train operating in, essentially, reverse direction. This is referred to as “push pull” operation, where the locomotive pushes the train in one direction, and pulls it in the other.

Mayor Callis asked what the percentage of the parts on the car being acquired for spare parts are salvageable. Mr. Burke said we can get as much as 50-70% of the spare parts, including most components that are not structural in nature.

Ed Cole asked how our ridership return compared nationwide relative to pre-pandemic levels. Mr. Bland reported that RTA ridership (including the Star) is tracking slightly behind similar operations nationally, with the Star at 35-40% and most commuter railroads at about 50-60%. By contrast, urban ridership on the MTA system is outpacing national ridership recovery, with Nashville’s ridership just about back to pre-pandemic levels while national figures are in the 70-80% range.

Ed Cole motioned to approve the Star Cab and Parts Contract Award; Mayor Billy Vogle seconded the motion, and the Executive Committee unanimously approved it.

VII. CEO's Report: CEO Bland provided the following report:

1. Governor Lee did sign legislation extending the Regional Transportation Authority through June 30, 2032. Thank you especially to Mayor Brown and Ed Cole for participating in various legislative hearings over the last six months to bring this about.
2. So far, we've operated service from Murfreesboro and Antioch to 2 Nashville SC home games, with 31 passengers riding to the first game and 37 to the second. WeGo anticipates this service will grow in popularity throughout the season as the word gets around.

3. It is time to update the RTA's long-range strategic service plan. This plan was last updated in 2016 jointly with the MTA. Once again, we would like to approach this as a joint project between RTA and MTA since many of the service and project initiatives are interrelated. WeGo just received proposals for this work, which the staff will evaluate. We anticipate returning to this board with more information and a recommended contract award, which will probably be at the April meeting.

VIII. Chair's Report: Mayor Randall Hutto thanked everyone for attending the board meeting.

X. Other Business: Mayor Paige Brown thanked Matthew Studer for his public comments.

XI. Adjournment: With no further business, Mayor Hutto motioned to adjourn the meeting; Ken Davis seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:49 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Ed Cole, RTA Secretary & Davidson County
Governor Appointee