



BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, August 16, 2006, 10:00 a.m.
Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency
Nashville, Tennessee

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERSHIP PRESENT

Bill Orange – Chairman	Mayor, Cheatham County
Bob Spivey – Vice Chairman	Mayor, Town of Smyrna
Paul Ballard – Secretary	Governor Appointee
Nancy R. Allen	Mayor, Rutherford County
Rogers Anderson	Mayor, Williamson County
Kathy Atkins	Governor Appointee
Paul Ballard	Governor Appointee
Howard Bradley	Mayor, Robertson County
Jim Cotey	Governor Appointee
Diane Davidson	Alternate, TDOT
Roger Farley	Governor Appointee
Scott Foster	Mayor, City of Hendersonville
Rick Gregory	Alternate, City of Goodlettsville
Jay Johnson	Alternate, City of Franklin
Shannon Logan	Alternate, City of Brentwood
Addam McCormick	Alternate, City of White House
Bob Nugent	Alternate, City of Murfreesboro
Joe Reagan	Alternate, City of Brentwood
R.J. 'Hank' Thompson	County Executive, Sumner County
Kenneth Wilber	Mayor, City of Portland
Don Wright	Mayor, City of Gallatin

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES:

Phil Armor	GNRC
Tauna Blaisdell	GNRC
Patty Cavanah	GNRC
Erin Collier	RTA Staff
W.T. 'Bill' Farquhar	RTA Staff
Glenda Griggs	RTS Staff
Tanisha Hall	GNRC
Era Hogan	RTA Staff
Betty Laurs	Booz Allen Hamilton
Teresa McKissick	RTA Staff

Allyson Shumate
Mary Ann Sparkman
Kevin Walker

RTA Staff
GNRC
Neel-Schaffer, Inc.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bill Orange called the Board meeting to order at approximately 10:00 a.m., on Wednesday, August 16, 2006, at Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency, Nashville, Tennessee.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Orange called for approval of the minutes of the July 19, 2006 Board meeting. Sumner County Executive Hank Thompson made a motion to approve the minutes. Town of Smyrna Mayor Bob Spivey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Orange called for any comments from the public. There were no public comments.

ACTION ITEMS

Item 4a was presented by Allyson Shumate. The item was DBE Goal for FY 2007. Mrs. Shumate stated that every year RTA, as a FTA recipient agency, must set an overall DBE goal for its DBE Program and prescribes various methods of calculating this goal. In accordance with this regulation, one method the RTA may use to calculate its DBE goal is to adopt a goal developed by another Department of Transportation (DOT) recipient so long as that agency procures from the same general area as the RTA. The RTA opted to base the methodology for development of the goal on that developed by the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT). This is appropriate as the TDOT is a DOT recipient agency.

The RTA set a goal for FFY 2007 of 6.5% DBE utilization. The RTA has experienced a reduction in DBE participation with the transition from engineering and planning to construction to operations; which makes the goal less than previous years. Staff believes the goal is reasonable and achievable.

It is recommended that a DBE utilization goal of 6.5% for FFY 2007 be presented for public review for a period of 30 days. Public comment may be received up to 15 days beyond the review period. Upon consideration of any and all public comments regarding the goal, and potential adjustments to address items identified during this process, it is further recommended that this goal be adopted by the RTA.

Hendersonville Mayor Scott Foster made a motion to adopt the DBE goal. Rutherford County Nancy R. Allen seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Item 4b was presented by Bill Farquhar. The item was Customer Service Contracts with the MTA. Mr. Farquhar stated that there are 33 days until start of service. Staff has been working closely with the MTA on customer service and connecting transit service issues. There are three contracts for Board consideration.

The first contract regards the shuttle service. Once the train gets downtown, the passengers will need to get to their respective destinations. A couple of months ago, the Board members were

informed about the Vanderbilt Shuttle Route #93, Downtown Shuttle Route #94, and the midday Shadow Bus to Lebanon Route #95. RTA tickets will be honored only on these services. The passengers wishing to ride to Donelson or Hermitage will take the #6 bus from Riverfront. RTA fare media will be honored on the 12:15pm trip only. Passengers wishing to ride the #6 at other times will pay the regular MTA local bus fare. In addition, the #25 downtown circulator service is scheduled to stop at the station seven days a week, providing some presence at the facility when the trains are not running. Key to the success of the program is the ability to revisit the shuttle routes and services on a regular basis the first few months of service. The routes have been developed based on surveys and existing transit usage, however, the actual commuter market may reveal a need to shift the routes to better suit the market.

The second contract regards telephone service (call) center and internet ticket sales. MTA has established a dedicated line into their call center for the Music City Star (862-6117). Callers will be able to get information regarding purchasing tickets, the schedules and days of service, and other information about the service. MTA will handle the online sales of monthly passes. There will be a link on the Music City Star website (www.musiccitystar.org), which will take the customer to a ticketing page of MTA's website where they can then purchase their tickets. As part of the service, MTA will be mailing out the tickets and handling the paperwork. RTA will receive an accounting of the ticket sales and the revenues on a monthly basis, again following the policies and procedures developed for the Relax and Ride contracts.

The third contract regards the transfer to MTA routes. In the development of the transit connections, it was originally assumed that a MCS ticket would be valid on all MTA services. This policy was based on the assumption that the tickets would be encoded on the MCS platforms before boarding the train. It was discovered that the cost of the necessary machinery and programming was much higher than staff expected. There were also numerous operational challenges and a high on-going operating cost associated with this approach. Fortunately, MTA is in the process of developing a "Smart Card" system that will allow passengers to swipe their cards near a machine and register the trip. RTA will offer these cards to those passengers (estimated to be less than 50) that have destinations past West End or outside the downtown shuttle service area. RTA will be billed by MTA \$0.76 a trip for the use of the cards. The cards will only be available to monthly pass holders. About 2% of customers will need the card.

County Executive Thompson made a motion to approve the contracts. Gallatin Mayor Don Wright seconded.

During brief discussion, it was clarified that the contracts were for the remaining 2006-2007 year.

Chairman Orange called for vote on the motion to approve the contracts. The motion passed unanimously. Paul Ballard abstained from the vote.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Item 5a was presented by Teresa McKissick. The item was Marketing Update. Ms. McKissick stated that the invitations for the Grand Opening events were mailed yesterday. On the backside of the invitations is a schedule of the events. The only change in the schedule from last month's presentation of it was the addition of the Mt. Juliet Station ceremony.

Ms. McKissick gave a brief presentation of the Music City Star advertising campaign which is underway and ongoing. There is a combination of billboard, print ads, and radio spots. The

radio ads began running on August 14. Those ads are in the morning; Morning Drive Time sponsorship on 76 stations and Morning Drive Time 30 second ads on stations WNRQ-FM, WRVW-FM, and WSIX-FM.

The newspaper ads began running on August 8th. Those newspapers are the Lebanon Democrat, Mt. Juliet News, Tennessean, Nashville City Paper, Nashville Business Journal, Wilson Post, News Herald, and News Beacon. Three billboards can be seen by commuters at the I-40E split at I-24W, Lebanon Road and Park Drive, and I-40E near Exit 224.

Item 5b was presented by Allyson Shumate. The item was Way finding Signage. Mrs. Shumate stated way finding signage is being produced to help guide motorists to the stations in preparation for start of service. Staff had great signs including direction arrows created by the Metro Sign Shop. However, they did not meet federal regulations requiring that all signs be green with white lettering.

Thus new signage is being produced in the proper colors. The signs are being produced by both Metro and TDOT. Staff is exploring the possibility of the Music City Star graphic being placed along I-40, in addition to the generic “rail station” signage.

Mrs. Shumate passed around pictures of the signage to the Board members. The signs on the local street will be placed in the next two weeks. The signage on I-40 will be in place by the middle of September.

Item 5c was presented by Bill Farquhar. The item was Mobilization Update. Mr. Farquhar stated that the crews are operating the train most days to familiarize themselves with the geography of the line and the proper handling of passenger trains. The trains began operating last week at 40 mph. This week the speeds will be increased to 59 mph as the signal system comes fully operational.

As part of the Safety Certification Process, held on August 2 was First Responders training. The training was to both ensure that the Emergency Management Agencies had the correct contact information for the Music City Star, and vice versa. The event included a detailed walk around of the equipment, demonstrating how to set the hand brakes, turn off the HEP and shut down the locomotive. Staff also demonstrated the use of the safety equipment and the emergency windows. This was the first of what will be a series of exercises with the Emergency Responders. Future events will include training for all emergency staff assigned along the line, and practice evacuations.

On July 31, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) brought their T-17 Track Geometry car to the Music City Star route. The T-17 is their latest generation test car that runs on all of the higher speed sections of Class I and Amtrak railroads. The car is capable of detecting at track speeds any alignment or gauge defect that may be in the track. The car tested the railroad in both directions.

The results of the testing were favorable and showed that the alignment was ready for 40 mph operations that day and gave a short list of curves that need reworked to allow for the full timetable speed operations. A one-way trip is currently at 50-55 minutes. The track quality was great.

With the data from the T-17, staff was able to finalize the track speeds for operating the Music City Star. Every effort was made to provide top speed for as long as possible. Too many abrupt changes in speed would have adverse impact on the operating budget due to increase fuel consumption and wear on the brakes. There was a graph included in the Board packet that showed the proposed operating speeds versus the original design.

During discussion, Governor Appointee Debbie Frank recalled a newspaper article about people trying to beat the train. Mrs. Frank is concerned about safety at grade crossings. Mr. Farquhar noted that the article was part of the plan to increase public awareness at the crossings. Mrs. Shumate stated that crossing gates have been installed at all railroad crossings. Staff has been and will continue conducting many Operation Lifesaver presentations to help inform people of necessary safety around trains.

Ms. McKissick stated that staff held a media event, at the Mt. Juliet station, to help get the word out about railroad safety. Diane Davidson stated that RTA is doing a great job of addressing safety.

Governor Appointee Roger Farley asked if staff had reconsidered having security other than uniformed police officers on the train. Mr. Farquhar responded that by allowing uniformed officers' to ride the train for free is a benefit to the RTA in which the persona that the uniform gives would influence all to be good.

Paul Ballard was asked what MTA's policies were on this issue. Mr. Ballard responded that he knows police officers could ride at no cost; however, he was unsure if wearing their uniforms were required.

Item 5d was presented by Allyson Shumate. The item was Update on Ticketing. Mrs. Shumate stated that one of the challenges RTA has been trying to overcome is how to validate tickets. The original concept was that the RTA would sell MTA daily passes out of the ticket vending machines and MTA monthly passes for monthly riders. This would cover the bus connectivity issues.

After many months of trying to work out how the tickets would be validated on the Music City Star as well as how the tickets would be validated in the MTA fareboxes, it was decided this approach would not work.

The RTA researched various types of validating machines; however, many are not sold without the purchase of the ticket vending machines by the same manufacturer, all of which are more than the RTA budgeted.

The RTA is proceeding with a "self" validating type of ticket. There will be a place on the ticket for day, month and a.m. or p.m. The rider will scratch off the appropriate day, month and a.m. or p.m. and the conductor will validate.

Monthly passes will be flash passes – good for calendar months. They will have colored stripes to represent the origination station, so the conductors will be able to verify that the proper tickets have been purchased.

It is a simple approach and will work with the existing equipment, eliminating the need for additional capital outlays. Mrs. Shumate passed around pictures of the tickets to the Board members.

Item 5e was presented by Kevin Walker. The item was Construction Update. Mr. Walker stated that the mainline surfacing is complete at Riverfront, rail plugs and welds are completed. When the FRA took their Geometry Car over the line, it was a wonderful QA check. All crossings are complete. Phase II grade crossing signals were activated. If a person looks down the track, they can see the green or red light on.

Hermitage Station was paved yesterday and the Donelson Station is getting paved today. The Mt. Juliet, Lebanon, and Martha are at substantial completion; those are waiting for the electricity and TVM's to be installed.

RTA is the proud owner of Riverfront Station. Mrs. Shumate noted that staff even has the keys.

Item 5f was presented by Glenda Griggs. The item was Relax & Ride Service Expansion. Mrs. Griggs stated that the RTA's mission is to improve air quality and provide ridesharing opportunities. The RTA is the largest commuter vanpool agency in the Southeast. To-date the RTA runs over 100 vanpools within the RTA's nine county region. RTA's regional Relax & Ride bus service from Nashville to Murfreesboro began in 1996 and the ridership has increased five-fold. Last year, RTA expanded the service to include a mid-day run, which has proven to be a success. In 1997, Hendersonville became the second Relax and Ride service for commuters traveling from Hendersonville to Nashville. This service has also increased its growth by over 100% since it started.

Staff knows individuals have personal preferences about modes of transportation and RTA is dedicated to providing options to all the counties in the region. Mrs. Griggs wanted to let the Board members know that in the coming weeks and months she would be contacting them to discuss the future opportunities for their communities to not only grow and maintain the ridesharing program, but to explore the possibilities of regional – or fixed route – service.

Fixed-route services require local funding. This is an issue all governments face as they consider scheduled route service. Also, if your city is not part of the MPO, any transit plan would need to be programmed through the Metropolitan Planning Organization, if your city or county is a part of the MPO, or through the Rural Planning Organizations.

Mrs. Griggs encouraged the Board members to contact her to schedule a meeting. If not, she would be contacting them within the coming weeks.

Chairman Orange stated that the RTA would not be without the rideshare program. It was noted that the ridership on both the Hendersonville and Murfreesboro routes continue to increase.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Griggs noted that this Board meeting would be the last meeting Mayor Allen would be attending as a Board member. Mrs. Griggs also stated that on behalf of the entire staff she would like to thank Mayor Allen for all her hard work, support, and dedication she has given the RTA in the last twelve years.

County Executive Thompson made a motion to adjourn. Mayor Wright seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully,

Paul J. Ballard

Paul J. Ballard
RTA Secretary