



BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, November 15, 2006, 10:00 a.m.
Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency
Nashville, Tennessee

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERSHIP PRESENT

Bill Orange – Chairman	Mayor, Cheatham County
Rogers Anderson	Mayor, Williamson County
Kirk Bednar	Alternate, City of Brentwood
Ernest Burgess	Mayor, Rutherford County
Tom Brashear	Alternate, Wilson County
Angie Carrier	Alternate, City of White House
Jim Cotey	Governor Appointee
Roger Farley	Governor Appointee
Scott Foster	Mayor, City of Hendersonville
Rick Gregory	Alternate, City of Goodlettsville
Jay Johnson	Alternate, City of Franklin
Paul Nutting	Alternate, City of Springfield
R.J. 'Hank' Thompson	County Executive, Sumner County
Don Wright	Mayor, City of Gallatin

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES:

Phil Armor	GNRC
Terry Bebout	TSG
Erin Collier	RTA Staff
W.T. 'Bill' Farquhar	RTA Staff
Glenda Griggs	RTS Staff
Tanisha Hall	GNRC
Era Hogan	RTA Staff
Julie Lamb	TDOT
Danny M. Leverette	Mayor of Spring Hill
George Morgan	Morgan & Morganton
Sylvia Odum	TDOT
Todd Presnell	Miller & Martin
Allyson Shumate	RTA Staff
Diane Thorne	TMA Group

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bill Orange called the Board meeting to order at approximately 10:00 a.m., on Wednesday, November 15, 2006, at Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency, Nashville, Tennessee.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Orange called for approval of the minutes of the October 18, 2006 Board meeting. Gallatin Mayor Don Wright made a motion to approve the minutes. Williamson County Mayor Rogers Anderson 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 Permanent Funding Options/Long Range Plan. Chairman Orange commented that there was lengthy discussion on this item last month. He stated that RTA staff is presenting materials for the Board members to take with them today for their review and comment over a period of time.

Mrs. Shumate stated that staff brought draft reports on permanent funding options for the Board members. Staff requested that all comments be received by December 20, 2006. Staff will then incorporate them and then bring back to the Board for further determination. Comments can be sent to staff via email, fax, or by hand.

Chairman Orange called for a motion to accept the plan for review and comment. Mayor Scott Foster made the motion. Mayor Wright seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Item 4b was presented by Hank Thompson. The item was Finance/Audit Committee report. County Executive Hank Thompson stated that the Committee recently met and discussed at length the previous item. He stated that there are two recommendations from the Committee. The first is a change in personnel. County Executive Thompson asked Bill Farquhar to present that part.

Mr. Farquhar stated that since the beginning of operations, two things have happened. RTA has a contract Administrator position filled by Lynda Dillin, who has decided to leave the RTA as her interest is more with capital projects, not on-going operations. The work load of Ms. Dillin's position has decreased dramatically now that the construction contracts are closing. Current staff can handle the administration of the operating contracts without the loss of efficiency. Erin Collier has been handling most of the customer service issues, ticket inventory, distribution, and more. RTA believes Mrs. Collier should be promoted to a new position of Operating Assistant for Customer Service. The duties would be focused on the Music City Star but would also include customer service for all the RTA programs (Relax and Ride, Vanpools and JARC).

RTA has the money in the budget for a part-time Contract Administrator at a higher hourly rate than the proposed Operation Assistant for Customer Service position. There is money in the budget to do this. It is basically renaming a position and shifting money from one line item to another. The administrative assistant, currently filled by Mrs. Collier, is funded under the GNRC overhead and would be filled by a new staffed hired by GNRC.

County Executive Thompson stated that the Committee recommends the promotion of Mrs. Collier to Operations Assistant for Customer Service. He made a motion to approve the recommendation. Jay Johnson, City of Franklin, seconded.

Roger Farley asked about a job description. It was clarified that the Contract Administrator position was being reclassified to Operations Assistant for Customer Service, and there will no longer be a Contract Administrator position.

Chairman Orange called for a vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

County Executive Thompson stated that the Finance Committee recommended to the RTA Chairman the formation of an Executive & Legislative Liaison Committee to support legislative efforts toward tort liability for commuter rail and long term funding of RTA programs. The Governor has not been a strong supporter of the commuter rail. The RTA and its member agencies have a lot riding on how much the East Corridor commuter rail is perceived as a success or failure. TDOT and the Governor are going to have to support commuter rail in order for it to succeed and expand to other corridors.

Two things have to be done. RTA has to go to the Legislators and lobby for tort liability; which begins in January. County Executive Thompson stated that in order for him to go ahead and start talking to his legislators he needs RTA staff to provide him with a list of tort liability points. He requested staff to get that information to him as well as those who will be getting involved with it.

The appointed committee will need to meet with the Governor and find out where he stands on the issues. Staff stated that they will get the information, last years' legislative bill, and new possibilities to the committee.

County Executive Thompson made a motion for the RTA Chairman to form an Executive & Legislative Liaison Committee to support legislative efforts toward tort liability for commuter rail and long term funding of RTA programs. Tom Brashear, Wilson County, seconded.

It was noted during discussion that the committee needs to request support from the cities and counties; along with Congressmen Cooper and Gordon before meeting with the Governor. It was noted that tort liability is a big issue in the legislation and that RTA needs legal counsel from GNRC to look at the legislative bill. In addition, it was suggested that Chad Jenkins with TML look at the legislative bill.

Chairman Orange called for a vote on the motion to request the RTA Chairman form an Executive & Legislative Liaison Committee to support legislative efforts toward tort liability for commuter rail and long term funding of RTA programs. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Orange appointed: Hank Thompson as Chair of the Committee, with Don Fox, Jay Johnson, Jim Cotey, and Bill Orange as committee members.

Staff will send out packets with information the Committee will need.

Item 4c was presented by Chairman Bill Orange. The item was Nominating Committee. Chairman Orange appointed Roger Farley, Rogers Anderson, and Hank Thompson as the

nominating committee for calendar year 2007 RTA officers. The Committee will recommend the slate of Board officers for 2007. The nominations will be announced at the December 20, 2006 Board meeting. Elections will take place at the January 17, 2007 meeting with the opportunity to receive any nominations from the floor.

Item 4d was presented by Chairman Bill Orange. The item was Task Force Report. Chairman Orange stated that the Task Force met on October 17 and discussed the status of the RTA, and what steps should the agency take to move forward as it grows. The Task Force conducted a lengthy discussion focused on the state of transportation planning in Middle Tennessee. Currently, there are a large number of agencies that are involved in developing and implementing transportation projects in the region.

The Task Force discussed the potential of the RTA assuming a greater role in the planning process to assist in developing an integrated approach to short and long term transportation solutions. The RTA by-laws require that the agency provide transportation planning function, however, due to limited staff, this function has never been a major part of the workload. The Task Force will work with the members of the Finance/Audit Committee to investigate seeking additional funds from state sources to support the expanded planning and administrative positions.

There are three recommendations from the Task Force: one, RTA will continue on its path to an independent status and evaluate all potential entities to partner with in the effort; two, develop a job description for an Executive director that includes working toward an independent status of the agency; three, direct the Finance/Audit Committee to investigate methods of funding additional staff positions, including an Executive Director.

Chairman Orange called for a motion to approve the three recommendations. Hank Thompson made the motion. Jim Cotey, Governor Appointee, seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 4e was presented by Sharon Simmons. The item was Job Access/Reverse Commute van contract with Waves Inc. Sharon Simmons stated that a portion of RTA's Job Access-Round VI grant was designated for capital purchase of passenger vans. A rear-lift equipped passenger van was purchased for Waves, Inc. (WI) Adult Day Care Program. This program is designed to help develop the necessary skills needed for individuals with life challenges to live independently. This van will be used by staff for transportation to employment and job-readiness programs for WI clients. RTA cost for the purchase of this van is \$25,756, paid via JARC funding.

Staff asked the Board to approve the contract with Waves, Inc for the use of n RTA funded van. Mr. Johnson made the motion. County Executive Thompson seconded.

During discussion, it was noted that collision insurance is not listed on policy requirements. Mayor Anderson made a motion to amend the contract to add collision. County Executive Thompson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Orange called for vote on the motion to approve the contract with the amendment. The motion was unanimously approved.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Item 5a was presented by Bill Farquhar. The item was Extended Evening Service. Mr. Farquhar stated that staff received an offer from Transit Solutions Group (TSG) to test out late

night evening service on Thursday and Friday for the remainder of the year. RTA staff agreed to the offer. The additional service will begin tomorrow, November 16.

Staff will report back to the Board in January on how well it went. If it works, staff will look into other special times/holidays, which the service could be provided again.

During discussion, it was noted that this service is less train miles than the Game Day Express, due to it only runs one train where as the Game Day Express runs two trains. Also commented, was that 8:30 p.m. is the latest the crew/staff could run without having to hire more crew/staff.

Item 5b was presented by Bill Farquhar. The item was Game Day Express Report. Mr. Farquhar stated that the first Game Day Express went fairly well. There was a big desire to run the three home games in December instead of the two planned originally. Staff proposes a fare of \$15.00 prepaid and \$20.00 on the platform the day of the game.

County Executive Thompson was concerned with the fare because of last month's debate and Lebanon, Mt. Juliet, and Wilson County not being represented at the current meeting. Mr. Farquhar responded that this was discussed at yesterday's ECOC meeting, where Mt. Juliet, Lebanon, and Wilson County were represented at that meeting, and this fare was unanimously agreed on.

County Executive Thompson commented that he is concerned with the ECOC making the marketing decisions. It not only affects them, but everyone in this room. The ECOC seems to be acting as a separate Board. He asked if anything as been done toward getting sponsorship for these Game Day Express trains.

Mr. Farquhar stated that Rob Shearer and his staff have contacted banks and developers in Mt. Juliet to underwrite each train. Mr. Shearer informed Mr. Farquhar yesterday that they have received some response but no one is ready to sign yet. Mr. Farquhar commented that RTA staff has worked with radio stations in giving away the Special Event tickets. They gave all the tickets away. Staff had about 30% of those show up on game day; which was expected.

Mr. Farquhar stated that next year staff will come to the Finance Committee and Board regarding a line item specifically for these marketing purposes. Also, staff is already talking with the Titans Network.

County Executive Thompson made a motion to approve the operation of Game Day Express trains on December 3, 17, and 31 at a fare of \$15.00 prepaid and \$20.00 on the platforms for marketing purposes. Rick Gregory seconded.

After further discussion, Chairman Orange called for vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 5c was presented by Allyson Shumate. The item was Ticketing Update. Mrs. Shumate stated that the ticket sales have been going well. At the beginning of service, where to purchase tickets was an issue to customers. Central parking staff has been selling tickets at Riverfront Station during the commute hours. That has been working efficiently and has decreased the amount of sale from the RTA offices, which is what customers wanted.

Angie Carrier, City of White House, asked if RTA rents out Riverfront Station. Mrs. Shumate responded that staff is working on a policy to bring to the Board regarding possible rental of the station for events and/or meetings.

Item 5d was presented by Sharon Simmons. The item was JARC Services Report. Mrs. Simmons stated that since April of 2000, RTA's JARC Program has been providing employment transportation services for the disenfranchised individuals in RTA's nine (9) county region. It has always been RTA's mission to provide alternative transportation to commuters in Middle TN and our JARC program continues to uphold those standards by providing needed transportation to those individuals who need a little extra help.

In the past year, with the help of community social service agencies and the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), JARC has provided financial support for extended hours on MTA buses, and have purchased and given out over 9800 bus passes to JARC clients to help get them to work. RTA has also provided over 700 hours of travel training on MTA buses for those people who have challenges when it comes to transferring. Currently, JARC has 5 commuter vans in its fleet. These vans are contracted out to social agencies to help transport their clients to employment services.

The current level of support that JARC offers will change drastically during the next grant rounds. Due to federal funding constraints, RTA JARC funds will be cut by about 40 %. RTA's motto is "Our job is getting you to yours" and RTA's JARC program will continue to work by this motto, providing the best service possible within the funding limits.

RTA current JARC funds are about \$500,000 per year. In the next two grants rounds, the first one beginning July 07, RTA will receive about \$300,000. Staff will be working with our funding partners to identify changes to the program to lessen the impact of this 40% reduction in federal support.

Item 5e was presented by Bill Farquhar. The item was September and October Ridership Report. Mr. Farquhar stated that ridership for the month of October averaged 594 passengers a day. This was an increase of 49 passengers from September's 549 average ridership. However, the numbers for both September and early October is inflated due to recreational/excursion riders, especially during Wilson County schools fall break the first weeks of October. The ridership for the first two weeks of October averaged 738 riders, while the average for the last two weeks of the month was 475. Staff believes that the 475 number is a much better indicator of the number of commuter riding the service. The ridership was very low on Halloween, as many regular riders departed work early on that day. Mt. Juliet remains the most heavily patronized station, followed by Hermitage and Lebanon. Ridership is on track to meet the projected 1,500 trips by the end of June, or nine months after starting. Ridership for the next two months of November and December is expected to grow only slightly due to the holiday season.

On time performance was over 95% for the month. There has been no delay due to weather. However, there was one electrical problem that caused a delay. The problem was corrected.

Item 5f was presented by Sharon Simmons. The item was Relax & Ride Ridership for September and October. Mrs. Simmons stated that the ridership on the two Relax & Ride services continues to show increases over the same month ridership a year ago. In September, the 96X Murfreesboro had increased from 195 riders per day to 201 riders, an increase of

approximately 3.0 %. The ridership on the #35X Rivergate Express to Hendersonville had increased from 44 riders per day to 56 riders daily, an increase of 29%.

In October, the 96X Murfreesboro had an increase of 11.7% over last year at this time. The ridership on the #35X Rivergate Express to Hendersonville had increased from 44 riders per day to 56 riders daily, an increase of 60%.

The first trip on the Murfreesboro Relax & Ride service was operating at capacity with more passengers than seats on a regular basis. To address the capacity constraint, RTA staff filled a 14- passenger vanpool to serve the additional riders.

Item 5g was presented by Sharon Simmons. The item was Service Development Report. Mrs. Simmons stated that she and Glenda Griggs met with A.O. Smith in Ashland City regarding vanpools for employees who live in the Clarksville area. RTA's staff's concerns are the hours and shifts of the employees, which may cause vanpools to not hold the number of riders the vanpool needs. Staff is still working on a plan with them.

In the past two weeks, staff has organized two new vanpools. The first is from Murfreesboro to Downtown that was referred to in the previous item. The second was from Clarksville to Downtown and Metro Center area.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Shumate stated that there has been a number of visitors in town interested in the commuter rail for similar projects in their area. Mrs. Shumate commented that Belmont University is in the process of surveying their faculty who ride the train and what type of transportation to and from the station. RTA staff has been doing test runs with MTA to look at changing the West End route.

Diane Thorne commented that she was in Chicago last week, attending the Railvolution Conference. She received many favorable comments about the Music City Star, especially regarding the extremely low per mile cost of the project.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully,

Paul J. Ballard

Paul J. Ballard
RTA Secretary