



SPORTS AUTHORITY OF THE
METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FORD ICE CENTER BELLEVUE – DRAFT PICKS | THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2025 | 10:30 AM

ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS: Cathy Bender (Chair), Jad Duncan (Vice Chair), Kim Adkins, Victoria Crawford, Don Deering, Dan Hogan, Anna Page, Russ Pulley, Emmett Wynn

STAFF: Monica Fawknorton (ED), Valda Barksdale, Brandon Little, Melissa Wells, Joshua Thomas (Metro Legal), Sam Keen (Metro Legal)

Visitors: Adolpho Birch (Titans), Jennifer Boniecki (Preds), Amy Bratten (Preds), Kyle Clayton (Predators), Kellen DeCoursey, John Gromos (TBA/Titans), Kate Guerra (Titans), Ryan Harbour (Nashville Soccer Club), Sean Henry (Preds), Heather Hill (Cumming Group), Rebecca King (Preds), Necol Lyons (Metro OMB), Jack Malone (Nashville Downtown Partnership), Karzan Mohamad-Ali (Cumming Group), James Morrison (Mortenson), Lindsey Paola (Nashville Soccer Club), Gabe Rodriguez (Nashville Downtown Partnership), Robert Sampson (RSAMPSON Consulting), Doug Scopel (Sounds), Pam Tarkington (Genesis Engineering), Bill Wickett (Preds)

Call to Order

Chair Bender called the meeting of the Sports Authority Board of Directors to order, welcomed all to Ford Ice Center Bellevue, and thanked the Preds for hosting.

Public Comment Period Pursuant to TN Open Meetings Act, Tenn. Code Ann. § 8-44-101

There were no sign-ups for Public Comment.

Consider Approval of April 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Chair Bender asked if there were questions or comments pertaining to the April 17, 2025 meeting minutes. There being none,

Upon a motion made by Director Adkins and seconded by Director Duncan, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the April 17, 2025 meeting minutes.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Fawknorton gave a brief overview of the agenda. She shared that staff has been working toward building relationships and garnering an understanding about other Sports Authority agencies across the country. Finance Manager Melissa Wells has been an integral part in reaching out and connecting with Sports Authority leaders in Raleigh, Houston, Chicago. Upcoming meetings include Baltimore, Minnesota and Olympic Regional Development Authority of Lake Placid NY. The conversations have been insightful in learning about structure, functions and operations of other Authorities which serve as an essential subsection of the sports ecosystem. The Authorities each expressed a strong interest in opportunities for connecting and networking with each other. Director Hogan questioned how many of the Authorities are structured as landlords (versus operators) similarly to Metro Sports Authority and approximately how many facilities do they manage? ED Fawknorton shared that Raleigh and Chicago function somewhat similarly while Houston has several facilities and serve in a hybrid capacity as landlords and bidding on sporting events. The Authorities all vary in that some may have multiples assets, including conventions centers and parking lots, while others may have only one facility. As discussions with the Authorities continues, staff will explore functions and provide more information, added ED Fawknorton.

ED Fawknorton also announced that Metro Council passed a Resolution honoring Gymnast Morgan Price from Fisk University. The Resolution recognized Ms. Price's achievements in gymnastic including winning her second National Collegiate Gymnastics Championship. Fisk is the first HBCU gymnastics program and it is the only collegiate gymnastics program in Tennessee.

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Personnel Committee Report: Consider Approval of Revisions to the Executive Director's Job Description

Vice-Chair Duncan reported that the Personnel Committee met on Monday, May 12, 2025 and had the opportunity to ask ED Fawknorton questions and discuss/rate her performance. The Committee gave the Executive Director excellent ratings and are highly satisfied with the performance of her and staff.

Also, the Committee reviewed and discussed updates and revised the Executive Director's job description. The Committee recommends approval of the draft which is in the binders for review. Once approved by the board, a final copy will be provided to Metro HR.

Upon a motion made by Vice Chair Duncan and seconded by Director Deering, the Board of Directors unanimously approved Revisions to the Executive Director's Job Description.

In continuing his report, Vice Chair Duncan reported that the Committee also discussed adjustments to the Executive Director's salary and contract but deferred any recommendations until the committee's next meeting.

Additionally, the Committee discussed funding authorization for staff and board professional development. The Staff recommends that the department budget for professional development be approved for an amount not to exceed \$20,000. Funds will be used for conference registration & travel, classes, professional memberships as well as Lunch and Learn sessions for the Board. The Personnel Committee recommends approval for the funding for which the Resolution will go before the Finance Committee at its next meeting.

Consider Approval of a Resolution Approving the Third Amended and Restated Agreement Between The Sports Authority of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County and the Nashville Downtown Partnership

ED Fawknorton reported that the Sports Authority's current agreement with the Downtown Partnership is a one-year extension, expiring on May 31, 2025. The agreement authorizes the Partnership to use Parking Lots F and R for daily shuttle operation and special event parking/shuttles for downtown workers and visitors, free of cost. The proposed agreement, reported ED Fawknorton, adds Lot E and seeks to extend this long-term partnership between the Sports Authority and the Downtown Partnership (22 years as of this month) for another 12 months with a 30-day termination option. The Partnership's shuttle operations take place in Lot R (downtown workers and special event attendees), Lot E, and Lot F (Metro employees). ED Fawknorton directed the boards attention to the proposed resolution/agreement which also includes a map and route. Staff recommends approval.

Jack Malone, Director of Transportation, Nashville Downtown Partnership, provided an update on operations highlighting:

- Partnership service includes three daytime routes
- Approximately 1,000 customers are served monthly
- Over 486k passengers trips were provided in 2024
- BEEP (Best Ever Event Parking) and Special Event Services (Titans, Preds, SEC Basketball games, etc) help reduce congestion & pollution.

Moving forward the Downtown Partnership anticipates being a viable option as companies continue to return to in-office work as 79% of 2019 workers have returned to office occupancy. Director Adkins requested clarification regarding previous and current customers to which Mr. Malone noted the customers listed on the presentation include a sampling of both current and previous customers. Director Adkins also requested hours of operation, whether ridership includes musicians and whether safety measures are a concern. Mr. Malone reported shuttle service is available 6:00am–7:00pm, Monday–Friday. Musicians currently are not typical riders; however, several downtown parking garages offer \$10 parking to musicians. Also, the Downtown Partnership is exploring nighttime service routes. Security guards are in the parking lots during operating hours; there are no safety concerns.

Upon a motion made by Director Deering and seconded by Director Adkins, the Board of Directors unanimously approved a Resolution Approving the Third Amended and Restated Agreement Between The Sports Authority of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County and the Nashville Downtown Partnership

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Titans DBE Update & New Stadium Monthly Progress Update

Kellen DeCoursey, Tennessee Titans Project Executive, reported that construction progress remains on schedule and on budget. The Titans are monitoring and tracking tariffs and thus far the construction project has not been impacted. Mr. DeCoursey shared an aerial drone image of the construction site showing that the complete footprint of the facility is now in place. There are 1,100 workers on site daily encompassing over 1.5 million labor hours. Two milestones have been reached:

- Concrete decks are topped out
- Project is now transitioning to the structural steel roof plus the large 290k pound structural steel truss has been set and bolted.

Adolpho Birch, Chief External & League Affairs Officer, reported that Stadium Project Payments to Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms continue to grow with total paid to date over \$87M. The number of DBE firms continues to increase and it is anticipated that DBE payments will exceed \$100M within the next two months. John Gromos, Tennessee Business Alliance- Principal in Charge, reported that workers are averaging 60k work hours per week. April saw one recordable incident where a mason was moving materials from a cinder block, the block slipped and pinched the end of his pinky finger. Additional training on material handling was implemented. TBA's Workforce Development Cohort #6 recently graduated and Cohort #7 will begin in July. The program will be modified and extended from a three-week to a six-week program to provide additional certifications. Director Hogan requested clarification on whether a 55-hour work week is the norm given the project is averaging 1,100 weekly workers at a rate of approximately 60k hours per week. Mr. Gromos noted the hours do fluctuate, however, it is typical for a commercial workforce to desire overtime. The hours are managed at 50-55 hours per week to avoid worker fatigue. ED Fawknorton requested an update on the Summer Heavy Metal Camp for high school students to which Mr. Gromos indicated he will include a detail update in next month's written report.

Kate Guerra, Vice President, Communications & Corporate Affairs reported on the *Call To Artists* efforts for art collections that will be accumulated for the 2.1M square foot New Nissan Stadium. The Titans have engaged Rise DBI, a full-service agency that provides custom design and branding integration into construction projects, specializing in stadium art projects and incorporating art into every facet of the stadium. Thus far, reported Ms. Guerra, Rise has conducted 3D walkthroughs of the entire stadium construction space to determine art mapping.

Ms. Guerra further reported that the *Call To Artists* project has also begun networking with Middle Tennessee artist for advice on soliciting artist and incorporating a broad scope of art mediums. The goal is to make the new stadium a celebration of Nashville and Tennessee with artistic ideas surrounding culture, neighborhoods, the Titans and the stadium. Solicitation for artist can be seen on billboards, stencils on sidewalks and banners on buildings. Art submissions opened Spring 2025 (50 received thus far), artist will be selected Fall 2025, final review and approval of art is scheduled for Spring 2026 with the unveiling anticipated during Spring 2027. It is anticipated that the Sports Authority will have representation on the Arts Selection Council which will be responsible for reviewing and approving final art selections. Inspirational art concepts will come from High School student art classes, Nashville's music community and outdoor multi-dimensional art. Chair Bender asked whether there is a process to ensure the solicitation of diverse artists and whether the submissions thus far reflect a diverse artist population. Ms. Guerra noted that artists of the current submissions have yet to be identified, however, during selections, diversity will be an important part of the process. Having diverse voices involved during the launching, feedback and promotion efforts were very important. The overall goal for diverse participation (including the *Call To Artists* efforts) on the construction project is 25% and the project is on track to exceed that goal. While the Titans will not require certification as a diverse business, they are committed to helping artists/businesses obtain certification should they desire. Director Adkins asked whether the *Call To Artists* project has coordinated with Metro Arts Commission to which Ms. Guerra stated, yes, and they have been extremely helpful in promotional efforts. Director Hogan stated with a 2.1M sq ft facility, is there a sense of how many pieces will be needed to which Ms. Guerra responded there is not a specific number given the space will include branding, wayfinding signage, storytelling, as well as artist renderings. Director Wynn inquired whether measures will be in place to police art selections to which Ms. Guerra stated the Arts Selection Committee will have a review and approval process to ensure the selections are appropriate.

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Ford Ice Center Bellevue Host Facility Report

Kyle Clayton, Chief Strategy Officer Bridgestone Arena, reported on the recent announcement of Bridgestone Arena's \$650M upgrade transformation which will not require any public financing. The Arena's current location is ideal and the plan is to modernize the entire space and expand the concourses out onto Broadway. Mr. Clayton shared a visionary rendering of the upgrade indicating potential opportunities for condos, hotels, bowling alley, restaurants and lounges. The Predators offices will remain on site.

The team has engaged CAA ICON as its construction representatives and Populous as project architects, continued Mr. Clayton. Both agencies are extremely familiar with the building. The project has an anticipated 3-5 years' timeline for completion. More details and a video will be shared during the June meeting at Bridgestone Arena. Director Pulley inquired about whether events and games will be interrupted during the upgrades to which Mr. Clayton noted the plan is for most of the work to take place during off-hockey season in the summer. CMA Awards and SEC Tournament obligations will be met, most concert schedules will be compressed while a few may be cancelled. Director Crawford inquired about the inspiration for the renderings to which Mr. Clayton reported they were inspired by other arenas as well as buildings on Broadway. The goal is to be authentic to Nashville, compliment the neighborhood while also modernizing the building.

Mr. Clayton also reported that the Capital Asset Management Plan will be submitted to the Sports Authority June 30 and reviewed during the August Sports Authority board meeting.

Amy Bratten, Director of Social Impact and Growth shared an update on the Preds GUIDER (Growth, Understanding, Inclusion, Diversity, Equality & Representation) platform including but not limited to:

- Utilizing eight home games for representing and welcoming diverse fans such as Hispanic Music Heritage Night, Native American Indian Association Charity Night, Black Music Heritage Night and Women's History Night.
- First-ever Music Heritage Night series where four commissioned artists created custom logos representing the Hispanic, LGBTQIA+, API and Black communities. \$57k raised via Nashville Predators Foundation auction benefitting various Middle TN community grants.
- Second annual TSU Smashville Seminar presented by Nissan where 22 TSU Human Performance & Sport Science students attended 'class' at Bridgestone Arena taught by Preds executives, department heads and leaders. Students earned 3 credit hours through TSU.
- The Preds supported the first student-led Fisk University Sports & Entertainment networking & panel by sponsoring and hosting a job fair table and provided two panel speakers and lunch for over 50 student participants. Director Crawford commented that two of her Fisk basketball student athletes were thrilled to participate in the networking event and appreciated the opportunity of hearing from the Preds.

Jennifer Boniecki, Director, Youth Hockey & Fan Development reported on the various hockey programs at Ford Ice Centers-- Antioch, Bellevue & Clarksville. She shared that through the weekly youth programs, over 675 new youth hockey players have been introduced to the game. The Youth League has expanded to over 500 youth and the Spring Middle School Hockey program has grown from 10 teams to 12 teams. The Nashville Junior Preds program creates a pathway for youth to develop and learn to play at all levels and works in conjunction with Total Package Hockey to grow figure skating participation.

Two "Learn Sessions" for women introduced 80 women to the game and Adult Hockey programs (ages 18 and above) broke a record with over 1,500 players. The Ford Ice Centers hosted a myriad of events including Smashville Women's Collegiate Hockey Showcase and four NCAA programs. Also, Smashville Safari Showdown (a pond hockey tournament) was hosted at the Nashville Zoo. Director Pulley commented that his 6-year-old grandson has fallen in love with hockey and the Preds made it easy for him to be a part of the youth program. Vice Chair Duncan also shared that his son is a rising junior and scholastic hockey player at his school. The coaches, Ford Ice Centers and programs are a vibrant and healthy asset to Nashville, shared Vice Chair Duncan.

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Rebecca King, VP of Community Relations, shared a video of various activities celebrating funds raised for 190 non-profits. With over 700 attendees, \$850k was disbursed to various non-profits including Metro Animal Control, East Tennessee Hurricane Relief, Inspiritus (housing for Senior Citizens) and Westminster Home Connection (home renovations for Senior Citizens & persons with disabilities). By the end of the summer, the Nashville Predators Foundation is on track to donate approximately \$2.5m to Middle Tennessee nonprofit organizations. Also, noted Ms. King, the Foundation was recently recognized with an award by the Nashville Fire Department for its strong community initiatives and collaborations.

Ms. King additionally reported on *Every Team for Every Child*, a new initiative in collaboration with the Memphis Grizzlies, NSC, Preds, Sounds, Titans and statewide minor league teams. The mission for the initiative is to increase foster care awareness and work together as a state to address the needs of children, youth and families before, during and after foster care.

Sean Henry, CEO congratulated NSC and Lindsey Paola on their soccer game win yesterday against the NY Red Bulls. He also recognized David Poile, the winningest and longest tenured general manager in NHL history. Mr. Poile recently retired as general manager and now serves as an advisor to the Preds.

Mr. Henry spoke of the excitement in Nashville including construction of the new Titans stadium and plans for renovating Bridgestone Arena. The build-out of Bridgestone Arena will embrace the authenticity of the community and will partner with top performing and high-ranking construction firms. Investing in Nashville's sports facilities is critical to promoting a 30–40-year life expectancy. Madison Square Garden is one of the oldest facilities in the country, however, it is also one of the most modern and legendary venues. Mr. Henry expressed that even if Bridgestone Arena loses several concerts during the renovation phase, it will be worth it to bring a first class building to the city.

Continuing, Mr. Henry noted that inspirations for reconstruction of Bridgestone Arena come from a variety of facilities including modern and ancient arenas. He added that all funding will be covered by users of the facility and not with public dollars.

In closing, Mr. Henry reported that the Preds had the fifth overall and three first round NHL draft picks. Despite the Preds missing the playoffs this season, the next several years will be bright with the new draft picks.

Facility Questions

No questions presented.

Adjourn

Chair Bender announced Metro offices will be closed on Thursday, June 19 in honor of Juneteenth Day. Thus, the next meeting will be moved up one day and is scheduled for 10:30am Wednesday, June 18 at Bridgestone Arena. There being no further questions or business, the Board of Directors meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Valda Barksdale, Metro Nashville Sports Authority

YouTube Link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LE4VSwBE_yE