



THE SPORTS AUTHORITY OF THE
METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE & DAVIDSON COUNTY

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING - MINUTES

NISSAN STADIUM – PRESS BOX

MONDAY, MAY 12 | 12:30N

Attendees

Personnel Committee Members: Cathy Bender (Chair), Jad Duncan (Vice Chair), Aaron McGee (Secretary/Treasurer), Dan Hogan (FC Chair)

Board Members: Victoria Crawford, Tiffany Degrafinreid, Russ Pulley

Staff: Monica Fawknotson (ED), Valda Barksdale, Brandon Little, Melissa Wells, Josh Thomas (Metro Legal), Sam Keen (Metro Legal)

Visitors: Greg McClarin (Metro Finance)

Call to Order

Chair Bender called the Personnel Committee meeting of the Sports Authority to order and welcomed all in attendance.

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

There were no sign-ups for public comments.

Consider Approval of April 8, 2025 Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes

Chair Bender asked if there were questions or comments pertaining to the April 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes. There being none,

Upon a motion made by Director Duncan and seconded by Director Hogan, the Personnel Committee unanimously approved the April 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes.

Executive Director's Annual Performance Evaluation

Chair Bender guided the evaluation discussion utilizing a Performance Rating Sheet of eight areas of responsibilities and six areas of core competencies, each with a potential rating of 1, 2 or 3. Vice Chair Duncan requested clarity regarding the process of review to which Chair Bender suggested that directors submit their completed sheets to staff for scores to be averaged and a compilation of their comments will be assembled into one document and signed by Chair Bender. The committee concurred.

Executive Director Fawknotson shared an overview of her role in monitoring tenant contract compliance for Bridgestone Arena (Predators), First Horizon Park (Sounds), Ford Ice Centers (Predators-Antioch & Bellevue), Geodis Park (NSC) and Nissan Stadium (Titans-the current & under construction stadiums). ED Fawknotson's oversight includes developing processes for ensuring requirements and contractual obligations are met for matters including but not limited to the SEC Tournament (Bridgestone Arena), Capital Asset Management Plan (Bridgestone Arena) and Capital Improvement Plan (First Horizon Park). Other responsibilities include maintaining knowledge of capital improvements and repairs which vary according to facility and league standards, conducting site visits of facilities, investigating security obligations at facilities, building relationships as well as advising the Mayor's office and Metro Council as needed. Director Hogan asked whether there is a process of verification for determining approval of

tenant capital requests to which ED Fawknotson responded the Authority has engaged agencies such as Venue Solutions Group to conduct facility assessments to confirm current condition and need for certain capital repairs and/or improvements.

Vice-Chair Duncan inquired whether solutions have been implemented to resolve the overlapping of activities at the Fairgrounds and GEODIS Park. ED Fawknotson noted it was once a concern, however, there is now continual communication between the two facilities regarding games, concerts, racing, flea market events, etc.

Conversations surrounding the utilization of a budget surplus ensued. Greg McClarin, Metro Finance reported that typically a department will ask to use their fund balance during the January to March budget request season for the upcoming year or during the departmental budget meetings with the Mayor, Finance Director and the Office of Management & Budget. If not during those occasions, the request would have to be part of a Supplemental resolution filing where the surplus funds would have to be authorized by Metro Council for them to be expended. Surplus funds, continued Mr. McClarin, can only be used for Operating Budget items within a department's regular operating budget in Fund 60008. A venue's funds can only be used for the venue they are collected for, e.g. Nissan Stadium funds cannot be used for Bridgestone Arena nor Bridgestone Arena funds for First Horizon Park.

Director Hogan expressed disappointment that board members are unable to communicate with each other outside of meetings, however, he and board members commented on the effective and remarkable communication efforts of ED Fawknotson and staff. The Committee also expressed high regards for ED Fawknotson's skill in professionally navigating political climates. She is respected amongst facility partners and Metro Council, she is knowledgeable and well sourced, she exhibits excellent leadership quality plus her commitment to the board and the city is esteemed.

Consider Approval of Revisions to the Executive Director's Job Description

Chair Bender referred to the Executive Director's Job Description recently updated by staff and a few board members. She indicated that the document (minus a few additions) was reviewed by Metro HR and once approved by the committee, the Job Description will go before the full board for approval and adoption.

Director Hogan questioned whether a strategic planning process for 5- or 10-year goals of the Sports Authority is implemented internally. ED Fawknotson indicated no, however, historically strategizing has been centered around problem solving to ensure aging facilities are safe and in good condition for public enjoyment. She also indicated during a recent review of the charter and bylaws, she observed that both may possibly warrant updating to guide future directives of the department, especially when considering the Sports Authority will celebrate its 30th anniversary in October (established 10/25/95).

Director Duncan requested clarity regarding the Job Description inclusion of the Sports Authority developing and maintaining a relationship with Ohio Valley Conference (OVC) to which ED Fawknotson reminded the committee that the NCAA Division I Athletic Conference is based in Brentwood and having a relationship with the League/ League Commissioner is important. The committee concurred.

Upon a motion made by Director Hogan and seconded by Director McGee, the Personnel Committee unanimously approved the Revisions to the Executive Director's Job Description with stated amendment.

Consider Approval of FY26 Department Compensation

A. Executive Director's Contract

Chair Bender reported that in November 2023 the board entered into a five-year contract with ED Fawknorton which entitles her to automatic Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) and Merit Increases in accordance with the pay plan.

Chair Bender additionally reported that in 2021 the Personnel Committee made an recommendation to increase the Executive Director's pay but, after push back from Metro HR and the previous Mayor's office, the board chose not to give the full amount of the committee's recommendation. The previous Mayor's Office and Metro HR communicated that an analysis of the Executive Director's salary would be performed in the next 1-2 years, but based communication from HR a specific study has not been done. Finance Manager Melissa Wells did report that a compensation study for the Metropolitan Government was recently completed and that new pay plan grades will be released within the next few weeks. Currently there are two grades for Executive Directors, but under the new plan there will be five (DP01-DP05). ED Fawknorton is currently a DP01, the lowest grade.

Chair Bender directed the Committee's attention to email conversations with Metro HR Director Hall who essentially stated that HR will perform its own compensation review specific to the Executive Director position.

Director Hogan directed the Committee's attention to the Comparison of Sports Authority's Executive Director's Salaries document in various states. He noted that even though Nashville is the 21st most populated state, Nashville's Executive Director's salary is 25% below average. He also noted that Nashville's Sports Authority team is performing in an above average manner of overseeing seven facilities in addition to their efforts involved in seeking to bring professional women's sports to the city. He strongly encouraged the Committee to consider an increase in pay for the Executive Director where her salary is commensurate with the average.

The Personnel Committee also discussed supplementing the Executive Director's salary with funding from the Arena Account. A salary recommendation was deferred until the FY26 Budget is approved and will be addressed during the Committee's next meeting.

B. Staff Salary Increases

ED Fawknorton reported that she and staff have reviewed various job classification, job mapping, responsibilities, titles and pay plan categories to ensure staff work is accurately reflected in pay plan categories and titles. Staff will continue to review these over the next few months to be well prepared for conversations with Metro HR and Civil Service Commission when the next budget season approaches. The plan is to present a budget to the Committee in January 2026. Director Pulley expressed his opinion that Brandon Little's salary appears to be extremely low and inquired whether there is a way to increase his pay. ED Fawknorton noted the department is looking at Metro's protocol to increase salaries for both Mr. Little and Ms. Barksdale. While their pay can increase within their designated range, because they are both Open Range Civil Service employees, a different classification would require Civil Service Commission approval.

Consider Approval of Funding for Staff/Board Professional Development

ED Fawknorton reported that last year during her evaluation there were discussions surrounding professional development for the board and staff. Events like Lunch & Learns would allow for topics to be covered outside of board meetings with a level of detail the meetings do not afford. Staff suggested 4% of staff salary be allocated for professional development and \$1,500 designated for Sports Authority Board Lunch and Learn Meetings, with total funding not to exceed \$20k.

Upon a motion made by Director McGee and seconded by Director Duncan, the Personnel Committee unanimously approved the authorization of funding for staff and board development in an amount not to exceed \$20,000.

Adjourn

Chair Bender noted that Personnel Committee recommendations with financial implications will go to the Finance Committee for action and to the full board for approval on Thursday, May 15, at 9:30am and 10:30am respectively.

The Personnel Committee will reconvene in early July following the passage of the Metro budget at which time the salary for the Executive Director will be determined and her contract will be revised. Staff salary increases will also be discussed.

There being no other business the committee adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Valda Barksdale, The Metro Sports Authority

Audio File Path:

P-Drive-Sports Authority\SA BOARD\Personnel Committee\Committee Meetings\2025 May Personnel Committee Meeting\5.12.2025 PC Audio Recording