



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

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE | MEETING MINUTES**

MONDAY JUNE 8, 2026 | 11:10AM | 150 2<sup>ND</sup> AVE N, NASHVILLE, 37201 CONFERENCE ROOMS 215 & 216

**ATTENDEES**

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:** Dan Hogan (Chair), Jad Duncan (Vice-Chair), Aaron McGee (Treasurer/Secretary), Kendell Poole

**STAFF:** Monica Fawknorton (President), Brandon Little, Melissa Wells, Joshua Thomas (Metro Legal)

**VISITORS:** Greg McClarin (Metro Finance), Natasha Dowell (Metro HR)

***Call to order***

Chair Hogan called the Personnel Committee meeting 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 Comment.

***Consider approval of July 16, 2025 Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes***

Chair Hogan asked if there were questions or comments pertaining to the July 16, 2025, Personnel Committee meeting minutes. There being none,

**Upon a motion made by Vice Chair Duncan and seconded by Director Poole, the Personnel Committee unanimously approved the July 16, 2025, meeting minutes.**

***FY27 Department Compensation***

- A. President's Annual Performance Review and Consideration of Compensation – The committee conducted an open discussion for the annual performance review of President Monica Fawknorton. President Fawknorton highlighted a few accomplishments during the past year and goals for the upcoming year:
- i. The Sports Authority commissioned a comprehensive facility condition assessment for First Horizon Park. The study will provide a long-term roadmap for capital improvements and help inform future discussions regarding sustainable funding mechanisms for facility maintenance and capital expenditures.
  - ii. The Authority approved and advanced funding for a new scoreboard at First Horizon Park using available Authority resources, reducing reliance on Metro's capital budget and supporting continued facility improvements.
  - iii. The Authority invested in security-related infrastructure and equipment, including Meridian Mobile Barriers (vehicle arresting devices), to enhance public safety and protect Authority-owned facilities.
  - iv. The inaugural Industry Playbook initiative through partnerships with Metro Nashville Public Schools, Bridgestone Arena and GEODIS Park has been a success. The program helps to build an industry pipeline by providing high school students with exposure to careers in sports, entertainment, venue management, hospitality and related industries.
  - v. Efforts to improve board member onboarding and education, helping them better understand the Authority's mission, responsibilities and governance structure is a priority for the

- Authority. New board member Director Poole expressed his appreciation of President Fawknottson's one-on-one engagement with the new directors as well as the new members orientation; both were extremely helpful and relevant.
- vi. Some future priorities and organizational goals include: 1) Using the First Horizon Park facility condition assessment to develop a long-term strategy for funding capital improvements (e.g. seat user fees) and preserving the ballpark as a premier public asset. 2) Monitoring and reviewing potential lease amendments, exterior modifications and other Authority approvals associated with the planned Bridgestone Arena renovation project. Chair Hogan questioned whether a hotel built on the property would become an asset of the Sports Authority to which President Fawknottson noted discussions will be scheduled to better understand that question as well as other uncertainties. Director McGee questioned the Predators lease term to which Madam President noted it is a 30-year lease expiring in 2049. Director Poole questioned whether the selection of Bridgestone Arena employees is under the purview of the Authority to which Madam President stated it is not. 3) Continuing oversight of the New Nissan Stadium project, preparing for demolition of the existing stadium, seat salvage operations, memorabilia sale opportunities plus transition planning following the Titans' final season in the current stadium.

The committee reviewed Monica Fawknottson's employment agreement and discussed options for extending her contract beyond its current term. Committee members expressed strong support for President Fawknottson's leadership, professionalism, responsiveness and commitment to board engagement. They also emphasized the importance of continuity as the Authority advances several major initiatives, including the New Nissan Stadium project, East Bank development activities and preparations related to future major events. The Committee expressed support for the Mayor's recommended budget for Metro employees to receive a 1.7% across the board salary increase plus a 2% merit increase which will be funded by Metro Finance.

**Upon a motion made by Director McGee and seconded by Vice Chair Duncan, the Personnel Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Board of Directors extend Monica Fawknottson's employment agreement by an additional two years, extending the contract through October 31, 2031.**

Typos were discovered in the Employment Agreement section 1.3 Term and in Amendment No. 1 to the Agreement section 3 incorrectly stating that the term shall expire October 31, 2028. Recitals of both the Amendment and Personnel Committee July 16, 2025 meeting minutes reflect the correct date of October 31, 2029; the incorrect dates will be corrected.

- B. Staff evaluation reports – For the importance of team continuity, Chair Hogan expressed his desire to adjust staff compensation in a fashion similar to what was completed for the President's compensation last year. President Fawknottson shared that staff evaluations were completed last month and further expressed the great talent and camaraderie that staff brings to the department. The committee reviewed compensation packages for Valda Barksdale and Brandon Little who fall under Metro Civil Service compensation guidelines. Natasha Dowell, Metro HR noted that should salary adjustment considerations fall outside the Civil Service range, the Authority is required to submit written justification to defend the request and must have funds available to support and sustain the increase. HR has a methodology that it uses to approve/deny the request, even if the increase is to be supported by Authority funds. President Fawknottson recommended a salary merit increase of 6% for Valda Barksdale and 10% for Brandon Little based on expanded responsibilities, market considerations and evolvement of Mr. Little's responsibilities.

After much discussion and in consideration of increased responsibilities and employee retention considerations, Chair Hogan recommended a 10% increase for Ms. Barksdale and 14% for Mr. Little. President Fawknorton expressed concern with those numbers as it would place both staff members at and/or near their maximum salary for next year and subsequently disallow future increase. Additionally, this would require requesting a change of classification from Metro HR and the Civil Service Commission. The Committee inquired about the possibility of making a job classification change given Mr. Little's role has expanded. President Fawknorton stated that the Authority has funding sources to support the increase and can move forward in a strategic manner that avoids adverse implications with Metro HR guidelines and in consideration of Metro's 1.5% across the board budget reduction for departments. Directors McGee and Poole stated that moving forward with 6% for Ms. Barksdale and 10% for Mr. Little sounds more justifiable in terms of defending the increase. Vice Chair Duncan recommended an 8% increase for Valda Barksdale and 12% for Brandon Little. Following discussions, the committee suggested a 6% merit increase for Ms. Barksdale and 10% for Mr. Little. The suggested recommendation is subject to review by the Finance Committee for further adjustment consideration, evaluation of funding and implementation considerations before final Board action.

**Upon a motion made by Vice Chair Duncan and seconded by Director McGee, the Personnel Committee voted unanimously to recommend a salary merit increase of 6% for Valda Barksdale and 10% for Brandon Little with the recommendation to be further reviewed by the Finance Committee.**

- C. Continued funding for employees whose compensation comes from outside the Metro General Fund  
The committee also discussed continued funding mechanisms for employee compensation supported through non-General Fund revenue sources, including Authority-controlled funding streams. President Fawknorton indicated that a Resolution in support of Metro's final merit increase recommendations will be brought before the Finance Committee and Board of Directors for Melissa Wells and Bob Lackey's salaries.

### ***Adjourn***

The Personnel Committee recommendations will go before the Board of Directors for final approval at its June 18, 2026 meeting. With no further business to discuss, the Personnel Committee concluded its meeting.

### **Audio Recording:**

P:\SA BOARD\Personnel Committee\Committee Meetings\2026 June 8 Personnel Committee\6.08.2025  
Personnel Committee Audio Recording