

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
REGIONAL METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF OMAHA
2222 Cuming Street
Omaha, Nebraska, 68102
April 24, 2025
8:30 a.m.**

MINUTES

The Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha Board met on Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 8:30 a.m., in person at the Authority's Administration Building, 2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102, and virtually. Notice was published in the Omaha Daily Record on April 18, 2025, in advance of the meeting. For the benefit of the public in attendance, a copy of the Open Meetings Law is posted in the meeting room, and the Agenda is published on the display in the facility lobby. The following were in attendance at the meeting:

Authority Board:

Mr. Curt Simon, Board Chair
Mr. Daniel Padilla, Vice Chair
Mr. Josh Corrigan
Ms. Clarice Dombeck
Ms. Yanira Garcia
Mr. Tim Lonergan
Mr. Cornelius Williams

Authority Staff:

L. Cencic, CEO/Executive Director
K. Pendland, Deputy Executive Officer
D. Grant, Human Capital and Talent Development Director
E. Simpson, Legal Director (Virtual)
W. Clingman, Finance Director
J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager (Absent)
A. Johnson, Civil Rights & Inclusion Director (Virtual)
J. Beverage, Maintenance Director (Virtual)
N. Ebat, Sr. Manager of Communications & Community Relations
S. Perry, Executive Administrator & Board Secretary

Others Present:

Other Metro staff
Members of the public

Metro connects people, places, and opportunities through quality transit services.

Agenda Item #1: Call to Order at 8:31 am.

Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Omaha Daily Record on April 18, 2025. For the benefit of the public in attendance, a copy of the Open Meeting Law is posted in the meeting room, and the Agenda is published on the display located in the facility lobby and online at ometro.com.

Agenda Item #2: Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The first order of business is the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.

- a. Regular Meeting: March 27, 2025

Motioned by Lonergan; Seconded by Garcia

ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, (Williams Absent), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #3: General Public Comment Period

This is an opportunity for members of the audience to be heard regarding topics related to the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha, not on the agenda, for a maximum of 2 minutes.

There were none.

Agenda Item #4: Administrative Report

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic began her report with the ridership numbers. In March, Metro carried 282,490 trips, which is a 7% increase from last year. K-12 Rides Free Program carried 49,373 in March, with over half a million trips this school year and a total of 1,609,252 since its inception.

In the past month, Metro has been busy with public events. A wonderful celebration was held for the Wheel Appeal award. Metro presented the winning design of the Wheel Appeal student art contest to a 15-year-old from Bennington Middle School at the time of the contest entry, named Avery Hightower. Her art celebrates the fact that everyone has differences, and those are things that should be celebrated. Miss Hightower's art will be wrapped on a Metro bus, which the community will have an opportunity to see traveling on various routes throughout the city. Directors Padilla and Corrigan both attended the event.

Ms. Cencic reported her attendance at a documentary and forum event, taking a look at how car-centric Omaha is, and examining the harm it brings to people and the city. The documentary went on to look at opportunities to address that moving forward, and a look at the benefits a more transit-centric approach can bring to the city. Directors Garcia and Dombeck were both interviewed and sat on the panel to dialogue with the audience.

Metro assisted the Omaha Refugee Task Force with planning and coordinating a transportation conference, largely focused on solutions for refugees in Nebraska. Ms. Cencic informed the Board that she was the opening keynote speaker for the conference, focusing on the need for transit-supportive land use and coordinated planning efforts. Members of Metro's planning team also presented and led a workshop guiding participants through designing their own transit route with a budget so they could get a feel for the considerations and choices that need to be made when putting together a transportation system.

Metro recently held its Safety Awards Banquet, with 106 employees earning safety awards during this yearly celebration of those with safe driving records. Metro also combines this with the Annual Employee Appreciation Day, which celebrates all employees. Ms. Cencic thanked Directors Padilla and Corrigan for attending this event as well. This celebrates Metro's safe drivers but also employees who are safe in other roles.

Ms. Cencic reported on the plans for the College World Series. Metro will be extending where the green route serves and will go from Cuming to Dodge while circling between 14th & 17th. After the event, there will be an additional ORBT bus stationed at 10th & Capitol, it will make one stop at the 15th & Dodge ORBT station before going directly to the Westroads Transit Center park and ride.

Metro staff are still working on finalizing the plans for the Memorial Park event, but it is currently looking similar to what was done over the last two years. Metro will be providing extra buses staged at 60th & Dodge after the concert. This helps the neighborhood around the park with traffic management and helps get people where they need to go quickly. In previous years, this has been successful in moving people around.

In summary, staff are working to implement strategic goals that are found in MetroNext with an important emphasis on service improvement, quality of service for customers, and improved coordination with partner agencies.

Ms. Cencic concluded her report and opened the floor to the Board for questions.

The Board asked if the 7% increase in ridership in March was attributed to the weather.

Ms. Cencic did agree that yes, the favorable weather this year did play a part; however, over the past two years, she indicated she has seen a rise in ridership overall.

There were no further questions or discussion.

Agenda Item #5: Administrative Reports

Administration/Human Resources

(D. Grant)

Mr. Grant provided the March recruitment report. Metro welcomed six new hires and identified seven candidates for April. Of the six new hires, four were bus operators in training, one paratransit operator in training, and there was an internal promotion to Field Supervisor. Congratulations, Jacob Palen.

Mr. Grant further reported that Metro is not only celebrating new hires but also those who have been with Metro for quite some time. Specifically, those who have been at Metro for ten plus years.

Emanuel (Eman) Agbelety, Custodial Supervisor for 10 years, and Evan Schweitz, Sr. Planning Manager, for 15 years, this spring. Congratulations on their longevity here at Metro.

Mr. Grant concluded his report and opened the floor to the Board for questions. There were no further questions or discussion.

Programs/Operation

(K. Pendland)

Mr. Pendland reported that customer service numbers remained steady in March, with 10,719 calls answered, but the service level dropped slightly to an overall average of 85%.

Fixed route revenue hours in March were 23,841, which reflects a slight decrease in service delivery by 654 hours compared to 2024. Passenger trips, however, were at 282,490, which led to a route productivity level of 12.0 passengers per revenue hour across all fixed routes, the highest reported over the last six years for March, and the highest seen overall since November of last year.

On-time performance averaged 4.5% early departure, 15% late departure, with an on-time departure rate of 80%.

Service interruptions accounted for 2.6% of our revenue hours, with most of those interruptions due to operator availability. The 9% vehicle availability (or mechanical as seen in the report) is mostly due to inclement weather situations where high winds resulted in some vehicle types not being available for service use.

For paratransit operations, a total of 6,882 trips were completed in March, which is an increase of nearly 144 trips from 2024. The average paratransit passengers per revenue hour was 1.9, which is the highest productivity level over the past 5 years.

Lastly, Mr. Pendland reported that the Metro's Safety Awards Banquet was held on April 17th, wherein 106 awards for safety, including awards for employees with 10 years plus safety achievements, were presented. Mr. Pendland congratulated all the awardees on their dedication to safety and their success in furthering Metro's mission. He also offered special thanks to Metro's communications and human resources teams for all their hard work in making this event special for everyone.

Mr. Pendland concluded his report and opened the floor to the Board for questions.

There were no further questions or discussion.

Communications

(N. Ebat)

Ms. Ebat reported on the 12 new items in the media from seven mostly local outlets. The majority were about the Wheel Appeal Reveal and Nebraska Public Transit Week. There is a local traffic reporter who has taken an interest in learning more about Metro, she's starting to feature some aspects of service during her live hits in the morning. The previous day, this reporter did a piece on microtransit.

Metro also partnered with the Omaha Public Library to host a book reading on one of its buses during National Library Week. A class of preschoolers participated, with library staff leading a story time that included several books and bus-themed songs. Students had an opportunity to ask questions of the bus driver.

Ms. Ebat provided updates on additional events held in March. Metro's Community Mobility Specialist hosted two train-the-trainer sessions, one of which reached capacity. The CRI Director and Procurement Manager led a webinar titled "Demystifying Doing Business with Metro," focusing on the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program and how businesses can prepare a bid for Metro projects.

Staff also engaged with students at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), including an introduction to urban planning class, where the discussion centered on Metro's transition to a regional authority, and a sustainability class that heard from two members of Metro's planning team.

Metro welcomed students from the Masterpiece Academy (ages 6–16) for a field trip. Students toured Metro's facilities and met staff from various departments to learn about operations behind the scenes. A key takeaway for many was realizing the extensive work required to keep buses and vans on the streets.

Metro also presented at the Common Senses meeting, where the CRI Director spoke with a coalition of nonprofits and service providers supporting people with disabilities. The presentation included an overview of Metro's services, factors affecting service reliability, and a preview of upcoming public participation meetings focused on MOBY service.

Ms. Ebat concluded by announcing that Metro will participate in Earth Day Omaha on Saturday at Elmwood Park from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Metro will have an electric bus on display near the food trucks.

Ms. Ebat concluded her report and opened the floor to the Board for questions.

Board members asked whether Do Space, previously located at 72nd and Dodge, would be relocating to the new library currently under construction at that site. They also inquired whether ride numbers under the Metropolitan Community College (MCC) Pass Program had decreased due to diverting to the Abrahams Library during construction.

Ms. Ebat responded that, to her understanding, Do Space will be housed within the new library. Metro's communications team is coordinating with the Omaha Public Library to ensure service information for that location is accessible and well-communicated to the public. She also noted that an ORBT station and Route 18 serve the area, with a stop currently paused due to construction that will reopen once the work is completed.

Ms. Cencic and Ms. Ebat added that they would review ridership data but noted that MCC's Pass Program now utilizes UMO rather than paper tickets for fare payment.

There were no further questions or discussion.

Agenda Item #6: Resolution 2025-12 Request Approval of Fiscal Year 2024 Audited Financials

(W. Clingman)

Staff sought approval of the 2024 audited financial statements. Eide Baily audited Metro's financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2024, and produced the audit report. The 2024 audit report was reviewed with Metro's Finance/Procurement Committee prior to the Board meeting.

Eide Baily's Nathan Edelman presented to the Board their findings from the audit. Financial statements were fairly stated and clean, no internal control deficiencies were identified and no federal compliance findings on were found.

The Board invited public comments on this resolution. There were none.

The Board asked for confirmation that the audit was clean and requested additional explanation regarding the early disposal of inoperable assets, as well as clarification on the decline in state funding over recent years.

Mr. Clingman explained that several buses are being disposed of prior to the end of its useful life due to accident-related damage where repair costs exceed vehicle value. Metro received approval from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for early disposal.

Ms. Cencic noted that Metro must seek FTA authorization before proceeding with such actions. She added that two Alexander Dennis vehicles faced significant supply chain issues, making it difficult to source parts. In some cases, Metro was able to use parts from inoperable buses to return seven or eight other vehicles to service.

Regarding state funding, it was noted that support from the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) has declined annually since Mr. Clingman's tenure began. This decrease is outside of Metro's control. When budgeting, Mr. Clingman takes a conservative approach and does not overestimate revenue. Additionally, a sizable amount of state funding from 2023 remains pending payment.

There was no further Board discussion necessary. The Board approved unanimously.

Motioned by Lonergan; Seconded by Padilla

ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES**Agenda Item #7: Resolution 2025-13 Request Approval of Fuel Contracts** (L. Cencic)

On April 10, 2025, Metro determined that obtaining bids for diesel and gasoline fuel due to a decrease in fuel market prices was prudent. Metro's current contract with Agriland will end in August 2025.

Metro requested bids for both diesel and gasoline for a six (6) month period beginning on September 1, 2025. Metro received five (5) bids for these contracts. The low, responsive, compliant bid for ultra-low sulfur diesel was from Petroleum Traders at \$2.0409 per gallon for 195,000 gallons. The low, responsive, compliant bid for gasoline was also from Petroleum Traders at \$1.6995 per gallon for 72,000 gallons.

The CEO/Executive Director advised the Board Chair, Mr. Simon, who agreed to award these contracts. Both proposed contracts are below the amount budgeted for fuel for 2025. Metro's current diesel contract, which will expire in August 2025, is \$2.298/gallon. Metro's current contract for gasoline that expires in August is \$2.0225 per gallon.

Staff requested full Board concurrence for two contract awards to Petroleum Traders in accordance with Metro's Procurement Policy. The contracts with Petroleum Traders will be in the amount of \$397,975.50 for the ultra-low sulfur diesel purchase and \$122,364 for the gasoline contract.

Petroleum Traders will be paid upon invoicing after delivery, which is spread out incrementally throughout the contract period.

The Board invited public comments on this resolution. There were none.

The Board asked Ms. Cencic why this purchase required immediate Board approval by the Board Chair.

Ms. Cencic explained that it's outlined in the procurement policy. As Metro goes out to obtain requests for bids or quotes, they can change by the hour or hours, so a decision is needed quickly. This allows savings from Metro as opposed to buying fuel on the spot. Board Chair approval allows an immediate response, but then it is presented to the full Board for approval and transparency.

There was no further Board discussion necessary. The Board approved unanimously.

Motioned by Lonergan; Seconded by Garcia
ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #8: Board Chair Report (C. Simon)

Board Chair Curt Simon had nothing to report for this meeting.

Agenda Item #9: Date, Time, and Place of Next Board Meeting

Thursday, May 22, 2025, at 8:30 a.m.
 Authority's Administrative Building

Agenda Item #10 Adjournment at 9:04 am.

Motioned by Corrigan; Seconded by Lonergan
ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, (Williams Abstained), MOTION CARRIES