

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING WITHOUT A QUORUM
REGIONAL METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF OMAHA
2222 Cuming Street
Omaha, Nebraska, 68102
May 23, 2024
8:30 a.m.**

MINUTES

The Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha Board met on Thursday, May 23, 2024, 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 May 17, 2024, 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 persons were in attendance at the meeting:

Authority Board:

Mr. Daniel Lawse, Chair
Mr. Othello Meadows, Vice Chair (Absent)
Mr. Jay Lund (Absent)
Ms. Amy Haase
Ms. Julia Plucker (Absent)

Authority Staff:

L. Cencic, CEO/Executive Director
I. Maldonado, Deputy Executive Officer (Absent)
D. Grant, Human Capital, and Talent Development Director
E. Simpson, Legal Director (Virtually)
K. Pendland, IT Director
W. Clingman, Finance Director
D. Kelsey, Operations Director (Virtually)
J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager
R. Sherping, Safety Director
A. Johnson, Civil Rights & Inclusion Director (Virtually)
J. Beverage, Maintenance Director (Virtually)
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.

Unapproved Board Minutes

Quorum was not present for the Board to take action. Only administrative reports were heard at this meeting.

Agenda Item #1 Call to Order at 8:32 am

The Notice of the Regular Meeting was initially published in the Omaha Daily Record on May 17, 2024. 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 #3 General Public Comment Period

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

No public comments were presented to the Board.

Agenda Item #4 Administrative Report

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic reported that Metro will be partnering with Creighton University for a new pass program beginning on July 1st in the Omaha area. The pass program allows Creighton students to ride the bus for free. Creighton University joins UNO, MCC, and College of St. Mary's in this program.

Metro will not operate a stand-alone shuttle during the College World Series in June. ORBT, Routes 4 and 13 will run an hour after each game to provide connections including to the park and ride at the Westroads Transit Center.

Ms. Cencic attended the State of the City as well as the International Investors Reception as a part of Berkshire/Hathaway weekend. She reported having conversations with the President of the Omaha Chamber and briefly with the Governor who acknowledged the importance of transit in Omaha.

Metro hosted The Code Circle meeting along with Alicia Johnson, Director of Civil Rights and Inclusion on the topics of inclusion and equality for our customers and employees.

In April, the K-12 Rides Free Program has now surpassed 1 million (1,042,500) rides. Overall ridership in April was 300,000 with a weekly average of 68,000. This was approximately 100,000 more rides than in April of 2023.

Agenda Item #5 Administrative Reports:

Administration/Human Resources

(D. Grant)

In April, Metro recruited 15 new employees. Of those, there were: eight bus operators, one paratransit operator, three mechanics, one custodian, a transit field supervisor, and a network security technician.

Mr. Grant further reported what Metro and his HR Department are doing to retain and engage with Metro staff. Partnering with the Safety Department, HR held the Safety Recognition Banquet last month in conjunction with Public Transit Week. This was to not only celebrate those who had a safe driving history but also for all employees to come together to socialize. A newsletter was created to highlight safety award recipients and employees this quarter.

Staff also participated in the Cinco de Mayo parade.

Mr. Grant concluded his report and opened the floor to the Board for questions. There were none.

Programs/Operation

On May 19th, Metro implemented new fixed route schedule changes. The most notable changes were the frequency of routes 13 and 15 to a 30-minute frequency. As of May 20th, the number of Route 16 changed to 106 and it is now called the Eppley Connector. The number of Route 98 changed to 120 and it is called the North Park Connector. Other than the numbers and new names, these two routes have not changed. This has been published on the website.

The new paratransit schedule also began on May 19th. This schedule increases the size of the Extraboard, to allow for the flexibility to address increased evening and weekend demand during the summer and help cover operator vacations.

Our fleet maintenance team continues to experience challenges with part supply chain issues affecting timely bus repairs and the availability of buses for service. Average part delays range between 45 and 90 days on most parts. The Fleet Maintenance Director and the Procurement Supervisor continue to call vendors and the bus manufacturer to expedite the delivery of bus parts. Currently, 13 buses are waiting on parts down from 16 last week. Five buses are being repaired by external vendors. Engine overhauls are being done on four buses internally, and seven buses are awaiting body repairs.

Operator attendance also continues to improve. The number of service interruptions associated with not having Operators has decreased from 8.6 percent in January to 3.8 percent in April. Thanks to the hard work of Metro's HR, Operations, and Training teams, six operators graduated last Friday and were added to the list of available Operators totaling 161 who are presently driving. Ten new operators continue to be in training and three new Operators started their employment on May 20th.

During Metro's May safety meeting, the Director of Operations discussed topics related to motorcycle safety, hot weather conditions, heat stroke, upcoming safety training, security at Metro's facilities, and other safety-related topics.

The week of June 10th Metro will be hosting a Transit Safety Institute's Bus System Safety course. 12 Metro staff from Maintenance, Operations, Safety, Training, BG&E, and Custodial will be participating in the class. 16 transit employees from 14 other outside agencies are also scheduled to be in attendance.

The College World Series will be taking place between June 14 and June 24th. For this year Metro will not be providing a circulator shuttle; instead, we will be promoting the use of the ORBT route. The ORBT station at 8th & Farnam will be closed and we will add a temporary stop at 10th & Capitol. The Omaha Police Department has agreed to assist buses making the left (southbound) turn from Capitol to 10th, which should improve operations compared to prior years. We will adjust detours on Routes 4 and 13 and will extend the ending times during game day weekends.

On October 19th, the Omaha Airport Authority will be conducting a Federal Aviation Administration-required Triennial full-scale exercise. Historically, their full-scale exercise involves Federal, State, and local emergency responders, hospitals, non-governmental organizations, transit, and approximately 75 volunteer victims. Metro will be assisting with the provision of one or two buses for the transportation of the various participants during the event.

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

Unapproved Board Minutes

Board Chair Lawse asked how the future looks with bus parts and maintenance delays. Mr. Sherping informed the Board that with the parts delays, Metro has been looking locally for the parts. However, it's difficult to gauge when the supply chain delays will end.

Once this class graduates, Maintenance is nearly 100% filled for the first time in years which will help with bus repairs.

The Board Chair also asked if Metro provided any emergency response support to the Elkhorn area.

Ms. Cencic shared that while Metro did not assist in Elkhorn a bus was deployed further south during the recent weather emergency and used as a warming center for emergency rescue workers.

Communications

(N. Ebat)

Ms. Ebat reported that the Communications team has been working diligently on sharing information with the public regarding the route title and service changes that have occurred over the past few weeks. Physical posters were placed inside the buses to better reach the community as well as displayed at various businesses, nonprofits, and service centers along the routes.

Digital, social media, and notifications were used and at the time of the Board report, no issues or complaints had been received only questions asking for the reason for the changes.

Metro has been working with a service learning class at UNO over the past semester. The purpose has been to use transit to assist others with reading. Metro will work the remainder of the year with UNO and something will be on the buses that will link back to the project.

The Communications and Operations teams have been prepping for CWS and the Memorial Park Concert. ORBT will be available during both events to ensure transportation.

Metro will be busy over the summer with events. Beyond the two mentioned, Metro will also be involved with the MidWest Fest formally Hutchfest, Juneteenth Parade, and Freedom Fest for June.

Wheel Appeal applications are still being accepted. Middle and High school students qualify for this contest to have art displayed on a Metro bus. Students can apply at ometro.com/wheelappeal.

Ms. Ebat concluded her report and opened the floor to the Board for questions. There were none.

Agenda Item #8 Board Chair Report

(D. Lawse)

Since a quorum was not present for the Board of Directors, resolutions were moved to next month. The Operations Committee and Planning & Policy Committee continue to meet but did not have a report as of today.

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

Thursday, June 27, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.
Authority's Administrative Building

Agenda Item #10 Adjournment

Quorum was not present and the meeting ended at 8:53 am.

No business was conducted during the meeting due to a quorum not being present. The following agenda items were moved to the June Board Meeting.

Agenda Item #2 Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Approval of minutes from the previous meeting.

- a. Regular Meeting: April 25, 2024

Agenda Item #6 Resolution: 2024-16 Request Appointment of New Member to Salaried Pension Retirement Committee

(W. Clingman)

Agenda Item #7 Resolution: 2024-17 Request Appointment of New Member to Hourly Pension Retirement Committee

(W. Clingman)