

Meeting Minutes – April 22, 2021

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF OMAHA
2222 Cuming Street
Omaha, Nebraska, 68102
April 22, 2021
MINUTES

The Transit Authority of the City of Omaha Board met in Regular Session on Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 8:30 a.m., virtually and in person at the Authority’s Administration Building, 2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102, due to COVID-19. Notice was given in advance of the meeting by publication in the Omaha World Herald. 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. Jay Lund, Chair
- Ms. Julia Plucker, Vice Chair (Virtual)
- Ms. Amy Haase, Secretary/Treasurer
- Mr. Daniel Lawse
- Mr. Othello Meadows (Absent)

Authority Staff:

- L. Cencic, CEO/Executive Director
- E. Simpson, Legal/Human Resource Director (Absent)
- D. Finken, Finance Director
- D. Jameson, Safety Director
- K. Shadden, Operations Director
- L. Barritt, Marketing Director
- G. Bradley, Maintenance Director
- K. Pendland, IT Director
- J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager
- J. Rumery, Grant Administrator (Absent)
- Rebecca Mahr, Recording Secretary (Absent)

Others Present:

- Other Metro staff
- Members of the public

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Agenda Item #1: Call to order

Mr. Lund called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. For the benefit of the public in attendance, a copy of the Open Meetings Law has been posted in the meeting room and the Agenda is published on the display in the facility lobby.

Agenda Item #2: Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

Mr. Lund entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the Board Meeting on March 25, 2021.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Ms. Haase

**ROLL CALL:
UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

Agenda Item #3:

L. Cencic informed the Board members that the Request to be Heard submitted by J. Boncordero was rescinded.

Agenda Item #4a: Administrative Reports

(L. Cencic for E. Simpson)

- Metro is excited to welcome C. Distefano as the new Finance Director.
- Metro continues to recruit for open staff positions. There are a number of open positions in all departments.
- Metro has requested and was granted additional time to submit information for the workers' compensation self-insurance renewal. Materials will be submitted once the annual financial audit is finalized.
- The federal mask mandate for public transit facilities is still in effect. Metro has created a form for riders to apply for a medical exception to this mandate. Beginning May 1, riders will need a special ID card to board the bus without a mask. The application can be submitted in person, via email, or via fax. Metro is working to make reasonable accommodations easily accessible to riders who need a mask exemption.

Agenda Item # 4b: Administrative Reports

(D. Jameson)

This past month, we have continued with staff training across many departments.

New model training continues with the new 2000 series NF buses. Training will commence the first week of May on the new school pass program, that J. Rose will outline here shortly. Allison Transmission is now scheduled to train Metro maintenance staff on Wednesday, May 12th. Refresher ORBT training continues, with emphasis on station parking and distracted driving to name a few. We are working with Hexagon Agility, our CNG bus tank manufacturer to perform on-site CNG tank inspections and assist us to develop a training program for staff. We continue to investigate additional training opportunities for all Metro staff in the future.

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Bus Operator Barriers. Nearly 75% of the NF buses are now installed with the permanent barrier, that are nearly identical to the ORBT buses. We will move over to the Gillig bus fleet next followed by the AD buses.

Pre-production process for our 3 40' electric NF buses continues. The buses remain on schedule for delivery Q4, 2021, with the first bus now arriving the week after Thanksgiving followed by one bus for each of the next two weeks. We continue working with our Engineering Team along with NF Engineering Team, so that Metro is prepared to support the electrical charging and infrastructure of these buses.

Throughout this month, operational administration staff remotely attended refresher Assault Awareness and Prevention for Transit training facilitated by NTI Rutgers University. This virtual class was in a train-the-trainer format.

The “Think Transit” Conference is next week. This is an annual event sponsored by Trapeze, which is our operational software company. Attending will be E. Koebel, W. Shumate and V. Cendejas. This will be a great opportunity to connect with industry peers and share experiences. This conference is usually attended by over 500 transit professionals each year. Metro has been working with Trapeze in their next version of OPS, our dispatching software. The program is called OPS Customer Development Program, whereby Trapeze solicits its client for suggestions on future product development and feature enhancements.

Metro’s COVID-19 mitigation continues with building and vehicle fleet sanitation every day. Starting at 2:00 A.M. all vehicles are cleaned prior to the beginning of each day. The cleaning includes wiping down the entire operator’s compartment, treating the passenger fabric seat inserts, wiping down all doors, handrails, modesty panels. Buses continue to be traded out mid-day, weather conditions permitting. Our daily building mitigation efforts include fogging all areas within the administration areas, wiping down hard surfaces, doors and door handles, hand railing, all common areas and bathrooms. All ORBT stations & stops have received a top-to-bottom, deep power wash and sanitation bath. Metro continues to clean all ORBT stations & stops on a regular basis.

Finally, I wish to report that G. Bradley is retiring after nearly 21 years of dedicated service to Metro. Mr. Bradley started his career in the Maintenance Department as a mechanic, was promoted to a “Red Shirt” Supervisor, and finally Mr. Bradley was promoted to Maintenance Director in early 2013. His last day here will be next Friday, 4-30-2021. Thank you, Mr. Bradley, for your dedication, effort, and service here at Metro! We wish you all the best in your retirement.

This concludes my report.

Agenda Item # 4c: Administrative Reports

(J. Rose)

Metro continues to see an increase in followers across all social media platforms. Much of the previous month was focused on MetroNEXT Round 1, which featured a two-week engagement window. We hosted 3 virtual meetings during the engagement window, utilizing paid ads across all social media platforms, a KIOS underwriting campaign, community partnerships, and other methods. We hosted nearly 100 active participants at the meetings; we also shared a recording of the meetings on KPAO and online. Surveys from the meetings indicated that social media was the primary source of information regarding the meetings, though the radio campaign was also effective. We also used surveys to gauge participant response, both online and in print, which was distributed to local libraries and other community partners. We got more than 800 total engagements across all methods and will release a summary in the weeks to come.

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Agenda Item #5: Request Approval of CY 2020 Audited Financials
(D. Finken)

Staff is seeking approval of the 2020 audited financial statements. Metro's Finance Committee met with the representative from Hamilton Associates, Lauren Cencic, and Denise Finken to review the December 31, 2020 Audited Financial Statements prior to today. A copy of the audit report is included in the Board Packet. Hamilton Associates performed the audit and produced the audit report. The Finance Committee will make their recommendations to the Board concerning approval of the 2020 Audited Financials.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Ms. Haase; Second by Mr. Lawse

ROLL CALL:
UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #6: Request Approval of Amended CY 2021 Standing Purchase Orders
(D. Finken)

Staff is requesting approval of the amended standing purchase orders that are in excess of \$25,000.00 for CY 2021. The Purchasing Order Policy stipulates that the Board shall approve all Standing Purchase Orders exceeding \$25,000.00 on an annualized basis. The Board approved the original CY 2021 Standing Purchase Orders at the December 2020 Board Meeting.

As a part of this resolution, staff is requesting to increase the standing purchase order for Connolly Customizing for snow removal and shelter repair by \$220,000.00 to a total standing purchase order for an amount not to exceed \$400,000. This increase is due to higher than anticipated snow falls this year and the addition of the ORBT stations which required snow removal services. All other standing purchase orders remain unchanged from what was approved by the Board in December 2020.

A copy of the amended CY 2021 Standing Purchase Orders showing the increased amount for Connolly Customizing is included in the Board Packet. This item was sent to the Procurement Committee for their review prior to the Board Meeting.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Ms. Plucker; Second by Ms. Haase

ROLL CALL:
UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #7: Election of Officers and Board Committee Assignments
(J. Lund)

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Annually, the Board of Directors nominates and elects a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and identifies committee assignments. The proposed Board committees are Finance/Procurement, Planning & Policy, and Operations. No committee membership shall constitute a quorum.

Nominations were opened by slate.

For the position of Chair, Mr. Lund nominated Ms. Haase. For the position of Vice Chair, Ms. Plucker nominated Mr. Meadows.

Board committee positions were also discussed and decided as follows:

Finance Committee – Ms. Plucker and Mr. Meadows

Operations Committee – Mr. Lund and Mr. Lawse

Policy Committee – Ms. Haase and Mr. Lawse

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Ms. Plucker

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #8: Administrative Report

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that today, Metro is formally announcing a one-year pilot program that will allow K-12 students to ride for free anywhere in the system at any time during service. Metro has partnered with the Omaha Chamber, Omaha Public Schools, home school groups, and other school groups to make this pilot program possible. Students will be able to ride Metro during evening and weekends as well as during school hours, allowing them to get to school, jobs, and other activities. The grant that is funding this program allows for fair coverage and public engagement/outreach related to the program. Metro is currently working with area schools to get the word out about the program and educate students on how to navigate the system. Students will need to show their student ID when boarding the bus but a pass has also been developed for those students who do not have a student ID.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that during the upcoming local election, Metro will offer free rides for the whole day as part of the Bus to Ballot initiative.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Metro continues to track COVID-19 impacts. Internal staff continues to wear masks and maintain social distancing. Overall Metro has had fewer cases in the last month. Metro is also working on getting vaccinations to employees that want them. Metro is not giving paid time off to employees to get the vaccine but is offering an incentive to get the vaccine. Ms. Cencic thanked E. Gomez and L. Barritt for their help in getting employees signed up for their vaccines.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that ORBT made the cover of Mass Transit magazine. ORBT is featured on the cover and has a several-page article included in the issue. A digital copy of the article has been shared with the Board. Ms. Cencic thanked staff who all did a great job launching ORBT during the pandemic.

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Lastly, Ms. Cencic echoed the Board’s earlier statements thanking Mr. Lund for his service as Board chair over the past year.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item #9: Board Chair Report

(J. Lund)

Ms. Haase asked Mr. Lund to speak on this item as the outgoing Chair. Mr. Lund informed thanked the Board for their work on creating new committees and defining functions and best practices of those committees. Going forward, the committees will be able to meet on a frequent basis and report in real time. Today’s slate was the culmination of everyone’s hard work. Thanks to everyone who participated in the Executive Sessions to help clarify these roles. Also going forward, the Board Chair Report can be informed by committee meetings for Ms. Haase in the future.

Agenda Item #10: Date, Time and Place of Next Board Meeting

Tuesday, May 27, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at Metro Transit Authority’s Administrative Building.

Agenda Item #11: Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was entertained to adjourn the meeting at 9:41 a.m.

Motion by Mr. Lund; Second by Mr. Lawse

**ROLL CALL:
UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

Ms. Amy Haase – Chair

Recording Secretary