

**Meeting Minutes – April 28, 2022**

**MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF OMAHA**

**2222 Cuming Street**

**Omaha, Nebraska, 68102**

**April 28, 2022**

**MINUTES**

The Transit Authority of the City of Omaha Board met in Regular Session on Thursday, April 28, 2022, at 8:30 a.m., in person at the Authority's Administration Building, 2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102, and virtually 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:**

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

**Authority Staff:**

L. Cencic, CEO/Executive Director  
I. Maldonado, Deputy Executive Officer  
D. Grant, HR Director  
E. Simpson, Legal Director  
L. Barritt, Experience & Engagement Director  
K. Pendland, IT Director  
W. Clingman, Finance Director  
D. Kelsey, Operations Director  
J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager  
J. Rumery, Grant Administrator

**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 8:28 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 is available online at ometro.com, and the agenda was 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 24, 2022.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Ms. Plucker

#### **ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

### **Agenda Item #3: Administrative Report**

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro has had a positive response overall to the first 3 electric buses. In March, Metro had 23 news stories, 10 of which were about the electric buses. Metro is seeing interest in them on social media as well as on traditional media outlets. People are excited about how these new buses are being integrated into the fleet. Additionally, Metro took one of the new electric buses to the Earthday Omaha event on Saturday, April 23, 2022. Participants could board the bus, test out the bike rack, and ask questions. Metro shared a booth with B-Cycle at the event. Metro staff talked with approximately 200 people, not only about the electric buses but about Metro overall and MetroNEXT.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Nebraska Public Transit Week was last week. Staff gave away prizes and tickets at the transit centers throughout the week. Metro also selected several free-fare periods on the buses.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro will be celebrating Bus to Ballot on Election Day, May 10, 2022. Metro plans to offer free fares on that day to help encourage people to get to the poles. The free fares will be offered on fixed route buses, ORBT, and MOBY.

Ms. Cencic shared with the Board that Metro is preparing for the annual Safety Awards. This will be held on Wednesday, May 4, 2022, from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm. This is a big celebration at Metro in which Metro staff who have been accident-free are celebrated. Staff is awarded with certificates and a ceremony to honor those milestones. A staff luncheon will also be held. Ms. Cencic encouraged the Board members to attend this event if they are available during that time. The event will take place in a tent that will be set up in the west side parking lot with games and a buffet.

Lastly, Ms. Cencic informed the Board that several Metro staff members just returned from the MAPA Heartland 2050 Learning Tour which was in Indianapolis, Indiana. That trip included Ms. Haase, Mr. Schweitz, and Ms. Cencic. It was a wonderful opportunity to spend time with other decision-makers in Omaha as well as an opportunity to learn more about Indianapolis. The group explored the bike-ped-transit infrastructure, many of

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their funding programs, and their BRT system. The group also had the opportunity to have lunch with the CEO of IndyGo which was a great learning experience.

Discussion was had.

### **Agenda Item #4a:            Administrative Reports**

(D. Grant)

In the Month of April, Metro had 24 people start new roles. Of those 24, five were filled with internal candidates including Sander Scheer who will be serving as our Maintenance Manager. In addition to Sander, we hired 12 bus operators, three paratransit operators, one mechanic III, two mechanic helpers, a network security technician, three dispatchers, and an assistant manager of transit operations.

Since the last board meeting, we have created and started advertising for 6 new roles. Those roles are Body Shop Mechanic, Manager of Communications and Community Relations, Purchasing Specialist, BG&E Fieldman and (2) Custodians.

In total, we are currently reviewing applicants and or interviewing for 12 unique positions and are currently finalizing 7 additional roles.

Discussion was had.

### **Agenda Item #4b:            Administrative Reports**

(I. Maldonado)

As always, Metro's team continues to focus on continuous improvement of operations, customer service, staff training and development, and safety. It has been one month since Metro has placed the three new electric buses into service. As with the implementation of any new technology, there is always a learning curve and an evaluation process. Metro has begun to test the range and reliability of the electric buses on shorter segments during the morning and afternoon routes. Metro is now operating the electric buses on longer routes throughout the entire system. Metro is working closely with the bus vendor to address any technical and mechanical issues that have come up. Overall, they have performed well on routes lasting between six and eight hours, with about 30% of their charge remaining. We have actually operated them for longer hours as well, as many as ten hours, and they have maintained their charge.

Mr. Maldonado updated the Board that Metro continues to work with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to help educate staff on the identification and reporting of potential security threats. In preparation for the College World Series, Metro has conducted two TSA security exercises where suspicious packages were placed inside buses. Metro held a safety meeting where our team discussed various operational and safety issues, and ways to eliminate or mitigate safety hazards. The Director of Transit Operations provided formal supervisory and junior management training from basic transit supervisory skills and accident investigations. Metro has begun discussions with transit partners of StarTran in Lincoln and DART in Des Moines to leverage regional transit opportunities and are working together to improve our respective transit supervisory and dispatch training. Part of this plan is actually to bring more training and consolidate some of our training. We discussed in those meeting to do some of that training here. This is much needed for Supervisors, Dispatchers, and other personnel.

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Mr. Maldonado informed the Board that on May 22, 2022, Metro will start a new bus operator schedule. The only change to our fixed route service will be that on Saturdays, Route 18 which currently operates on a 15-minute frequency will operate every 20 minutes. This change will affect primarily mid-day service. There will be no changes to this route on weekdays. Metro does not anticipate that the Saturday service changes will be a major inconvenience to customers.

Mr. Maldonado updated the Board that over this past month, he has participated in various committee meetings to include the MAPA Equity Learning Capsule, the Congestion Management Committee meeting, meetings with representatives from the City of Omaha, and a meeting with the College World Series Planning Committee.

Discussion was had.

### **Agenda Item #5: Election of Board Officers and Committee Assignments**

(J. Lund for O. Meadows)

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

Mr. Lawse proposed appointments and committee assignments stay as they are currently. Discussion was had.

Motion by Ms. Plucker to keep officers and committees the same as they have been during the past year; Second by Mr. Lawse

**ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

### **Agenda Item #6: Request Appointment of New Members to Salaried Pension Retirement Committee**

(W. Clingman)

Staff is requesting the appointment of three new committee members to the Salaried Pension Retirement Committee members because of vacancies created by a staff retirement and external advisor resignation.

The Metro salaried pension plan requires a 5-member committee which is comprised of the following individuals:

- 2 members of Metro's management personal appointed by the Board of Directors
- 1 member of the Metro Board appointed by the Board of Directors
- 1 member from the citizens of Omaha who is qualified in financial affairs appointed by the Board of Directors
- 1 member at large from Metro's salaried personnel who is selected by the other members of the retirement committee

Staff requests that the Board appoint Kevin Pendland, Ivan Maldonado and John Philo to the Salaried Pension Committee. Kevin Pendland would fill the management personnel vacancy that was created with the retirement of Kelly Shadden. Ivan Maldonado would fill the management personnel vacancy created by the resignation of

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Linda Barritt from the committee, and John Philo, CFA would fill the vacancy created by the resignation of the prior, long-serving, Omaha citizen qualified in financial affairs, J.J. Schenkelberg, CFA.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Ms. Plucker

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

**Agenda Item #7: Request Approval of MetroNEXT Title VI Service Equity Analysis**  
(E. Schweitz)

In compliance with our Title VI Program's Major Service Change Policy, an Equity Analysis was conducted for the proposed MetroNEXT projects to be implemented by 2030. The analysis determines whether the proposed changes have a disparate impact on minority populations or cause a disproportionate burden on low-income populations.

Disparate Impact Analysis

Findings reveal on a cumulative basis the minority population will benefit more than the non-minority population. The number of weekly revenue hours was multiplied by the percent of minority population residing in the ¼ mile area surrounding each route to identify the cumulative effect on minority populations. The cumulative benefit of the changes to minorities is 48%. The cumulative impact of the changes to non-minorities is 36%.

*No disparate impact is identified for the proposed changes.*

Disproportionate Burden Analysis

Findings reveal on a cumulative basis the low-income population will benefit more than the non-low-income population. The number of weekly revenue hours was multiplied by the percent of low-income population residing in the ¼ mile area surrounding each route to identify the cumulative effect on low-income populations. The cumulative benefit of the changes to low-income populations is 48%. The cumulative impact of the changes to non-low-income individuals is 41%.

*No disproportionate burden is identified for the proposed changes.*

The service equity analysis considers the cumulative changes as outlined in the MetroNEXT plan. Individual projects or service changes may require additional Title VI analyses if the changes meet the threshold of a major service change at the time of implementation.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Ms. Plucker

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

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### Agenda Item #8: Request Approval of MetroNEXT Plan

(E. Schweitz)

After a yearlong planning and public engagement initiative, staff is presenting the MetroNEXT Plan to provide strategic direction through 2030. Outreach during the pandemic included a variety of virtual and in-person engagement, with more than 1,000 participants and 1,500 comments contributing to the planning process. MetroNEXT prioritizes transit projects & initiatives to embody Metro's mission, vision, and values:

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

**Vision:** Metro is a valued transportation choice for all members of our community and a vital partner in Omaha's future.

**Values:** Unity · Responsibility · Care · Resourcefulness · Learning · Appreciation

MetroNEXT is an aspirational, achievable vision to address equity in our region, improve & expand connections, provide an excellent travel experience, promote environmental stewardship, lead responsibly & collaboratively, and deliver better transit for a more connected region. In pursuit of these goals, the plan has prioritized the following projects:

- Improved signage at all bus stops
- A policy allowing Moby clients to ride the bus fare-free
- Permanent funding for the K-12 Rides Free program
- Coordination of regional vanpooling
- 50 new bus shelters with real-time arrival displays
- Expanded evening & weekend service
- Return of most routes to pre-COVID schedules
- 24<sup>th</sup> Street transit corridor enhancements
- Frequency improvements on routes 3, 4, 13, 15, & 30
- Extension of Route 30 to serve McKinley Road
- Expansion of service to Eppley Airport
- Extension of 92 Express service to Elkhorn
- A Fort Street express route
- Study of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street transit corridor enhancements

Implementation of this plan would require operating funds of approximately \$52 million per year and would produce a measurable impact on Metro's goals.

Low-income and minority neighborhoods are estimated to gain access to 54% more jobs within a 30-minute commute, and access to essential services near frequent routes would double. Nearly 70,000 people would gain access to frequent service, including 37,000 members of zero-car households. These new investments are projected to attract new ridership, replacing 1.4 million vehicle miles traveled by cars on our roadways and reducing more than 3,700 metric tons of greenhouse gases each year. More information, including the full MetroNEXT plan, is available at [ometro.com/MetroNEXT](http://ometro.com/MetroNEXT).

Upon approval, Metro staff will work to identify additional funding sources and pursue implementation of these projects in phases building to 2030.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Ms. Plucker; Second by Mr. Lawse

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**ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

**Agenda Item #9: Board Chair Report**

(J. Lund for A. Haase)

Mr. Lund shared with the Board that the Operations Committee has already shared all of the successes from the past month regarding HR and other things. Mr. Lawse stated that the excitement around the electric buses and thank you to the staff who is adapting and adjusting and learning new systems for mechanics to keep the buses in good repair, learning new electrical systems. I know this is all new and it sounds like with your attention to detail and tracking, we are getting a lot of great information and feedback about what's working and what we might want to tweak because in the world where we are seeing things going, we will have many more electric buses in the fleet in the coming years. This is a good pilot to test out what is capable, what's possible, and how does it work within the system. Thank you to the staff for that.

Ms. Cencic shared that Metro's financial audit is still delayed due to staffing issues on the part of the auditing firm. Originally the NTD report was due to the federal government by the end of April, but Metro has an extension to the end of May. Metro will be sharing that with the Finance/Procurement Committee and with the Board as soon as it is available.

Mr. Lawse reported that the Planning & Policy Committee discussed a detailed walkthrough of the MetroNEXT plan that was presented by Mr. Schweitz earlier in this meeting. At this time, there is nothing additional to add from Planning & Policy. Ms. Cencic shared that the Planning & Policy Committee is also working on updating Metro's Operating Policy 33 which is the public participation policy at Board meetings. It is tentatively expected to be on the Board agenda for next month.

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

**Thursday, May 26, 2022, 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 9:00 a.m.

Motion by Ms. Plucker; Second by Mr. Lawse

**ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

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**Ms. Amy Haase – Chair**

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**Recording Secretary**