

Meeting Minutes – August 26, 2021

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF OMAHA
2222 Cuming Street
Omaha, Nebraska, 68102
August 26, 2021
MINUTES

The Transit Authority of the City of Omaha Board met in Regular Session on Thursday, August 26, 2021 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
Mr. Othello Meadows, Vice Chair
Mr. Jay Lund (Absent)
Mr. Daniel Lawse
Ms. Julia Plucker

Authority Staff:

L. Cencic, CEO/Executive Director
I. Maldonado, Deputy Executive Officer
E. Simpson, Legal/Human Resource Director (Absent)
C. Distefano, Finance Director
L. Barritt, Marketing Director
K. Pendland, IT Director
J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager (Absent)
J. Rumery, Grant Administrator

Others Present:

Other Metro staff
Members of the public

Meeting Minutes – August 26, 2021

Agenda Item #1: Call to order

Ms. Haase called the meeting to order at 8:32 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 is published on the display in the facility lobby.

Agenda Item #2: Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

Ms. Haase entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the Board Meeting on July 22, 2021.

Motion by Mr. Meadows; Second by Mr. Lawse

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #3: Administrative Report

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that the K-12 program is going very well. Metro has had approximately 11,000 K-12 rides over the summer months, as compared to approximately 6,900 trips in 2019. Metro is seeing high ridership at 20th and Dodge when Central High is let out. Many students are getting on ORBT during that time of day and Metro is working to accommodate the students without stretching service resources. Yesterday, a supervisor went out to the site to help direct traffic. Metro picks up approximately 80 students during this timeframe, which is impacting on-time performance. However, with a supervisor present, ORBT was able to maintain better on-time performance and students were split up more evenly between ORBT buses.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that the first electric buses will be arriving in the second half of December 2021. Metro is working on preparing charging equipment, as well as training materials and special tools to accommodate the new technology when these buses arrive. Metro will be doing a full bus wrap to promote the electric buses as well.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Metro's new fare program will be going live soon. This was a project that was awarded by the Board in 2019. The new system is a cloud-based approach to paying fares. Riders will be able to access their accounts via smart cards and mobile devices. This is a real-time seamless program. Metro is currently beta-testing the new technology with multiple stakeholders. The program is currently slated to go live to the public on September 20, 2021. Riders will be able to add funds to their accounts via any internet connected device, TVMs, and retail networks throughout the service area. For half-fare customers, riders will be able to use their half-fare card to pay fare rather than having to purchase paper tickets to accompany the half-fare ID card. Metro has performed a Title VI equity analysis for the fare media change, but prices will remain the same. Metro will be implementing a monthly fare cap with this program, meaning that when a rider uses their smart card, their account will keep track of usage for the month and not charge more than the cost of a monthly pass. This new process removes the barrier of the high upfront cost of purchasing a monthly pass outright. Metro will waive the \$2 smart card fee through the end of 2021 and will be handing out smart cards at transit centers for free when the system goes live. The minimum amount of fare money that can be added to the

Meeting Minutes – August 26, 2021

card at one time is \$5. Fare boxes will also remain on the buses and will still work for riders, but Metro does want to transition from paper passes to smart card use over time.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item #4a: Administrative Reports

(L. Cencic for E. Simpson)

- Ms. Simpson is currently attending an HR conference and we are looking forward to learning about the information she will bring back to Metro.
- Metro continues to recruit for a number of positions, including the position of Operations Director.
- The TSA security directive mask mandate has been extended from September 2021 to January 2022.

Agenda Item # 4b: Administrative Reports

(I. Maldonado)

The month since the last Board meeting has been quite eventful and productive. In preparation for the arrival of electric buses, our staff has set aside a specific lane in our bus garage for the installation of charging stations. The preparations included providing water near the future location of the electric bus area and relocating our bus cleaning to another area near the safety lane.

An independent fuel testing vendor conducted our annual fuel line detector testing on gas and diesel fuel dispensers. All systems passed successfully.

As part of our public transportation safety plan, our team has developed an employee safety reporting process that will include the utilization of a hazard assessment form, employee safety reporting collection boxes that will be placed at various locations, and a database that captures, tracks and helps mitigate safety hazards. We anticipate the full implementation of these items within the next few weeks. We drafted and implemented a Dispatch notification procedure that will improve communication with members of management and the tracking and response to accidents, safety incidents, and operator assaults, in the reporting of mandatory safety reportable incidents to the Transportation Safety Administration (TSA).

During the week of August 15th through August 21st, members of the Operation Management Team, training and Dispatch supervisory personnel conducted a comprehensive safety blitz intended to identify safety trends. The team provided on-the-spot training and feedback to operators and maintenance personnel on issues affecting safety. A total of 227 field checks were completed. The safety blitz helped us identify that additional training is needed on the completion of daily pre-inspections and deployment and testing of wheelchair ramps and lifts and the activation of bus display signs prior to vehicles entering into service. Our operational staff are revising and drafting daily standard operation procedures which include capturing, tracking, investigation, and resolution of customer concerns and compliments as well as operator payroll procedures. We have begun conversations with our current fleet maintenance vendors to learn of existing software capabilities and upgrade opportunities available that will be able to enhance operations and fleet maintenance.

Meeting Minutes – August 26, 2021

Agenda Item # 4c: Administrative Reports

(J. Rose)

Metro's social media platforms continue to see growth, with new page likes on Facebook and new followers on Twitter and Instagram in the month of July.

Outreach has been steadily picking up since earlier this year. We connected with around 80 people attending various meetings and presentations we gave. The focus was primarily on the MetroNEXT update regarding the announcement of 24th Street as Metro's next priority corridor.

The communications and planning team put a lot of energy toward community engagement on this announcement, especially along the 24th St. corridor, with neighborhood groups, local organizations, elected officials, stakeholders, and community members.

We also put effort toward media engagement before and after the announcement, resulting in 10 stories across 9 outlets, with a great feature by Chris Burbach at the Omaha World-Herald, as well as national coverage in Mass Transit Magazine and a mention in Next City.

We focused on pushing K-12 Rides Free in advance of the school year, conducting direct outreach to schools and with paid social media advertising and a paid underwriting campaign on KIOS.

Agenda Item #5: Request Approval to Enter into Contract with Omaha Electric Service, Inc for the Electric Charging Stations Project

(J. Rumery for J. Willoughby)

Bids were received and opened at a public bid opening on August 17, 2021, at 10 am to perform services associated with the construction and installation of the electrical charging stations at Metro. This package includes all infrastructure to connect the charging stations and dispensers to the existing electrical room along with the installation of the charging stations and dispensers provided by Metro. One contractor, Omaha Electric Services, Inc. submitted a responsive bid. The bid submitted was for \$140,700.

An engineer's independent cost estimate was developed by the design team and the submitted bid was 4.5% higher than that estimate. Since there was only one bid submitted, Metro will enter into negotiations with the Contractor. The award of the contract will depend on successful negotiations which are a condition of the award of the final contract. The contract amount will not exceed the bid amount of \$140,700.

We are requesting the Board authorizes the CEO to prepare and execute a contract with Omaha Electric Services, Inc. for the Electric Charging Stations construction package upon successful negotiations.

This item was forwarded to the Procurement Committee, prior to the Board meeting for their review..

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Mr. Meadows

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Meeting Minutes – August 26, 2021

Agenda Item #6: Request Approval of Title VI Fare Equity Analysis (L. Barritt)

In compliance with Metro's Title VI Program, a Fare Equity Analysis was conducted on the proposed implementation of a new fare payment system and fare capping. This new fare system, called Umo, will be deployed across Metro's fleet and provide access to an account-based system that riders can use to pay fares with a smart card or smartphone. Additionally, staff proposes to implement monthly fare capping at \$55 for regular fares and \$27.50 for approved half fare card holders. This monthly fare capping will allow users to receive the potential discounts of a monthly pass even if they cannot afford the upfront cost of Metro's current 30-Day unlimited pass. This fare capping program will replace Metro's existing 30-Day unlimited pass but the current pass will be phased out slowly to ensure a seamless transition.

Metro's Title VI Policy requires a Fare Equity Analysis be completed for any proposed increases, decreases or elimination of a fare type. Additionally, a Fare Equity Analysis must be completed if there is a proposed change in fare medium or structure change to determine if the proposal has a discriminatory impact on minority and/or low-income populations.

The Title VI Fare Equity Analysis found:

- No disparate impact on minority riders.
- No disproportionate burden on low-income riders.
- Minority and low-income riders will not be limited to or denied the benefits of the proposed fare change.

Board approval will ensure Metro's continued compliance with the Federal Transit Administration's Title VI requirements.

This item will be reviewed sent to the Planning/Policy Committee prior to the Board Meeting. Assuming committee concurrence, staff recommends the full Board approve the resolution as presented.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Ms. Plucker

ROLL CALL:
UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #7: Request Approval of the Hourly and Salaried Employees' Pension Plan Actuarial Reports as of January 1, 2021 (C. Distefano)

Staff is requesting approval of the updated Hourly and Salaried Employees Pension Plan Actuarial Valuation reports, which were produced and presented by Becky Spielman of Milliman Retirement Services for both the Hourly and Salaried Pension Plans. Both the Hourly and Salaried Committees met June 17, 2021, discussed and recommended changes which the Board approved at the June 24, 2021, meeting. The finalized reports are included in the Board Packet information.

Meeting Minutes – August 26, 2021

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Meadows; Second by Ms. Plucker

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #8: Request Approval to Rescind Resolution No. 419 – Preliminary Tax Levy – CY 2022
(C. Distefano)

Staff is requesting approval of a resolution to rescind Resolution No. 419 Preliminary Tax Levy allocation for CY 2022, which was approved at the July Board meeting. The request to rescind No. 419 is because the property valuation used to calculate the levy rate is based on an estimated property valuation from the assessor's office. The property valuation was finalized on August 20, 2021.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Mr. Meadows

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #9: Resolution 420 – Request Approval of Resolution No. 420 – Final Tax Levy Allocation – CY 2022
(C. Distefano)

Staff is requesting approval of Resolution No. 420, Final Tax Levy for CY 2022 Assuming Board approval, the resolution will be sent to the City of Omaha and Douglas County for approval by each of their Boards in September. A copy of the 2021 Certified Property Valuation and the Tax Levy Calculation are included in the Board Packet. The allowable growth in the certified property valuation does not exceed the 2.5% No additional funds are available this year for allowable growth as the percentage for allowable growth does not exceed the base limitation increase of 2.5%. The total dollar amount of this tax levy remains unchanged from the preliminary at \$19,975,759.98. The Final Mill Levy rate is 0.04731. This is a decrease from the 2021 Final Mill Levy rate of 0.04777 and the 2022 Preliminary rate of 0.04733. Resolution No. 420 is included in the Board packet for your review. The City of Omaha and Douglas County will equally split the tax levy rate of 0.04731 or 0.023665 each.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Mr. Meadows

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Meeting Minutes – August 26, 2021

Agenda Item #10: Request Approval of Revised Operating Policy #27

(L. Cencic)

Operating Policy 27 addresses Metro’s purchasing policy and procedures. The policy was last revised and approved by the Board in January 2017. Staff is proposing revisions to the operating policy related to changing the authority for administrative approvals of requisition to better reflect changes in staffing at Metro. The revised operating policy also defers to Federal regulation, including but not limited to Circular 4220.1f, for requirements and procedures for federally funded grant purchases. Other changes are cosmetic in nature or procedural updates to reflect current operations. The revised operating policy was sent to both the Policy/Planning and Finance/Procurement Committee for review prior to the Board meeting.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Ms. Plucker; Second by Mr. Lawse

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #11: Board Chair Report

(A. Haase)

From Programs and Policy, we are making some progress at looking at almost all of our policies and making sure they are updated from 1988.

Mr. Lawse updated the Board that the Programs and Policy Committee continues to look at climate resilience Board actions that other agencies have passed. In light of the latest UN ICCP report that came out recently, Mr. Lawse requested to go a little more in-depth on that topic at the next Board meeting because there are some implications on how we operate, how we are measuring risks, and planning for the future. There is already a baked-in 1.5 degrees Celsius warming that is guaranteed over the next 30 years so that will impact our operations. Mr. Lawse offered to provide a 10–15-minute report next month or bring a third party to give the Board an update for what these findings are and then we can start to understand what those implications are. Staff have been looking at what other transit agencies have been doing in terms of Climate action planning and risk mitigation around this topic so there is more to come.

Mr. Lawse informed the Board that the Operations Committee talked about some of the things regarding the recent storm. There were some impacts to our facilities that we needed to mitigate. It was good practice to point out gaps. Ms. Cencic added that the Operations Committee also talked about the marketing campaign for hiring. The committee also talked about how Metro can better prepare to handle safety policies, procedures, training, and education. Mr. Maldonado has been doing a lot of this work.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item #12: Date, Time and Place of Next Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes – August 26, 2021

Tuesday, September 23, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at Metro Transit Authority’s Administrative Building.

Agenda Item #13: Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was entertained to adjourn the meeting at 9:26 a.m.

Motion by Mr. Meadows; Second by Ms. Plucker

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

Ms. Amy Haase – Chair

Recording Secretary