

**Meeting Minutes – December 22, 2020**

**MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF OMAHA  
2222 Cuming Street  
Omaha, Nebraska, 68102  
December 22, 2020  
MINUTES**

The Transit Authority of the City of Omaha Board met in Regular Session on Tuesday, December 22, 2020 at 8:30 a.m., in the Authority's Administration Building, 2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102. 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  
Ms. Amy Haase, Secretary/Treasurer  
Mr. Daniel Lawse  
Mr. Othello Meadows

**Authority Staff:**

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

**Others Present:**

Other Metro staff

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### **Agenda Item #1:            Call to order**

Mr. Lund 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 the Agenda is published on the display in the facility lobby.

### **Agenda Item #2a:            Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings**

Mr. Lund entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the Board Meeting on November 16, 2020.

Motion by Ms. Plucker; Second by Mr. Meadows

**ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

### **Agenda Item #2b:            Approval of Minutes of Public Hearing Meeting**

Mr. Lund entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the Board Meeting on December 18, 2020.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Mr. Meadows

**ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

### **Agenda Item #3a:            Administrative Reports**

(E. Simpson)

- Metro continues to recruit to fill open positions.
- Ms. Cencic and I have been working on securing COVID-19 vaccines for Metro employees. According to Nebraska's vaccine plan, vaccines for mass transit will be distributed in phase 1B of the plan. On December 21, 2020, a conversation was had with Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) and Metro has been added the vaccine list. Metro plans to obtain vaccines from the DCHD and administer vaccines to employees using its staff nurse. The vaccine will be administered to employees in phases due to potential side effects.

### **Agenda Item # 3b:            Administrative Reports**

(D. Jameson)

Bus Operator Barriers. Shipments will continue for the NF buses over the next few weeks until fulfilled. The NF parts continue to come in. We received a tentative ETA on the Gillig barrier re-shipment date of the later next month. We are still waiting on an ETA for the AD bus barriers, hopefully they will ship in Q1, 2021.

Installation of Metro first operators' barrier was completed last week, we had some manufacturing delays due to the forward station pole being shipped incorrectly; this has now been corrected.

All 5 NF buses have arrived at Metro, and Glenn and I performed the Configuration/Acceptance audit. The final 6 NF buses remain as scheduled to start line entry in late January, and arrivals starting in late March.

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Dialogue continues on the pre-production process with NF for the 3X 40' electric buses. The requisite Federal clauses have been returned and we are in the process of issuing a PO. These buses remain on schedule for delivery Q4, 2021. We continue working with our Engineering Team along with NF assistance, so that Metro is prepared to support the electrical charging needs of these buses.

We continue COVID-19 mitigation around the entire building and the vehicle fleet every day. Buses continue to be traded out mid-day on ORBT & 18 Route and any others as necessary. Our daily mitigation efforts include fogging all areas within the building administration, the vehicle fleet, re-wiping down the entire operator's compartment, removing & cleaning the passenger fabric seat inserts, wiping down hard surfaces, doors and door handles, hand railing, all common areas and bathrooms. Finally, we are cleaning all ORBT stations five days a week and each station is deep cleaned every Saturday evening. We will be installing the newly arrived non-contact thermometers around the building as we wait for the balance of the system to arrive. These additional items include a pre-screening questionnaire on a touch screen incorporated with employee ID badging.

Metro continues ORBT training with the balance of the operators that are NOT primary ORBT drivers. We anticipate this to be completed next month, then we will return to refresher training for all Bus Operators. Dispatch continues to monitor OTP and headway/bunching management and all have performed exceptionally well, with a shout out to Marlon Phoenix for his role in making sure the ORBT stays on-time.

CNG night-time fueling has worked very well, with little downtime. The extension hose is working as designed and we are not having any issues with the functionality of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street doors. CNG vehicle operators continue to work with Maintenance personal by calling ahead on their last trip downtown to check on an open fueling slot, and if available, they will divert their return to 22<sup>nd</sup> Street instead of returning to the bus barn.

We are finalizing our plans for maintenance training, this will include new model, fuel propulsion system, electronics, drivetrain & transmission to name a few.

### Agenda Item # 3c: Administrative Reports

(J. Rose)

Page 1 of the marketing section – page 37 of the board report – shows a social media summary for the year through November, with 2019 and 2020 comparisons. Metro saw significant increases in social media activity, this year compared to last.

Facebook had a similar number of posts from 2019 to 2020, with nearly double the reach, engagement, shares and an increase in comments. We gained 200 page likes, with a big jump in November. The ORBT Twitter page was created specifically for ORBT in February of 2019. We were much more active on Twitter this year, with a big growth in impressions (440K in 2020 compared to 164K in 2019). We've also seen a steady gain in followers (357 thru the end of November). On Instagram, we had more posts and comments than the previous year, with a steady gain in followers.

### **ORBT Launch**

- **Ribbon Cutting/Media Event:** Initially, Metro planned an in-person, combined media and ribbon cutting event. To take extra COVID precaution we separated the media event and ceremonies, opting for a limited in-person media event and a virtual ribbon cutting. This allowed us to provide the media and the mayor with a firsthand ORBT experience and invite more people to our ribbon cutting than we would have been able to in person. The virtual ribbon cutting videos premiered on YouTube and Facebook – the YouTube video had 545 views, and on Facebook we reached 2300 (organic), with more than 600 engagements, helping drive reach.

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- **Social media** around the ORBT launch helped maintain consistent content and energy, especially for those that were interested in participating but didn't plan to ride. In addition to the Metro Communications team, a full-time social media manager was online for the opening days of launch to handle interactions. We also had the assistance of 50 community volunteer ambassadors, who helped welcome new riders to the service.
- **ORBT Dispatch:** This tool has been a consistent touchpoint throughout the construction process, with nearly 470 subscribers. We saw good open rates (averaging 45% - industry standard is around 20%) and click rates (averaging 10% - industry standard is 2.25%)
- **Earned media** was a critical touchpoint, especially as we neared the ORBT launch. In 2020, we had 461 stories valued at nearly \$2.5 million in publicity value.
- **Outreach and in-person engagement** was limited due to the pandemic, but we still attended 83 events – in-person or virtually – reaching more than 1800 people. This also allowed the team to focus on earned, paid, and shared media this year.
- **Outdoor media:** The team secured signage at 7 locations along the route through community partnerships: Westroads Mall (est. 50K vehicles per day), Crossroads Mall (est. 83-85K vehicles per day, down from 95K pre-COVID), Filmstreams, Midtown Crossing (one digital, one printed banner), UNO, and Premier Bank
- **Paid Media:** Metro utilized paid media via radio spots (KBBX – 45 spots from 11/9-11/29; KBBX, 45 spots from 11/9 – 11/29; KOWN 27 spots from 11/9 – 11/29; KIOS 81 live reads from 11/9 – 12/6), resulting in nearly 400K impressions, as well as online geofenced banner ads resulting in 97K impressions. We also promoted and sponsored social media post. Paid social, banner, and radio ads made nearly 700K impressions.

Currently, the Communications Team is focused on planning for 2021, including communications around the strategic planning effort, fare upgrades, website updates, and more.

### Agenda Item #4: Request Approval of Standing Purchase Orders – CY 2021

(D. Finken)

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

A copy of the Standing Purchase Order list is included in the Board packet.

This list was distributed to the responsible Directors for review, then it was sent to the Procurement Committee for review prior to the Tuesday, December 22, 2020 Metro Board Meeting.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Ms. Plucker; Second by Mr. Meadows

**ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

### Agenda Item #5: Request Approval of Metro Area Transit Salaried Employees' Pension Plan Amendment No. 2

(D. Finken)

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Staff is requesting approval of the Salaried Employees' Pension Plan Amendment No. 2 (see attached), which was produced by Pension Attorney, Michael Weaver. The amendment changes the Salaried Employee' Pension Contribution Rate from current of 6.0% to 6.5% effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 and then increasing to 7% thereafter. This item was reviewed and approved by the Pension Committee on November 5, 2020.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Ms. Haase; Second by Mr. Lawse

**ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

**Agenda Item #6: Request Approval of the Hourly and Salaried Employees' Pension Plan Documents as of January 1, 2020**

(D. Finken)

Staff is requesting approval of the Metro Area Transit Hourly and Salaried Employees Pension Plan Documents as amended and restated effective January 1, 2021. Both the Hourly and Salaried Pension Plan Documents have had Amendments over the last couple of years which have been approved by the Board at previous meetings. These amendments have been added to the pension plan documents by our Pension Attorney, Michael Weaver. These approved resolutions are for the Attorney's legal files. Plan documents sent electronically under separate cover.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Ms. Plucker; Second by Ms. Haase

**ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

**Agenda Item #7: Request Approval of the Final CY 2021 Operating Budget**

(D. Finken)

Staff is requesting approval of a resolution to adopt the CY 2021 Final Operating Budget. The proposed CY 2021 Final Operating Revenue and Expense Budget is \$33,298,429 this is an increase over the 2021 CY Preliminary Operating Budget of \$432,578 or 1.3%

A copy of the CY 2021 budget assumptions and the CY 2021 Final Operating Budget - revenue and expense worksheets are included in the Board Packet.

A meeting to review the CY 2021 Final Operating Budget was held with the Finance Committee.

Discussion was had.

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Motion by Ms. Haase; Second by Ms. Plucker

**ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

**Agenda Item #8: Administrative Report**

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic wished the Board members and staff a Happy Holidays. It has been quite an unusual year with COVID-19, ORBT launch, and the transition in leadership. Ms. Cencic also thanked the Board for helping her with the onboarding process.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro's normal in-person Safety Banquet was replaced with a take-out version to recognize staff milestones and grab a bagged lunch to enjoy. The annual Holiday Appreciation meal was also canceled due to COVID-19 concerns so Metro is celebrating staff accomplishments by giving small gifts to each staff member.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro has been working closely with Douglas County Health Department in regards to COVID-19. Metro is looking into procuring additional temperature-taking kiosks. Some Metro staff have been quarantining out of an abundance of caution, which has had minor impacts on Metro service but staff is doing their best to get service out on the street while still maintaining safety.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Metro is currently allowed to offer meetings remotely through the end of January 2021 based on a Limited Executive Order from the state governor. Unless this Executive Order changes, the February Board meeting will be held in person.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that she is working closely with staff regarding plans for public engagement and outreach in 2021. Metro is planning to build on the efforts of ConnectGo by seeking further community input in the new year to help consider how transit might be enhanced and expanded in the future.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that she is closely monitoring additional federal funding that was recently passed by Congress. The new bill includes \$14 billion for transit relief but it is unclear yet whether Metro will be eligible for some of that funding. Ms. Cencic will update the Board as that becomes more clear.

Discussion was had.

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

(J. Lund)

Ms. Lund informed the Board that this report will be included in the Board agenda every month going forward. The primary purpose will be to inform all Board members of future changes in organizational structure and in committee updates from those working with Mr. Johnson at Sort Sol Group, the company that helped initiate Project Phoenix.

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**Agenda Item #10: Executive Session**

Mr. Lund entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session at 9:24 a.m.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Mr. Meadows

**ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

Mr. Lund entertained a motion to return to Regular Session at 10:26 a.m.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Ms. Haase.

**ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

**Agenda Item #14: Date, Time and Place of Next Board Meeting**

**Tuesday, January 28, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. to be held virtually or at Metro Transit Authority's Administrative Building.**

**Agenda Item #15: Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was entertained to adjourn the meeting at 10:26 a.m.

Motion by Ms. Haase; Second by Mr. Lawse.

**ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

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**Mr. Jay Lund – Chair**

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**Recording Secretary**