

**Meeting Minutes – February 24, 2022**

**MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF OMAHA**

**2222 Cuming Street**

**Omaha, Nebraska, 68102**

**February 24, 2022**

**MINUTES**

The Transit Authority of the City of Omaha Board met in Regular Session on Thursday, February 24, 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

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

D. Grant, HR Director

E. Simpson, Legal Director (Absent)

L. Barritt, Experience & Engagement Director

K. Pendland, IT Director

J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager

J. Rumery, Grant Administrator

**Others Present:**

Other Metro staff

Members of the public

## **Meeting Minutes – February 24, 2022**

### **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 January 27, 2022.

Motion by Ms. Plucker; Second by Mr. Haase

### **ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

### **Agenda Item #3:            Request to be Heard – R. Johnson**

Ms. Haase informed the Board that Mr. Johnson rescinded his request to be heard.

### **Agenda Item #4:            Administrative Report**

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic welcomed Mr. Grant as Metro's new Human Capital and Talent Development Director. Metro is excited to have him and he will be providing the Human Resources Administrative report later on in this meeting.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro has two billboards along Dodge Street celebrating Metro's achievement of a half-million rides on ORBT since inception. Additionally, the Art+ORBT project, which was led by Omaha by Design in partnership with Metro to install murals at the ORBT stations, was awarded the Outstanding Public Art Award by the Omaha Entertainment and Arts Board.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Metro is scheduled to install the canopy at the new 8<sup>th</sup> & Farnam ORBT station in May. Metro expects the work at this station to be completed in May, but the station will not open until July when the park opens.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro is out for bid on the IT Office additions and audio-visual building upgrades. Metro expects to bring a resolution to the Board during the March Board meeting to award the contract. This project includes upgrades to audio-visual systems in the Board room and the downstairs Training room. At this time, we do not expect disruptions to the ability to hold future Board meetings in the Board room but if that should change, Metro will work with the Board to arrange for alternative accommodations. This project is intended to better facilitate in-person and virtual meetings so future Board meetings will have much better equipment and be able to welcome more virtual participation.

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Ms. Cencic updated the Board that all of the digital display signs, emergency phones, and cameras are installed at both Westroads Transit Center and North Omaha Transit Center (NOTC). As of today, Westroads is up and running. Metro expects to have all of the equipment at NOTC online by next week.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that electric charging stations are 98% complete. Metro is waiting on a few remaining pieces including surge protectors that have been delayed until the end of March. The charging stations are functional without those surge protectors. Metro is also waiting on the Cable Management System but that does not impact charging.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that the Facility Sustainability Project is in the design and engineering phase. Metro has been trying to identify the location of the future chiller room to allow for Metro to add conditioned air to the maintenance shop. Metro is making good progress on this project and working on the overall engineering so we can release that soon. Metro has had a few COVID-related delays on this project, so the schedule has not yet been updated to account for those changes.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro's annual audit will kick off soon with the auditors visiting in March. Metro is running a little behind schedule this year due to staff turnover, but we will work with the Finance Committee to make sure the audit is completed in time for the audit in April. Depending on the timing of the completion of the audit, Metro may need to request a special Board meeting in April but that will be determined once we have more information, and the audit is underway.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Metro's Title VI program update is due to the Federal Transit Administration in September. As a reminder, Title VI prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance to ensure that public funds are not spent in a way that encourages, subsidizes, or results in discrimination. Metro's updated program will include adopted standards and policies including major service change definitions and disparate impact to proportion burden policies. Metro will look at all elements of service including vehicle loads, headways, on-time performance, service availability, vehicle assignments, and bus stop amenities. Metro will monitor past performance using randomly sampled bus trips, update and review our Language Assistance Plan, looking at minority representation of the Board and Advisory Committee, complaint procedures and investigations, and Metro's public participation plan. Staff will work with the Planning and Policy Committee on that update as we prepare for this in September.

Lastly, Ms. Cencic shared with the Board an update on MetroNEXT. Metro will be holding public meetings in March and would like to share with the Board the couple of PowerPoint slides showing information that will be presented. Ms. Cencic proceeded to go through the PowerPoint slides with the Board, explain the information that will be presented to the public at the upcoming MetroNEXT meetings, and inform the Board of when the upcoming meetings will take place.

Discussion was had.

**Agenda Item #5a:**            **Administrative Reports**  
(D. Grant)

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Mr. Grant introduced himself to the Board and informed the Board that he started February 7<sup>th</sup> as the Director of Human Capital & Talent Development. He is looking forward to using his HR skillset to attract, develop & retain the staff necessary to help Metro accomplish the goals of servicing the community.

Mr. Grant's background includes HR leadership in purpose-filled organizations, such as Metro, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion work, Recruiting, and HR consulting.

In addition to welcoming Mr. Grant, Metro also welcomed 3 new Transit Operators in the month of February.

Mr. Grant is also happy to announce that Metro has filled our Operation's Director role and both of the Utility Garage maintenance positions. The Director of Operations will start in early March.

Looking forward, Metro will be concluding our interview process with several Transit & Paratransit Operator candidates next week.

Metro has also posted and hopes to start interviewing for four newly created positions. Metro is looking for a Sr. Manager of Planning, an HR Coordinator, a Fleet Maintenance Manager and three Transit Field Supervisors. We are excited about all of these roles, but Mr. Grant highlighted the Transit Field Supervisors. The Transit Field Supervisors will work closely with Dispatch to provide in-the field oversight and in person Operator and customer support.

Lastly, in addition to Careerlink, Metro has also started developing profiles and advertising roles on additional job boards including LinkedIn. MR. Grant invited the Board to follow Metro and for individual Board members to add their years of Board service at Metro to their list of experience.

Discussion was had.

### **Agenda Item #5b: Administrative Reports**

(I. Maldonado)

Metro's team continues their efforts to improve overall performance, safety, and customer service. To these goals, Mr. Maldonado and the Maintenance team have been in communication with bus vendors and operational software vendors to improve working relationships, to seek training opportunities for staff, and to gain needed support with the resolution of mechanical and technical issues.

Mr. Maldonado informed the Board that he and Ms. Cencic met with representatives from the College World Series Planning Team to discuss how Metro may encourage the use of transit to this event. The group also discussed the possible creation of a circulator route that will enable usage of public parking and travel to the event. The College World Series is scheduled to take place between June 16<sup>th</sup> and June 27<sup>th</sup> with most games taking place between 1:00 and 6:00 pm.

Metro has received all three electric buses and both charging stations are fully operational. Metro's trainer, instructors, managers, and selected supervisor and maintenance personnel have been in training for the safe operations of the new electric buses, and Metro has begun to provide similar training to operators. Mr. Maldonado anticipates training of operators to be completed by next week.

Metro's Planning, Operations, and Communications staff met with Ms. Cencic and Mr. Maldonado to discuss plans for the next fixed route operator schedule and staffing needs.

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Mr. Maldonado informed the Board that he and Metro’s senior staff met with members of the Transportation Security Administration to partner in Metro’s efforts to improve the security of our system, to conduct future safety assessments and exercises, and to provide security-related training to staff. Metro will also focus on security at the upcoming quarterly training.

Discussion was had.

**Agenda Item #6: Resolution – Request Approval of Resolution #422 – Approval of Federal Certifications and Assurances**

(L. Cencic)

Each year, as a part of Metro’s receipt of federal grant funding, Metro and its attorney are required annually to sign and file Certifications & Assurances (C&A) that required federally mandated programs and requirements will be followed.

Staff is requesting authority to authorize the CEO/Executive Director and Attorney to execute the 2022 C&As.

Resolution #422 authorizing the same is included in the Board packet.

Recommend full Board approval.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Meadows; Second by Ms. Plucker

**ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

**Agenda Item #7: Board Chair Report**

(A. Haase)

Ms. Haase shared with the Board that last month, a member of the public addressed the Board and even though the Board was not able to participate in open discussions and cannot take actions on items that are requested from members of the public who have specifically requested to be heard, staff did answer those questions and shared to the best of their ability the responses to those questions with the rest of the Board.

Ms. Haase reported to the Board that the Planning and Policy Committee has primarily been involved with the MetroNEXT efforts. Ms. Haase encouraged everyone to attend the upcoming meetings and give feedback and input on this important planning process that will lay the groundwork for key things Metro will be looking at doing in the next few years.

Mr. Lawse reported that the Planning and Policy Committee has also been working on a Sustainability Board Resolution. Just as Metro did a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Resolution a few months ago, staff is preparing a Sustainability and Climate Action Resolution to make sure it sets the direction for Metro and gives guidance to staff about what is important and how to take into consideration sustainability and climate change, those impacts, and risk mitigations. That resolution should be coming in March.

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Mr. Lawse updated the Board that the Operations Committee has had a lot of activity over the last month. Mr. Grant shared some of the hiring pieces that the committee discussed. There is an upcoming pick that will happen in May which was also discussed. The Operations Committee also discussed the new electric vehicles and charging stations. The committee also discussed the College World Series details. Most of these items were covered already previously but these are the topics upon which the Operations Committee focused during this past month.

In relation to the Finance Committee, as Ms. Cencic shared earlier, Metro is preparing for the annual audit process. This process has been delayed due to recent staff turnover. The previous auditor has left, and current staff is working to do more with fewer people. Metro has a tentative plan that will allow us to meet our deadline but this deadline is very tight with little flexibility.

**Agenda Item #8:      Date, Time and Place of Next Board Meeting**

**Thursday, March 24, 2022, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at Metro Transit Authority’s Administrative Building.**

**Agenda Item #10:      Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was entertained to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Ms. Plucker

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

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**Ms. Amy Haase – Chair**

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**Recording Secretary**