

**Meeting Minutes – January 27, 2022**

**MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF OMAHA**

**2222 Cuming Street**

**Omaha, Nebraska, 68102**

**January 27, 2022**

**MINUTES**

The Transit Authority of the City of Omaha Board met in Regular Session on Thursday, January 27, 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

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)

L. Barritt, Experience & Engagement Director

K. Pendland, IT Director

J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager

J. Rumery, Grant Administrator

**Others Present:**

R. Johnson

Other Metro staff

Members of the public

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### 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 December 23, 2021.

Motion by Ms. Plucker; Second by Mr. Lund

### **ROLL CALL:**

**UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.**

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

Mr. Rodney Johnson thanked the Board for the opportunity to express his concerns again. Mr. Johnson stated that he still has some of the same questions that he presented last month. First, will the transit center in North Omaha ever be unlocked? There is one black Board member, but are there any other upper-level positions for blacks at Metro, such as supervisory positions, executive positions, etc? When will the Transit Center and Fleet Interior contract be out for bid again? Metro has always had a lot of deficiencies when dealing with disadvantaged black business enterprises. I am wondering if, from 2016, there has been any improvement. What efforts of outreach has Metro done to entice black businesses? Can I get a copy of 6 invoices submitted by Goodwill for the last 6 months or any consecutive 6 months to date, if that's possible, as well as copies of the agreements, which should also be on file for Goodwill and any addendums or amendments? These should all be readily available. The Freedom of Information Act created in 1967 allows for 20 days. It has been almost 60 days and I still have not received the documents I have requested under the Freedom of Information Act. Who is the project manager at Metro? Who is the Legal Human Resources manager and the Title VI coordinator? Again, you are about black businesses, and we are located in the black business hub of 24<sup>th</sup> Street. I don't know how many goods and services you receive from black businesses. I am aware that the Federal Government has a prompt pay for prime contractors. I am curious of how it can take Metro 4 and a half months to pay a prime contractor which is also a DBE. What are Metro's current DBE goals? And why does Metro have such bad DBE selection? This is the synopsis of the questions you have in front of you. I would like to dig into them.

Ms. Haase thanked Mr. Johnson for sharing these questions and informed him that these are definitely questions that Metro will look into. The information provided gives the Board something to help further their investigation. The Board thanked Mr. Johnson for his time today. Mr. Johnson asked for a timeframe to be put on the responses to his questions. Ms. Haase informed Mr. Johnson that the Board will review these questions before the next Board meeting, over the next 30 days. Mr. Johnson asked again for the requested 6 invoices from Goodwill. Ms. Haase informed Mr. Johnson that she will need to check with staff on this request. Mr. Johnson directed his question to Ms. Cencic. Ms. Cencic informed Mr. Johnson that as long as those documents were a part of Mr. Johnson's initial request, she will work with staff to provide those documents to Mr. Johnson before the next Metro Board meeting.

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Mr. Johnson thanked the Board for their time.

### **Agenda Item #4: Request to be Heard – J. Boncordo**

Ms. Haase informed the Board that Mr. Boncordo's request to be heard was rescinded prior to the Board meeting.

### **Agenda Item #5: Administrative Report**

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Metro continues to monitor COVID-19 cases. There has been an increase throughout the region and Metro has not been immune to that. This has had some impacts on service but Metro is doing everything possible to mitigate service interruptions. Metro had 12 positive COVID-19 cases in December 2021 as well as additional employees who needed to quarantine due to potential exposures or symptoms. The numbers for January are not yet available. Metro is looking at increasing the leave available for employees with COVID especially since it is starting to come back around and some folks may need to isolate or quarantine more than once.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that initial estimates are available for Metro's 2022 5307 apportionment. Under the new Transportation Bill, Metro is expecting an increase in apportionment. It looks like the increase for 2022 will be within the \$2.5-3 million range. As a reminder, this money can only be used for capital expenses.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Metro received NEPA approval from the FTA for the BRT station at 8<sup>th</sup> & Farnam. With that approval, Metro can now move forward with that station construction.

Lastly, Ms. Cencic informed the Board that she attended the Mayor's press conference yesterday announcing the new Mutual of Omaha headquarters building as well as the streetcar. Metro remains committed to working with the City to make sure the streetcar is a success in terms of coordinating with the City and working on the formation of an eventual Streetcar Authority.

### **Agenda Item #6a: Administrative Reports**

(L. Cencic for E. Simpson)

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that she does not have any updates from Ms. Simpson to share at this time.

### **Agenda Item #6b: Administrative Reports**

(I. Maldonado)

Metro staff started 2022 with great momentum, lots of energy and working efficiently in our continuous efforts to improve operations and service delivery.

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During the weekends of January 1<sup>st</sup> and January 15<sup>th</sup>, staff safely and successfully managed the operations of transit services during two snow weather events.

Metro's Information Technology team successfully upgraded the Trapeze Operational system which came with enhancements that will assist with fixed route routing and operator scheduling.

On January 16<sup>th</sup> Metro started a new operator schedule that was developed based on our current staffing levels with the goal to reduce service interruptions. Last week three new operators graduated from the new operator training and are now driving on their own.

Metro's maintenance and leadership staff held discussion with New Flyer vendor representatives concerning mechanical issues experienced by ORBT articulated buses. New Flyer maintenance technicians visited Metro's maintenance facilities and worked along Metro mechanics to troubleshoot and repair buses.

Metro received two of the three new electric buses and is waiting for the last one to be delivered within the next few weeks. Commissioning of the charging facilities is scheduled to take place during the middle of February. Metro will then begin the training of trainers, maintenance, and supervisory staff on the operation of the new buses, and soon thereafter will begin to train operators. Staff will also begin preparing the electric buses for service which will include the installation of technologies like UMO, mobile data terminals, fareboxes, synchronizing destination signage, wrapping buses, and installing 2-way radios. Electric buses are expected to be in service by the end of March or beginning of April.

Metro held a safety meeting in January where the team discussed various operational and safety issues.

Metro's planning and leadership staff met with the MetroNEXT consulting team to learn and discuss what other transit systems are doing to meet the transportation needs of citizens residing in low density areas.

Mr. Maldonado informed the board that he participated as a member of the Metropolitan Agency Planning Agency (MAPA)'s Safety Meeting and Transportation Technical Advisory Committee. He also attended two Federal Transit Administration webinar trainings, one regarding Public Transit Agency Safety Plans and the other regarding changes to the U.S. Census and how it will impact FTA's grant programs.

Metro began installing real time arrival displays at the North Omaha and Westroads Transit Centers. Touch screen informational kiosks, surveillance cameras, emergency phones and new restroom doors are also being installed at NOTC. The completion of these projects is anticipated to take place by the middle of February.

Discussion was had.

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

(A. Haase)

Ms. Haase reported to the Board that the Planning and Policy Committee had a great meeting this month and a very good update. The committee reviewed a lot of components of the plans and measurable goals for MetroNEXT. The committee is specifically excited about starting to look at how a Regional Transit Authority could fit into some of the MetroNEXT scenarios.

In relation to the Finance Committee, Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro is getting ready to begin the annual audit process so the Finance Committee will soon have more updates on that process.

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Mr. Lawse updated the Board that the Operations Committee recently met to talk about staffing and the exciting news that Metro has hired for some full-time positions. Mr. Maldonado talked about preparations at Metro for winter weather, as well as the training improvements. It feels like Metro is tightening up the policies and procedures around safety, security, and training. Mr. Lund added that Ms. Cencic is continuing to build her leadership team and staff, which is a critical piece of Metro’s mission.

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

**Thursday, February 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 9:01 a.m.

Motion by Mr. Meadows; Second by Mr. Lawse

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

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**Ms. Amy Haase – Chair**

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**Recording Secretary**