

Meeting Minutes – June 23, 2022

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

2222 Cuming Street

Omaha, Nebraska, 68102

JUNE 23, 2022

MINUTES

The Transit Authority of the City of Omaha Board met in Regular Session on Thursday, June 23, 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 (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 (Absent)

K. Pendland, IT Director

W. Clingman, Finance Director

D. Kelsey, Operations Director

J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager (Absent)

J. Rumery, Grant Administrator (Absent)

Others Present:

Other Metro staff

MAPA staff

Members of the public

Meeting Minutes – June 23, 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 was published on the display in the facility lobby.

Agenda Item #2a: Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Ms. Haase entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the Board Meeting on May 26, 2022.

Motion by Ms. Plucker; Second by Mr. Lawse

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

Agenda Item #2b: Approval of Minutes of Board Retreat Meeting

Ms. Haase entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the Board Retreat Meeting on May 27, 2022.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Mr. Lund

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

Agenda Item #3: General Public Comment Period

Ms. Haase opened the General Public Comment Period to invite members of the audience to be heard regarding regular topics related to the Transit Authority of the City of Omaha. No members of the public came forward to comment.

Agenda Item #4: Administrative Report

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that office construction is still underway. She thanked staff for their continued patience of working in a construction zone, as she knows this is a disruptive process. The project is on schedule to add a few more offices to the building by this fall. This project is taking an under-utilized former conference room that had become a storage area for old furniture and transforming it into a more useful space. The final product of this renovation will also help with future hybrid online/in-person meetings by providing better two-way communication between online and in-person attendees.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Metro is currently working with MAPA to renegotiate their lease. MAPA is currently a tenant in the Metro building and Metro looks forward to working on the next agreement with them to have them continue their work here.

Meeting Minutes – June 23, 2022

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that she, Metro's Finance Director, and Metro's Legal Director have been participating in Board meetings with the Omaha Streetcar Authority. The second Board meeting was earlier this week. A new interim Executive Director has now been hired to help with moving that project forward. In addition to Metro's role on the Streetcar Authority Board, Ms. Willoughby and Ms. Cencic are also actively involved with the City's project development group that is reviewing plans and working with HDR on design and decisions.

Ms. Cencic shared with the Board that July 1st is going to be a big day in Metro's history. On that day, Metro will be opening the 8th & Farnam ORBT station, which was awaiting the completion of construction in that area. Metro will now have a full ORBT station up and running in that location concurrent with the opening of the Gene Leahy Mall. Additionally, July 1st is also Metro's 50th Anniversary as an agency. Metro was created by state legislature on July 1, 1972. This is a very important time to reflect on all that Metro does for the community, the millions that have been served over the years, and all that Metro does to connect people, places, and opportunities. Ms. Cencic thanked all staff for their work and asked to take a moment to appreciate how integrated Metro has been in the community over the last 50 years. To celebrate this, Metro will be doing some fun promotions and announcements, including a contest that will be announced in the near future.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item #5a: Administrative Reports

(D. Grant)

In the Month of June, Metro hired 16 people with 10 of those starting in the month of June. Of those 16, we hired 6 Bus Operators, 1 Paratransit Operator, 1 Mechanic, 2 Mechanic Supervisors, a Communications Specialist, and a Tire Specialist. In addition to those roles, Metro also promoted 3 current transit Operators to Field Supervisors. We are very excited to get this new role at Metro off the ground and working for our community.

Additionally, since the last Board meeting, we have created and started advertising for 5 new roles which include a Senior Engagement & Experience Specialist, another Tire Specialist, and 2 Dispatchers. With onboarding such a large number of employees over the last couple of months, we want to publicly acknowledge Mr. Wells and his training department. Many of these roles spend either their first 2 days or their first 8 weeks with the training team. This team ensures a high quality initial experience at Metro for our new hires. The training team has done a wonderful job with the number of people Metro has been hiring.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item #5b: Administrative Reports

(I. Maldonado)

Metro's staff continues to work hard on maintaining proper service levels, maintenance of vehicles and facilities, monitoring on-time performance, training operators and maintenance personnel, and promoting safe operations. Metro held a Employee Safety Meeting and a Safety Committee Meeting where internal staff discussed ways to improve safety and security. In conjunction with the Transportation Safety Administration,

Meeting Minutes – June 23, 2022

Metro held 3 days of quarterly operator trainings where all operators went through training on issues pertaining to safety and their own protection, safe driving, and security issues.

Since the last Board meeting, Metro held the graduations of 5 fixed route operators, and tomorrow Metro will have 4 new operators and 2 maintenance staff graduating.

This month, Metro participated in a Stuff the Bus event where approximately 33,000 pounds of food was collected to help the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, to help feed local low-income families.

Metro also started the College World Series circulator which operates one hour before and after the games. Metro was informed yesterday that this route will start early today because they have added another game to the schedule.

Earlier this month, 24 members of the Bus History Association held their annual conference in Omaha. During their stay, they visited Metro's facilities to look at the retro buses as well as the electric buses. This group was very excited to have the opportunity to look at Metro's vehicles.

Mr. Maldonado informed the Board that he participated in various committee meetings including the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) Equity Learning capsule and the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee. Special thanks to the team here who actually engage in trying to get Metro staff recognized and engaged in the different activities. Metro staff participated in the Juneteenth Parade and held a barbeque. Metro provided a bus for the parade.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item #5c: Administrative Reports

(L. Cencic for N. Ebat)

Ms. Ebat joins us online today but apologizes that she cannot be here in person. She will be giving these updates in the future. In addition to Ms. Ebat, Metro also welcomes a new Communications Specialist. Metro is very excited to have a fully staffed Communications team.

In May and June, Metro offered free rides for Bus to Ballot and saw an 11% increase in ridership compared to a typical Tuesday in May. Metro also participated in the promotion of Bike to Work Day where free rides were offered to those with bicycles. This resulted in a 28% increase in bike rack usage. There was also a 5% increase in overall ridership compared to a typical Friday.

In addition to the Juneteenth Parade and the Freedom Festival, Metro also worked with the local Omaha Union Fanclub, Omaha Parliament, to take ORBT to a soccer game. Metro also took a bus to the UNO Childcare Center to talk about being a bus operator and how they can take the bus in Omaha. Metro also did a How To Ride training with SWIPCO and SWITA in Council Bluffs for the Boys and Girls Club, teaching about 50 kids how to ride a bus, how to request a stop, and things like that.

Our media coverage continues to grow and increase. In the first half of 2022, Metro has had more than twice as many media mentions than in 2021. From January through May 2022, Metro had 69 mentions. In the same time period of 2021, Metro only had 31 mentions. In May 2022 alone, Metro was covered by 18 stories..

Discussion was had.

Meeting Minutes – June 23, 2022

Agenda Item #6: Resolution #425: Conversion of the Transit Authority of the City of Omaha, dba Metro, to a Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority

(A. Haase)

Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statutes §18-1801 to §18-1825, known and cited as the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority Act, the Transit Authority of the City of Omaha, dba Metro, may convert to a regional metropolitan transit authority with an affirmative two-thirds vote of its Board of Directors. As of the effective date of the conversion, Metro shall remain a body corporate and politic and a governmental subdivision of the State of Nebraska, but thereafter shall be known as the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha.

In addition to the powers and authority granted under the Transit Authority Law (Nebraska Revised Statutes §14-1801 to §14-1826), such regional metropolitan transit authority shall have and possess all of the powers and authority of, together with the duties and responsibilities of, a regional metropolitan transit authority pursuant to the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority Act. The operating jurisdiction of such regional metropolitan transit authority shall be deemed to extend to all areas within the boundaries of the municipality that established the transit authority under the Transit Authority Law, as may thereafter be expanded.

At any time after the conversion into a regional metropolitan transit authority, any municipality that is within the same metropolitan statistical area or combined statistical area as such regional metropolitan transit authority may decide, by an affirmative two-thirds vote of its governing body, to request to join such regional metropolitan transit authority. Upon approval of such request by a two-thirds vote of the board of directors of such regional metropolitan transit authority, the operating jurisdiction of such regional metropolitan transit authority shall be deemed to extend to all areas within the boundaries of such municipality, as may thereafter be expanded.

The effective date of the conversion to a regional metropolitan transit authority shall be August 1, 2022.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Mr. Lund

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #7: Board Chair Report

(A. Haase)

Ms. Haase shared with the Board that the Policy & Planning Committee has been focused on Resolution #425. There are a few other policy items that the committee will continue to work through that have not been updated in a number of years. The Board had the retreat on May 27, 2022, which was the only other big item from the past month.

No updates were shared from the Finance Committee.

Mr. Lund and Mr. Lawse reported that the Operations Committee has been focused on Resolution #425 as well. Other items were covered by agenda items previously addressed during today's meeting.

Meeting Minutes – June 23, 2022

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

Thursday, July 28, 2022, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at Metro Transit Authority’s Administrative Building.

Agenda Item #9: Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was entertained to adjourn the meeting at 9:11 a.m.

Motion by Ms. Plucker; Second by Mr. Lawse

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Ms. Amy Haase – Chair

Recording Secretary