

Meeting Minutes – May 20, 2021

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF OMAHA
2222 Cuming Street
Omaha, Nebraska, 68102
May 20, 2021
MINUTES

The Transit Authority of the City of Omaha Board met in Regular Session on Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 8:30 a.m., virtually and in person at the Authority's Administration Building, 2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102, 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
E. Simpson, Legal/Human Resource Director (Absent)
D. Finken, Finance Director
D. Jameson, Safety Director
K. Shadden, Operations Director
L. Barritt, Marketing Director
K. Pendland, IT Director
J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager (Absent)
J. Rumery, Grant Administrator (Absent)
Rebecca Mahr, Recording Secretary

Others Present:

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 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 April 22, 2021.

Motion by Ms. Plucker; Second by Mr. Meadows

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #3a: Administrative Reports

(L. Cencic for E. Simpson)

- Metro is happy to welcome to new fixed operators to the team. Both new employees are currently in training. Metro is also happy to announce a new diesel mechanic who started last week.
- Metro has made a conditional offer to the preferred candidate for the new Deputy Executive Officer position.
- Applications remain very low overall and hiring continues to be a challenge.
- Metro is currently rolling out a comprehensive marketing campaign to target hiring efforts.
- Metro's 2020 Financial report has been forwarded to renew our self-insurance certification.
- Lastly, an updated monthly staffing activity report is included separately from the Board packet, to replace the copy that was initially included in the packet.

Agenda Item # 3b: Administrative Reports

(D. Jameson)

Continue with staff training across many departments. New model training continues with the new New Flyer series 2000 buses. Maintenance training was held with Allison Transmission. We also held four classes with staff. Allison Transmission sent two staff members from Indianapolis to train our staff. In addition, they brought two local staff members from the local representative of Allison Transmission. Each class lasted about an hour and a half and was a combination of in-class and hands-on training. We staged 2 buses downstairs of the new 2000 series, one on the ground and one up in the air, to show the bus attributes and to train on troubleshooting. We plan to have follow-up training later this year with Allison Transmission depending on their schedule.

Refresher ORBT training continues with emphasis on station parking and driving. We continue to work with Hexagon Agility, our CNG bus tank manufacturer to perform on-site tank inspections and assist us in the development of a training program. We continue to investigate additional training opportunities for all Metro staff in the future.

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We have completed the bus operator barriers on the New Flyer buses. We have also received the Gillig templates and have started the installation on the Gillig buses. Those will be followed up by installations in the Alexander Dennis buses, which will be the last buses to receive operator barriers.

Pre-production process for our new 40-foot electric buses continues. We still have weekly meetings. Production remains on schedule as of this month. The first bus is arriving the week after Thanksgiving and then one bus per week after that. We continue working with the engineering team along with the New Flyer engineering team so that Metro is prepared to support electrical charging units for these new buses.

Throughout late last month, operational and admin staff were involved in Assault Awareness and Prevention for Transit training. That was facilitated again by NTI. This is a virtual “train the trainer” format so we will be taking these pieces and evolving them into an all-staff training to include everyone. As the Board may recall, we have trained the entire operational staff twice before in Assault Awareness. We continue to look for other opportunities to train staff in this type of environment.

The Think Transit conference was well received by Metro staff. This again is annual training supported by Trapeze, the company that runs our operational software. All staff said that it was a great opportunity with many valuable take-aways. We sent two additional staff members and the training lasted for three days.

Metro continues to work with Trapeze on the next generation of their operational software that is used by Dispatch on Fixed Route service. We are one of fifteen sites to beta sites around the country to act in this capacity. The next generation of this operational software will all be cloud-based. We have two more webinars slated for early next month to have follow-up conversations.

Metro’s COVID-19 initiative continues. We have not changed anything. The building and fleet are sanitized every day beginning at 2:00 a.m. All vehicles are cleaned prior to the beginning of each day. Cleaning includes wiping down the entire operator’s compartment, treating the passenger covered seat inserts, and wiping down all doors and surfaces. Buses continue to be traded out mid-day, weather conditions permitting. Our daily building mitigations include efforts to fog the entire building, wiping down all surfaces, and cleaning all common areas and bathrooms. All ORBT stations receive top to bottom deep cleaning and power washing every week. We empty trash twice per week. Anything else is on an as-needed basis. This process takes about two and a half days for the crew working eight hours a day to complete.

Finally, Metro staff wish all Board members a safe and happy Memorial Day weekend. As this is a federal holiday, all Metro services will be closed on Monday, May 31st.

Agenda Item # 3c: Administrative Reports

(J. Rose)

Social media: Metro continues to gain followers across platforms. Content in the month of April include ample project work, including K-12 Rides Free, Bus to Ballot, and MetroNEXT. We are seeing consistent traction on Twitter, with more than 5,000 impressions per post for the year so far.

Earned media: Metro was featured in at least 15 earned media stories last month, focusing primarily on K-12 Rides Free and Bus to Ballot. The Omaha World-Herald also ran an article on Art+ ORBT last week.

Campaigns: Metro’s paid campaign focus currently is on hiring and recruitment. We have two social media campaigns running across Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook; one specifically targets operators and drives the audience directly to Careerlink, while the other is a general hiring push and drives the audience to Metro’s

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Careers page. This provides two different paths of exposure as users navigate their social media feeds. There are more than 34,000 impressions across platforms currently, with click rates range from 2%-5% (Twitter has the highest reach and click rate). The first campaign finishes on the 22nd, at which point we will assess results and plan for the next round. We are also utilizing ORBT kiosks, bus hood signs, and continue to explore additional digital and outdoor ad content, in addition to broadcast media.

Agenda Item #4: Request Approval of Amended By-Laws

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Haase informed the Board of the decision to table this request to provide more time to review the amended By-Laws before approval.

Motion by Mr. Meadows; Second by Ms. Plucker

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #5: Administrative Report

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro now has 60% of employees who are now fully vaccinated, which is just above the county average.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that a new pick will go into effect on Sunday, May 23, 2021.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that due to staffing challenges, COVID-19, and decreased ridership, Metro will not be offering shuttle services for the College World Series in 2021. Other bus services will run and ORBT fare will continue to be free during that time, so hopefully that will incentivize attendees to use public transit and walk the few extra blocks from downtown to the College World Series location.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that the new K-12 fare program is going well. Metro had approximately 1,000 students take advantage of the program so far. Exact numbers will be provided in the future.

Lastly, Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Metro staff is currently evaluating potential ORBT lines for MetroNEXT.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item #6: Board Chair Report

(A. Haase)

Ms. Haase informed the Board that in the future, this report will be an opportunity for individual committees to share updates with all Board members. Ms. Haase updated the Board that the Program & Policy Committee finalized initial criteria to be used in evaluating potential new ORBT lines in MetroNEXT efforts. The committee members had a great discussion of what is appropriate to provide for different corridors and how to maintain the

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integrity of the ORBT brand in the future. Mr. Lund of the Operations Committee informed the Board that this committee had an initial kickoff meeting to define how to best serve staff in the future. The committee is building those processes now and is developing a draft charter. Mr. Lawse of the Policy Committee informed the Board that this committee is considering what are the most relevant reports in the Board packet and is considering the development of a strategic plan tied to what started with Project Phoenix and what is being continued with MetroNEXT efforts. The Finance Committee will have an update next month, as Metro starts work on the 2022 preliminary budget.

Agenda Item #7: Executive Session

Ms. Haase entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session at 9:13 a.m.

Motion by Mr. Lund; Second by Mr. Lawse

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

Ms. Haase entertained a motion to return to Regular Session at 9:31 a.m.

Motion by Mr. Lund; Second by Mr. Lawse.

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

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

Tuesday, June 24, 2021, 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 9:31 a.m.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Mr. Lund

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

Ms. Amy Haase – Chair

Recording Secretary