

Meeting Minutes – October 28, 2021

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF OMAHA
2222 Cuming Street
Omaha, Nebraska, 68102
October 28, 2021
MINUTES**

The Transit Authority of the City of Omaha Board met in Regular Session on Thursday, September 23, 2021 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 (Absent)

Authority Staff:

L. Cencic, CEO/Executive Director
I. Maldonado, Deputy Executive Officer
E. Simpson, Legal/Human Resource Director (Absent)
L. Barritt, Marketing Director (Absent)
K. Pendland, IT Director
J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager
J. Rumery, Grant Administrator (Absent)

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 8:35 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 September 23, 2021.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Mr. Lund

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #3: Administrative Report

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro is very excited about the upcoming APTA (American Public Transportation Association) conference. This year is a big exposition year, which is something they hold every three years. A number of staff will be attending this meeting from November 7th – 10th in Orlando, Florida. We look forward to gaining great insight into industry best practices, new technologies, and other up-and-coming topics in transit.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Metro successfully launched Umo in late September and started charging fares on ORBT at the beginning of this month. It is up and running. Metro is very pleased with the project overall although we experienced some technical difficulties with TVMs and the integration of Umo. We have been working very closely with our contractor to resolve these and any customer concerns. Mr. Rose will be talking in his report about the extensive work we have been doing with Umo ambassadors. Umo is a national product that has been launched at numerous agencies across the country, but this is the first time anywhere in the US that they have worked with this subcontractor to integrate TVMs into this application. Despite the bumps in the road, the flexibility it will offer Metro customers is something we are really excited about.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro held operator training this month as well. Twelve sessions were held for operators and dispatchers. We trained on a number of things including Umo, customer service, driving in winter conditions, and rules and regulations pertaining to driving near bike facilities. Ms. Cencic acknowledged Mr. Sherping, Mr. Wells, and Mr. Maldonado, for their work on these training sessions.

Ms. Cencic shared with the Board that Metro's ORBT system was nominated for a Laurels Award. The official announcement will be made on November 11th. Metro certainly appreciates the recognition.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Metro will be losing Mr. Rose, Communications and Community Relations Manager. Mr. Rose will be going to another transit agency. His last day with Metro is November 16th. He has been with Metro for 5 ½ years. Mr. Rose was originally hired as the Outreach Coordinator to focus on getting ready for ORBT communications and launch. Since then, he has really grown during this time with Metro, and

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has taken on a number of new projects including all community relations for Metro, media relations, some marketing, and has even delved into some project manager roles as the K-12 project manager so he will be missed. However, we are very excited for him in this new opportunity.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item #4a: Administrative Reports

(L. Cencic for E. Simpson)

- Metro's Finance Director, Ms. Distefano, resigned earlier this month to pursue another opportunity. That position has been reposted.
- Metro has also posted a new position for the Human Capital and Talent Development Director. This is the HR position who will take over recruitment, employee issues, and help to build an internal talent development and training program. We have a great training program for operators but are looking to expand that effort to all areas of Metro.
- Metro continues with hiring promotions. There is a new banner hanging outside on the west side of the building. We also continue ads and other methods of reaching the public.
- Metro would like to welcome a new Paratransit operator who began training last week, and Ms. Brockman who has recently joined us as our Finance Clerk. We have also promoted an internal candidate to a Finance Clerk who will be starting in the Finance Department next week.
- Ms. Simpson and Ms. Cencic met with the Senior Director of Workforce Development from the Omaha Chamber recently to strategize ways to improve recruitment efforts because Metro currently has a record number of positions available.
- Metro will be submitting applications for quotes to renew the excess workman's comp insurance. This is a lengthy process to gather all of the related data.
- Metro continues to monitor the work place and provide guidance to employees in regards to COVID-19. We still have a few cases but our numbers have dramatically decreased from peak. We are also in the early planning stages of working with the Health Department to set up a mobile vaccine site at our North Omaha Transit Center.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item # 4b: Administrative Reports

(I. Maldonado)

Metro would like to thank staff for the great work they perform each day to ensure safe and timely service delivery to our customers. Since our last meeting, staff have worked persistently to ensure that Metro has adequate number of operators and buses available each day to ensure safe and reliable services to customers. We have seen a remarkable improvement in this area with only a few instances where parts of a route might have been affected.

Earlier this month we experienced delays in the repair of ORBT buses resulting in a number of 60' articulated buses being out of service. This occurred due to an internal shortage of parts as well as due to an unanticipated delay in parts delivery. To elaborate, this is a national shortage of certain parts. Our maintenance staff and Procurement Department have reached out to try to stock up on parts that we know we use frequently in order to prevent further delays.

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Our new operator schedules began on Sunday, October 3rd. This new schedule has also improved operator coverage during the day and we have additional personnel on the extra board. On October 14th, members of our Maintenance team, Ms. Cencic and I visited StarTran to learn more about their electric bus program and its operations. It was a great visit and the information gained will prove helpful as we prepare for the delivery of our first 3 electric buses.

As I mentioned earlier, at a previous meeting on October 23rd, Metro assisted with the transportation participants at the Omaha Airport Authority Veteran Hospital Multi-Agency Emergency Management Exercise. One Metro bus was all that was needed for the exercise, and it was reported that the event was very successful.

During the last Board meeting, I provided an update on the status of our hazard identification and removal efforts. I would like to recognize Mr. Shering for taking the lead on helping Metro get the agency to a perfect safety status and for spearheading this program. Metro removed 98% of all potential hazards prior to the last meeting, and as of yesterday, we have removed all hazardous materials that were still remaining, with 500 gallons of oil being sucked out of our collection pit.

This concludes my presentation. I would be glad to answer any questions that members of the Board may have. Thank you.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item # 4c: Administrative Reports

(J. Rose)

We continue to see steady growth across all social media platforms. Our social calendar focused on Umo this month, due to the recent launch of the system, which included passenger education information, videos, and more. We also continue to push information about projects such as Art+ ORBT and post rider alert updates.

We had great coverage in the news media last month, with 15 stories across 8 outlets, ranging from local to national outlets. Most were stories about Umo, and included six media demonstrations that we hosted. We were also featured in an Art+ ORBT story on WOWT.

In-person outreach continues to fluctuate during the pandemic, but we attended three events through the 15th – the board reporting date – as well as a couple additional events since then.

Much of our energy was dedicated to Umo outreach and communications. Efforts ranged from a multitude of print, digital, and display collateral to Umo Ambassadors (we had 34 ambassadors dedicate more than 300 hours and reach more than 1000 people in the first round of 21 days alone) to media engagement.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item # 5: Request Approval to Award Work Order 15 – Metro Sustainable Building Upgrades Project as a Part of the A&E IDIQ Contract with SRF

(J. Willoughby)

The A&E Contract with SRF is split into multiple task orders. Work Order 15 – Metro Sustainable Building Upgrades Project includes the following building upgrades: Removal of skylights over the vehicle storage area

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and replace with roofing, installation of solar panels on the replaced roof sections, upgrading 42 electrical subpanels, providing conditioned air in the maintenance area of the garage, enhancing the number of CNG sensors and provide scaffolding to allow improved access to sensors, upgrading and activating the deluge system as part of the internal fire suppression system, and replacing the westside parking lot and loading dock area pavement. Metro negotiated with SRF in three steps. The first step was the negotiation of the scope of work which was approved by Metro and SRF to include the design and construction administration of the items listed above. The second step was the negotiation of the fixed fee percentage, and the third step was the negotiation on hours required to complete the work order. Metro and SRF agreed on 5,716 hrs. The negotiated hours were 3.6% lower than the Independent Cost Estimate. Based on hourly rates, Metro and SRF negotiated a total fee of \$794,810.13. The negotiated fee amount was 1.3% lower than the Independent Cost Estimate.

We are requesting Board authority to enter into Work Order #15 – Metro Sustainable Building Upgrades Project as a part of the A&E IDIQ Contract with SRF for the amount of \$794,810.13.

This item was forwarded to the Procurement Committee, prior to the Board meeting for their review.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Lund; Second by Mr. Meadows

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #6: Board Action in Support of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Justice
(D. Lawse & A. Haase)

Vision: Metro is a valued transportation choice for all members of our community and a vital partner in Omaha's future.

Mission: Metro connects people, places and opportunities through quality transit service.

We aim to realize this vision by cultivating and investing in a culture of mutual respect, appreciation, and teamwork.

We value care: We care about our customers and each other.

A vision is what we journey toward. We are on this journey together. We strive to always be learning and evolving. Part of this learning and evolving is doing the work to deepen our care of our customers and one another through valuing diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and justice. This work is important. This work can be hard. This work makes us stronger. We are committed to this work and helping our customers (riders), employees and partners do the same.

The most resilient organizations, communities, and groups of people are ones that are created together with all of the unique perspectives and backgrounds found within those groups.

We are making strides to get better through...

- Accessible services including MOBY
- Title VI analyses whenever major changes occur

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- Audio announcements
- Real-time arrival information
- Umo fare payment system and monthly fare-capping
- MetroNEXT planning study
- Investing in Metro’s future leaders

These strides are helping us to support this work...and there is still more to do. We acknowledge that we always need to be learning and evolving and we aim to be better.

Because we value Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Justice and this work is critical to making us stronger and better able to support our employees and customers, we make this motion to direct staff to develop a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Justice plan of action to continue to learn and more fully embody living these values for our customers, our team, and our partners.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Meadows; Second by Mr. Lawse

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #7: Board Chair Report

(A. Haase)

From the Programs and Policy Committee, we focused primarily on the resolution regarding the Board Action to Support Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Justice. Our next projects to focus on will be looking at updating the Sustainability policy. Ms. Haase passed the floor on to Mr. Lund.

Mr. Lund updated that the Operations Committee has been focused on the current workforce challenges. We can’t say enough how much everyone’s efforts are appreciated. Things are very stressful right now due to things like parts that aren’t available, which is completely outside our control currently. It’s good to see building improvements coming through again. Mr. Lawse reminded the Board that Ms. Cencic is up for her annual review in the near future, and this process will need to be activated and followed.

Ms. Haase and Ms. Cencic updated the Board that the Finance/Procurement Committee is preparing for the annual budget approval.

Discussion was had.

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

Monday, November 15, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at Metro Transit Authority’s Administrative Building.

Agenda Item #9: Adjournment

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There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was entertained to adjourn the meeting at 9:26 a.m.

Motion by Mr. Lund; Second by Mr. Meadows

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Ms. Amy Haase – Chair

Recording Secretary