

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
REGIONAL METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF OMAHA
2222 Cuming Street
Omaha, Nebraska, 68102
October 24, 2024
8:30 a.m.**

MINUTES

The Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha Board met on Thursday, September 24, 2024, at 9:15 a.m., in person at the Authority's Administration Building, 2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102, and virtually. Notice was published in the Omaha Daily Record on September 18, 2024, in advance of the meeting. 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:

Mr. Daniel Lawse, Chair
Mr. Othello Meadows, Vice Chair (Absent)
Mr. Jay Lund
Ms. Amy Haase
Ms. Julia Plucker (Absent)

Authority Staff:

L. Cencic, CEO/Executive Director
K. Pendland, Interim Deputy Executive Officer
D. Grant, Human Capital, and Talent Development Director
E. Simpson, Legal Director (Absent)
W. Clingman, Finance Director
J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager (Absent)
A. Johnson, Civil Rights & Inclusion Director
J. Beverage, Maintenance Director (Virtually)
N. Ebat, Sr. Manager of Communications & Community Relations (Absent)
S. Perry, Executive Administrator & Board Secretary

Others Present:

Other Metro staff
Members of the public

Metro connects people, places, and opportunities through quality transit services.

Agenda Item #1 Call to Order at 8:31 am

The Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Omaha Daily Record on October 18, 2024. 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.

Agenda Item #2 Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The first item of business is the approval of minutes from the previous meeting.

- a. Special Meeting: September 24, 2024

Motioned by Lund; Seconded by Haase

ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Meadows and Plucker Absent), MOTION CARRIES

- b. Regular Meeting: September 24, 2024

Motioned by Lund; Seconded by Haase

ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Meadows and Plucker Absent), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #3 General Public Comment Period

This is an opportunity for members of the audience to be heard regarding topics related to the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha, not on the agenda for a maximum of 2 minutes.

Keith Gamerl, Teamsters Local 554 business representative for Council Bluffs.

He informed the Board that as of June of 2024, there has been an open issue with Metro without a resolution. He is asking to be contacted to resolve this issue.

James De Mott, a volunteer reporter with Documenters who is contracting with the Omaha World-Herald (OWH)

Mr. De Mott introduced himself and informed the Board that he was writing an article on Metro's "good work." His article will be published in the Flatwater Free Press.

Agenda Item #4 Administrative Report

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic reported on ridership as Metro is seeing a nice healthy growth in our ridership. In September Metro carried over 285,000 rides and is just shy of 2.4 million trips year to date. Year-to-date ridership has increased compared to 2023. On ORBT year to date ridership is 449,000 which is an increase of about 13% from 2023. For K-12 Ridership year to date is at 436,000 which is 25% over the year to date in 2023.

Ms. Cencic reported on the status of the three new shuttle buses recently purchased with Board approval. They are currently in use on fixed route service. Ms. Cencic thanked the Maintenance and IT Departments for retrofitting and making amendments to the buses by adding bike racks and automatic vehicle locators (AVL) to show up on MyRide. Additionally, the Training Department is instructing operators on the unique handling requirements of the shuttles, such as blind spots that differ from the regular fleet and Moby vehicles. The shuttle buses will be used on various routes, but often on express and green routes. The assignment of the shuttle buses will be based primarily on ridership and used judiciously.

Ms. Cencic also provided an update on Metro's Leadership Academy, noting its success with four of the fifteen current participants earning promotions this year. The cohort is nearing completion, with one regular session and a capstone project presentation remaining. For the upcoming 2025 program, applications are open to eligible employees with at least one year of service at Metro. The program format will shift to half-day sessions each month instead of full-day sessions.

Interim DEO Kevin Pendland and Ms. Cencic have been connecting directly with staff, attending quarterly trainings, and participating in Q&A sessions to address questions and gather feedback. They recently launched a new monthly initiative called “Coffee Chat,” where employees are invited to drop in, enjoy coffee, and discuss any topics they wish.

Ms. Cencic concluded her report and opened it to questions from the Board. There were none.

Agenda Item #5 Administrative Reports:

Administration/Human Resources

(D. Grant)

Mr. Grant reported that the most recent edition of the quarterly newsletter is out now, and it highlights coworkers, milestones, promotions, and retirements.

In September, eleven (11) individuals started new roles that included three internal promotions. Five were bus operators, two paratransit operators, and one body shop mechanic. The promotions consisted of a Mechanic Supervisor, a Transit Dispatcher, and a Maintenance Coordinator.

Meto has identified ten (10) additional candidates for start dates in October.

Mr. Grant concluded his report and opened it to questions from the Board. There were none.

Programs/Operation

(K. Pendland)

Mr. Pendland reported that early departures remained below 5% for September and stayed steady at that level so far in October. Service Interruptions for September are the lowest Metro has seen in a year, with 97.1% of service hours being operated. The numbers for October are so far looking to extend that trend.

Mr. Pendland further expressed his appreciation for the patience that the Board and the public have shown to Metro, and we will continue to strive to improve the quality and reliability of our services.

Mr. Pendland concluded his report and opened it to questions from the Board. There were none.

Communications

(A. Pigaga)

Ms. Pigaga reported on behalf of Ms. Ebat.

Communications recently helped to coordinate Eagles Take Flight Day with Central High School. It's a day when high schoolers head out into the community to explore different professions around Omaha. Nearly 1,000 students boarded metro buses twice that day to get to their locations.

Other activities that Communications was a part of are as follows:

- Attended the College of St. Mary resource fair for single mothers to help remind students they have a pass program and can access Metro Transit without paying a fare.
- Partnered with Vision Zero for a press conference on the opening of a new pedestrian refuge along Route 24. It allows pedestrians a place to stand if they can't make it across the street. It's also near several bus stops.
- Members of Metro's Civil Rights and Inclusion team also attended Project Connect which helped connect unhoused members of our community with various resources all in one place. Metro staff spoke with a number of people to help connect them with transit.

- Metro will be providing its Bus to Ballot Program for the seventh time this Election Day, November 5th. Riders will be able to ride any Metro buses, ORBT, or MOBY fare-free to help ensure transportation is not a reason people can't access the important right to vote.
- Metro Communications be attending two school-related fairs later this month to teach students and parents more about K-12 Rides Free and how students can access transit for the various opportunities they have around the metro.
- November 18th Metro will have some special surprises for riders in celebration of ORBT hitting two million rides. We're not quite there but are very close.
- On Saturday, October 26th, Metro will be partnering with The RiverFront on their It's Fall Y'all event for Halloween. An ORBT bus will be decorated as our take on a haunted house for families to visit, pass out candy, and talk about the K-12 Rides Free program, as well as all of Metro's services.

Ms. Pigaga concluded her report and opened it to questions from the Board.

The Board asked if St. Mary's ever put in a sidewalk to make better access from the bus stop to the campus. Ms. Pigaga indicated she did not have the answer but would investigate it and get back to the Board.

The Board inquired about the application process for the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC), which will consist of eleven members. Of these, five will serve two-year terms, while six will serve one-year terms. To date, Metro has received 17 eligible applications, which are currently under review. The selected committee members will be announced in mid-November.

Agenda Item #6 Resolution 2024-30: Request Approval of the Hourly and Salaried Employees' Pension Plan Actuarial Reports as of January 1, 2024 (W. Clingman)

Staff requested approval of the updated Hourly and Salaried Employees' Pension Plan Actuarial Valuation reports, which were produced and presented by Becky Sielman of Milliman Retirement Services for both the Hourly and Salaried Pension Plans. Both the Hourly and Salaried Committees met on September 26, 2024, to discuss the report presented to them by Milliman. The finalized reports were included in the Board Packet information.

Mr. Clingman concluded his report and opened it to questions from the Board.

Ms. Cencic further added that Metro did complete an Experience Study for both plans, which reviewed the plan assumptions such as the age of retirement. The actuarial report reflects those updated assumptions. These were the first Experience Studies to review the assumptions in a very long time. Mr. Clingman suggests this should be done every five years.

The Board approved unanimously.

Motioned by Haase; Seconded by Lund

ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Meadows and Plucker Absent), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #7 Board Chair Report

(D. Lawse)

Mr. Lawse reported that the Operations Committee met, and the Board will be going into Executive Session to review Lauren's performance evaluation.

He reflected on how this is the current Board's final months serving Metro. January the newly Elected Board will start. Mr. Lawse expressed his appreciation for the progress and changes Metro has made since becoming a Board member and serving his 10+ years.

Agenda Item #8 Executive Session at 9:00 am

This Board reserves the right to enter into Executive Session in order to protect the public interest with respect to discussion regarding litigation, personnel, and other matters listed in the Nebraska Revised Statute § 84-1410.

Motioned by Haase; Seconded by Lund

ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Meadows and Plucker Absent), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #9 Date, Time, and Place of Next Regular Board Meeting

Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.

Authority's Administrative Building

Reconvened back into Regular Meeting at 9:32 am

Motioned by Lund; Seconded by Haase

ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Meadows and Plucker Absent), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #10 Adjournment at 9:33 am

Motioned by Lund; Seconded by Haase

ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Meadows and Plucker Absent), MOTION CARRIES