

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
REGIONAL METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF OMAHA
2222 Cuming Street
Omaha, Nebraska, 68102
November 19, 2024
8:30 a.m.**

MINUTES

The Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha Board met on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 8:30 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 November 13, 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
Mr. Jay Lund
Ms. Amy Haase (Absent)
Ms. Julia Plucker

Authority Staff:

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

Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Omaha Daily Record on November 13, 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. Regular Meeting: October 24, 2024

Motioned by Lund; Seconded by Meadows

ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Haase 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.

No public comments were presented to the Board.

Agenda Item #4 Administrative Report

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic reported on a new Microtransit pilot project in the Omaha region. This is something Metro has been looking at since developing the MetroNext plan. Recently, Metro sent out a Request for Proposals (RFP) and received two responses and is currently beginning the process of contract negotiations to further pan out what this will all entail. Metro is very excited about the additional service that can be provided to the community. Ms. Cencic recently presented to the Transit Advisory Committee regarding the project and received some feedback. Soon Metro will be announcing additional opportunities for community and stakeholder feedback before this is brought before the board.

Ms. Cencic advised the Board that she purchased gasoline that will fuel the Moby vehicles and shuttle buses. She did speak with Mr. Lawse, the Board Chair, regarding this purchase that will cover November through January at \$1.935 per gallon. This fell within her purchasing authority and did not require Board approval.

Ms. Cencic and Mr. Pendland Interim Deputy Executive Officer (Interim DEO) recently hosted another round of "Coffee Chats," providing staff with an informal opportunity to share ideas, ask questions, and voice concerns. She is pleased to report that these sessions have been well attended and positively received. Sessions were held in October and November, with additional sessions scheduled for December.

The 2025 Metro Leadership Academy is set to begin this January with new participants for the year. Currently, 31 applications have been received to fill a spot of approximately 15 slots for the new cohort. It will be a tough decision to determine who will participate. This Leadership Academy is designed for internal participants from all levels and departments who have been employed with Metro for at least a year focusing 50% of the curriculum on leadership and the other 50% on transit-specific guidance, requirements, and regulations. We will work to ensure attendees are a well-balanced cohort to ensure the best capacity and environment for learning different perspectives.

Ms. Cencic also informed the Board that tomorrow she will be sitting on a Table Talk panel with Inclusive Communities to discuss Transportation Justice at the Metro Community College Fort Campus.

Lastly, she shared the ridership numbers for October which was 321,000. She was happy to share it was the highest month of ridership in 2024 which was up more than 8,000 riders over October 2023. Metro is currently to date at 2.7+ million trips this year. For the K-12 Rides Free Program, the current year ridership is 266,000 with a total to date of 1.37 million.

The most exciting milestone is reaching two million rides on ORBT which aligns with its fourth anniversary. Much to celebrate with ORBT and overall rides. Ms. Ebat will share more in her report regarding the activities surrounding the ORBT milestones.

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

Mr. Lund asked for additional information regarding Microtransit, what it exactly is as a service to the general public, and when it would start.

Ms. Cencic advises it will begin in 2025 depending on the negotiation process and set up with a third-party provider. They will provide the service, and it will be an app-based requested ride. On the app, a rider would request the trip, and it will then navigate through service zones based on where you are. The algorithm sends a vehicle e.g. car or van, to you as a rider, or if there is a way it could be combined with transit. It may be origin to destination, origin to transit line, or vice versa. The third party would be providing the vehicles and service under the branding of Metro which is why it is a pilot. The rate structure is to be determined but looked at as a premium service. This service can help serve areas outside of a fixed route that are difficult to serve with our current services. This is a chance to start something using new technology.

Mr. Lawse asked will this extend the territory for our services or in the current area of services.

Ms. Cencic indicated a little bit of both filling in gaps in current areas and then reaching some hard-to-serve locations.

There were no other questions or comments.

Agenda Item #5 Administrative Reports:

Administration/Human Resources

(D. Grant)

Mr. Grant reported on recruiting in October. Metro started nine new individuals and identified 10 additional in November. Of the nine a couple of them had administrative roles. Veronica Cendejas was promoted to Operations Administrator, and Diane Grobeck Executive Operations Administrator will work closely with Metro's Interim Deputy Executive Officer. There were also internal promotions of Ken Davis, a longtime bus operator being promoted to Moby Dispatch.

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

Mr. Lawse asked how Metro is looking at meeting recruiting targets.

Mr. Grant reported that when Metro recruits it's done three months in advance and is currently on target for our service plans.

Programs/Operation

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic is reporting on behalf of Mr. Pendland (Interim DEO) who is currently on vacation. The continued focus is on avoiding service interruptions and early departures. She is happy to report that early departures for October were down to 4.2% and have remained below an average of 5% for the first part of November, which is a marked improvement.

Mr. Pendland and staff, in particular Metro's Transportation Manager, Bus Operators, and Dispatch, have worked hard to avoid service interruptions. A revised copy of the Service Interruptions Report was provided that shows that the service interruptions in October were the lowest in a year.

Another big effort in Operations is focusing on our Safety Committee. Mr. Sander Scheer, our new Director of Safety & Security, and Kevin Pendland, Interim DEO, are working alongside a consultant who specializes in safety to revitalize and formalize the Safety Committee. This Committee is comprised of 50% union representatives and 50% management employees who work together to analyze safety concerns, risks, and accidents identify mitigations and ways to resolve those, and form recommendations to Ms. Cencic for consideration.

Ms. Cencic concluded the Operations report and opened it to questions from the Board.

Mr. Lawse thanked the staff for their work on lowering the percentage of early departures and service interruptions.

Ms. Cencic extended a huge thank you to the maintenance staff for their work in helping to lower the service interruptions due to bus maintenance.

Communications

(N. Ebat)

Ms. Ebat reported what public engagement was conducted in October. The weekend before Halloween Metro joined community organizations at the Heartland of America Park for the annual "It's Fall Ya'll" event. It's something of a table trick-or-treat opportunity. Staff decorated the outside of the bus as a giant Jack-o-Lantern. Inside a family-friendly Haunted Bus was created for people to walk through. Metro became the attraction of the day with lines staff struggled to keep up with.

Metro staff walked in the Annual Bellevue Veteran's Day Parade the following weekend with several employees who are veterans themselves.

This most recent weekend Metro extended service on ORBT for the sold-out Billie Eilish concert, both to help alleviate traffic downtown and to give concertgoers a more sustainable way to attend the concert. Billie Eilish is a big proponent of public transit and has encouraged her fans to use it to get to and from her shows throughout the tour. It sounds like everything went off without a hitch, and ridership numbers will be available in the coming days.

As Ms. Cencic mentioned in her report Metro is celebrating ORBT hitting two million rides since its launch. Because ORBT and public transit are about community, Metro wanted to make sure the celebrations held highlight that this week. A trio of musicians with the Omaha Symphony played several pieces on board ORBT to surprise our riders with mini-concerts. They played a special rendition of "I Will Go the Distance" along with a few other pieces from their concert series. One news piece about it said through our partnership: "The Omaha Symphony demonstrated its commitment to

the community, bringing music to every corner of Omaha. This special event not only celebrated a milestone in public transit but also enriched the cultural life of the city,"

Ms. Ebat also shared that the communications team will be visiting ORBT stations with some little things to say thank you to our riders another icon of Omaha, the Bob Kerrey bridge will be lit up in ORBT orange to recognize our milestone as well same evening.

Agenda Item #6 2024-31 Request Approval to Enter into Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) Contract with SRF Consulting Group for Architectural and Engineering Services

(J. Willoughby)

A Request for Proposals solicitation was issued on October 1, 2024, for qualified firms to perform architectural and engineering services associated with a three-year IDIQ contract with an optional two-year extension. Three written proposals were received on October 31, 2024, with one proposal deemed non-responsive for not submitting all the required exhibits. A selection committee comprised of two MAPA staff and three Metro staff reviewed and scored the remaining two proposals. The result of the selection committee's scoring was a recommendation to award to SRF Consulting Group.

Metro requested Board authority to authorize the CEO to prepare, negotiate, and execute a contract with SRF Consulting Group for three years, with an optional two-year extension, for consultant services to complete numerous projects throughout the contract term. Scopes of work and fees, resulting in work orders, will be negotiated for each project, and awarded incrementally throughout the contract term. Any work order which exceeds the CEO's authority, per the purchasing policy, will be included on the agenda at future Board meetings throughout the contract term, prior to proceeding with any such work.

The Board approved unanimously.

Motioned by Meadows; Seconded by Plucker

ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Haase Absent), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #7 Resolution 2024-32: CEO Performance Evaluation 2024 (D. Lawse)

WHEREAS, Nebraska Statute §84-1410(1) empowers the Board of the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority to convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the CEO's 2024 performance evaluation, with Executive Sessions being confidential and restricted to Board Members and authorized Metro staff invited by the Board; and,

WHEREAS, The Board duly convened in Executive Session on October 24, 2024, to discuss the annual performance evaluation for the CEO, Lauren Cencic;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha that it has reviewed and adopted the attached evaluation for the CEO, Lauren Cencic, pertaining to the calendar year January through December 2024.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board approves a compensation adjustment for Ms. Cencic as a 4% salary raise effective at the start of the first pay period in 2025.

The Board approved unanimously.

Motioned by Lund; Seconded by Meadows

ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Haase Absent), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #8 Resolution 2024-33: CEO Employment Contract

(D. Lawse)

WHEREAS, the Board of the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha (“Metro”) and Ms. Lauren Cencic (“CEO”) entered into an employment agreement effective September 14, 2020; and

WHEREAS, The Board and Ms. Cencic find the agreement to be mutually beneficial and wish to extend the employment agreement, keeping all other terms contained in the employment agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha that it hereby approves the extension of the contract for the CEO, Lauren Cencic, for an additional period of three years, covering September 14, 2025, through September 13, 2028.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board authorizes the Board Chair to execute the contract extension with the CEO on behalf of the Board.

The Board approved unanimously.

Motioned by Meadows; Seconded by Plucker

ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Haase Absent), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #9 Board Chair Report

(D. Lawse)

One or two policies are coming before the Board in December. The Planning and Policy Committee met and discussed the implications of Federal funding for our services. Lauren Cencic and the staff are keeping track of those possible impacts.

Ms. Cencic and Ms. Perry are getting ready for the new Board. The new Elected Board’s first official day will be January 9th. Mr. Lawse informed the other Board Members that their last Board meeting will be in December with their last official day being on January 8th.

Agenda Item #10 Date, Time, and Place of Next Regular Board Meeting

Thursday, December 19, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.
Authority’s Administrative Building

Agenda Item #11 Adjournment at 9:00 a.m.

Motioned by Plucker; Seconded by Lund

ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Haase Absent), MOTION CARRIES