

AGENDA
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
REGIONAL METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF OMAHA
2222 Cuming Street
Omaha, Nebraska, 68102
August 22, 2024
8:30 a.m.

MINUTES

The Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha Board met on Thursday, August 22, 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 August 16, 2024, and a revision of the Notice of the Regular Meeting was published on August 21, 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 (Absent)
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 (Virtually)
W. Clingman, Finance Director (Virtually)
J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager (Absent)
R. Shering, Safety Director (Virtually)
A. Johnson, Civil Rights & Inclusion Director (Virtually)
J. Beverage, Maintenance Director (Virtually)
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 8:30 am

The Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Omaha Daily Record on August 16, 2024, and a revision of the Notice of the Regular Meeting was published on August 21, 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: July 25, 2024

Motioned by Haase; Seconded by Meadows

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS (LUND ABSENT, 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.

One audience member approached the podium to speak. She did not turn on her microphone therefore her name and address were not put on record.

The customer wanted the opportunity to be heard regarding the ORBT end of lines and the process as it involves riding the bus to get to her home. She is retired and enjoys riding the bus where she needs to go. However, several times she has been asked to get off of the bus at the end of the line. She boards the ORBT going eastbound but must ride it westbound to get home. She does not make a completed loop of the route and questions why she is not allowed to reboard the bus for the rest of the way home. She is willing to pay again but the driver has told her she can't swipe her card more than once. She has called Customer Service several times and has stopped catching the bus to the 8th Street stop. Customer Service did read the guidelines and it indicates at the end of the line she has to depart the bus but can get back on once it resumes. The drivers have never told her this information.

The Board appreciated her sharing her feedback and they recognized some inconsistencies but also appreciated her sharing what she likes about riding the Metro. Ms. Cencic indicated she will have staff reach out to her and will ensure that there is clarification around the procedures and will provide re-training if needed.

Agenda Item #4 Administrative Report

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic opened her report up with ridership numbers for July. In July, Metro carried 248,739, more than 12,000 rides over last year. From January to July, Metro carried 1.8 million rides in 2024, compared to 1.7 million last year. Additionally, the K-12 Rides Free program is going strong so far carrying 1.17 million total rides since its inception. For July 2024, there were just over 33,000 K-12 Rides Free program rides.

Metro is working with Metropolitan Community College (MCC) to complete major upgrades to the South Omaha Transit Center. There have been drainage challenges that have caused some concrete issues that require replacement. MCC has worked to improve many of the challenges with repairing the embankment running down to the concourse. In accordance with our lease with MCC, Metro shares the responsibility to maintain, repair, or replace the concourse. The original lease with MCC was signed in 2005 and is set to expire in 2025. In order to use FTA funds to help with the repairs to replace the concrete, Metro has to demonstrate to FTA that we will be able to maintain

satisfactory continuing control over the federal investment. To this end, Metro will be working with MCC to renew the lease for the transit center prior to expending federal funds.

Metro is currently implementing its sustainability project, staff and visitors have experienced disruption due to the first phase which begins with fixing the drainage issues and resurfacing the parking lot. Parking spots are at a premium right now but the administration and visitors lot is still available for those coming to Metro's office for assistance. An electrical contractor is also in the building working on some upgrades including some panel displacements. Next week the fire suppression workers will be at Metro to begin their work.

Metro has been working with the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART), a peer agency, learning and sharing knowledge on outreach, and planning. They also have some experience with Microtransit which was previously reported that Ms. Cencic is looking into as a potential solution here in Omaha. DART plans to visit Omaha as well as Metro visiting their agency to learn from one another.

This Friday, Metro leadership will be holding a workshop with the idea of working together as the senior leadership of Metro to become a more cohesive team and help to become better leaders to support the important work Metro does in connecting people places, and opportunities.

This afternoon, Metro will begin a new tradition of bringing back eight recent retirees to celebrate all their years of service here at Metro.

Safety Quarterly Trainings have finished with the bus operators addressing safety on the road and ensuring drivers are knowledgeable about the various pass programs including the most recent pass program with Creighton. The primary focus of the training was safety and reducing accidents.

Later in the agenda, a resolution regarding the fuel contract will be presented. It's noteworthy that fuel prices are favorable at the moment. Metro is considering going out for a future fuel contract that will cover February 2025 through August 2025. If that occurs, Metro will bring this new contract to the Board for full concurrence.

Lastly, Ms. Cencic closed by thanking staff for all of their hard work and reminding the Board, staff, and the public that Metro will be closed in observance of Labor Day on September 2nd and service will not operate that day.

Ms. Cencic concluded her report and opened up for questions from the Board.

The Board inquired about how the next phase of the parking project will impact staff parking and how this information is being communicated to staff to help them plan accordingly

Ms. Cencic informed the board that updates are being shared with staff, via emails and digital screens throughout the building. There will be enough parking, but the big push is making sure staff park within the lines of the parking spot to lessen the challenge. Paint lines are being refreshed and staff patrol the parking lot to make certain spaces are being used appropriately.

Agenda Item #5 Administrative Reports

Administration/Human Resources

(D. Grant)

Mr. Grant reported that six individuals started new roles at Metro. Of the six are four bus operators, one paratransit operator, and an HR Generalist. In addition to the new hires, HR has posted for a Mechanic Supervisor and a Project Manager.

Metro celebrated four paratransit and five bus operators' graduation yesterday. Metro welcomes them for being a part of the team and serving the community.

Six individuals will be honored for their time here at Metro by way of its first retirement celebration. We thank them for their years of service and want them to know how appreciated they were while with us.

Mr. Grant concluded his report and opened up for questions from the Board. There were none.

Programs/Operation

(K. Pendland)

Mr. Pendland informed the Board that on-time performance continues to improve. On average early departures were reduced by 2% in July and the numbers from August as of yesterday show an additional 5% reduction. If those numbers hold for the remainder of the month, it will represent a nearly 50% improvement from 16% to 8% since June. While the overall goal is to reduce this and maintain a level below 5%, the data is very encouraging.

Service interruptions are still a daily challenge. The maintenance team is working hard to reduce service interruptions due to vehicle availability and management is working with the union to provide additional incentives to mechanics for working additional hours. On service interruptions due to operator availability, Mr. Pendland had the opportunity to speak with the TWU union leadership earlier this week and both will be working together to identify the cause of this and will be investigating to find solutions. Mr. Pendland will be sharing their findings in the next Operations Committee meeting.

Mr. Pendland concluded his report and opened up for questions from the Board.

The Board asked what was driving behind the reduction from 16% to 8%.

Mr. Pendland responded that it is the new process and procedures in place to monitor on-time performance more closely.

Communications

(N. Ebat)

Ms. Ebat expounded more regarding the parking lot construction. Communications is working hard to encourage staff not to drive their cars in during construction to ease the burden of parking spots. They are pushing bike-share which Metro staff has access to an annual pass and bus rides.

Ms. Ebat reports that during July/August, the Metro Communications Department attended the Back to School Bash at the Children's Museum with plenty of other groups that provide community resources, particularly ones that are helpful as children enter or head back to school. Naturally, Metro had a lot to talk about when it came to the K-12 Rides Free program, there were plenty of parents who wanted to know more about how their kids could use it to get to school along with those who were interested in learning how to use the bus to get to the children's museum.

Communications also attended several days of the Omaha Public Schools (OPS) enrollment fair to help families get started in the new school year. On the first two days of school for OPS, staff also visited transit centers and rode several routes in the morning ahead of school start time to help students learn how to get around.

Metro partnered with our friends at Millwork Commons to be a featured venue on both days of this year's Open Omaha. It's put on by our partners at Omaha By Design. Metro shared ORBT with people who hadn't had a chance to check it out yet. There were a few people from other parts of the country who thought ORBT was futuristic.

Metro conducted some training at Lutheran Family Services. Metro's Community Mobility Coordinator and Communications Senior Manager met with a group of people from Lutheran Family Services who assist refugee families in getting situated in Omaha. Metro worked on training them on how to plan a ride, track a bus, and other ways their clients can navigate our system.

In August/September, Communications will be involved with Omaha Public Schools' Family Involvement Program. The program helps OPS students who are immigrants or refugees and their families learn English and other skills that will help them adjust to life in the U.S. Metro will be joining a session of their class later next month.

Metro will also be hosting three virtual trainings next month open to anyone who would like to join.

Ms. Ebat concluded her report and opened up for questions from the Board. There were none.

Agenda Item #6 Resolution: 2024-22 Request Approval of Fuel Contract (L. Cencic)

Metro determined that it was prudent to obtain bids for both diesel and gasoline fuel due to a decrease in fuel market prices. Metro's most recent contract with Sapp Bros Petroleum ended in July 2024.

On July 24, 2024, Metro requested bids for both diesel and gasoline for a six (6) month period beginning in August 2024. Metro received six (6) bids for these contracts. The low, responsive, compliant bid for ultra-low sulfur diesel was from Petroleum Traders at \$2.5730 per gallon for 232,500 gallons. The low, responsive, compliant bid for gasoline was also from Petroleum Traders at \$2.1669 per gallon for 60,000 gallons.

The CEO/Executive Director advised the Board Chair, Mr. Lawse, who agreed to award these contracts. Both proposed contracts are below the \$3/gallon budgeted for fuel for 2024. Metro's most recent diesel contract which expired in July 2024 was \$2.5643/gallon. Metro's most recent contract for gasoline that expired in July was \$2.0499 per gallon.

Metro requested full Board concurrence for two contract awards to Petroleum Traders in accordance with Metro's Procurement Policy. The contracts with Petroleum Traders will be in the amount of \$598,222.50 for the ultra-low sulfur diesel purchase and \$130,014 for the gasoline contract.

Petroleum Traders is paid upon invoicing after delivery, which is spread out incrementally throughout the contract period.

The Board approved unanimously.

Motioned by Meadows; Seconded by Haase

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS (LUND ABSENT, PLUCKER ABSENT), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #7 Resolution: 2024-23 Request Approval of Purchase of Transit Buses (L. Cencic)

Metro has identified three used transit buses for sale from Transportation Equipment Sales Corp. (Tesco). Staff recommended the purchase of these three buses to help reduce service interruptions caused in large part by parts shortages and supply chain issues. These three buses would be used on fixed route services when a full-sized bus is unavailable.

The three buses are all Ford E-450 body-on-chassis-style vehicles with larger bodies than Metro's current MOBY vehicles, with seating for 16-20 passengers. All three vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts, appear in good condition, and have low mileage. One vehicle is in near-new condition. These vehicles were inspected by Metro staff prior to purchase.

The proposed vehicles for purchase are:

- A 2016 Starcraft vehicle with 52,789 miles for \$44,900
- A 2017 Turtle Top vehicle with 27,035 miles for \$69,900
- A 2024 Startrans vehicle with 1,718 miles for \$114,900

Staff requested authority to procure these buses from Tesco for an amount not to exceed \$250,000 including delivery. This purchase will be paid for with local funds. This resolution was sent to the Finance/Procurement Committee for review.

The Board approved unanimously.

Motioned by Meadows; Seconded by Haase

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS (LUND ABSENT, PLUCKER ABSENT), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #8 Board Chair Report

(D. Lawse)

Mr. Lawse reported that the Operations and Planning & Policy Committees met to discuss several items that were discussed in today's meeting, including transit bus procurement, service interruptions, on-time performance, and an update on the legislative package. He noted that while the outcome still needs to be reviewed, it appears to be in a better position than at previous times.

Ms. Cencic added that next month there will be two meetings. A Special Board Meeting, which will be a public hearing, will be held at 9:00 a.m., followed by the regular meeting at 9:15 a.m.

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

Mr. Lawse emphasized to the Board, staff, and public a scheduling change for the next Board meeting, which will be held on Tuesday, September 24th. The special meeting will take place first, followed immediately by the regular meeting.

Special Board Meeting Tuesday, September 24, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

Regular Board Meeting Tuesday, September 24, 2024, at 9:15 a.m.
Authority's Administrative Building

Agenda Item #11 Adjournment at 9:11 am

Motioned by Meadows; Seconded by Haase

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS (LUND ABSENT, PLUCKER ABSENT), MOTION CARRIES

Daniel Lawse, Board Chair

Selina Perry, Board Secretary