

Meeting Minutes – January 28, 2021

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

2222 Cuming Street

Omaha, Nebraska, 68102

January 28, 2021

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The Transit Authority of the City of Omaha Board met in Regular Session on Tuesday, January 28, 2021 at 8:30 a.m., in the Authority's Administration Building, 2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102. 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:

Mr. Jay Lund, Chair

Ms. Julia Plucker, Vice Chair

Ms. Amy Haase, Secretary/Treasurer

Mr. Daniel Lawse

Mr. Othello Meadows (Absent)

Authority Staff:

L. Cencic, CEO/Executive Director

E. Simpson, Legal/Human Resource Director

D. Finken, Finance Director

D. Jameson, Safety Director

K. Shadden, Operations Director

L. Barritt, Marketing Director

G. Bradley, Maintenance Director (Absent)

K. Pendland, IT Director (Absent)

J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager Engineering/Transportation/Planning

J. Rumery, Grant Administrator (Absent)

Rebecca Mahr, Recording Secretary (Absent)

Others Present:

Other Metro staff

Marissa Martinez

Chris Rogers

Curt Simon

Other members of the public

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Agenda Item #1: Call to order

Mr. Lund called the meeting to order at 8:33 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

Mr. Lund entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the Board Meeting on December 22, 2020.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Ms. Haase

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #3: Request to be Heard – Marissa Martinez

Ms. Martinez introduced herself to the Board. She explained that she lives in Midtown, in the Blackstone neighborhood, has lived in Omaha for 5 years, has lived car-free for 2 years, and has lived in the Blackstone neighborhood for 1.5 years. She is able-bodied and travels via walking, Metro bus, and B-Cycle. Bus routes near her are ORBT, Route 11, and Route 15. Ms. Martinez informed the Board that she sets an intention at every full moon. Her intention last year brought her to Metro to learn more about how things work. It has widened her perspective on what happens at Metro. She plans to continue her involvement in 2021 and intends to speak more in the future. This month, Ms. Martinez set an intention for Metro staff to challenge their own car-centric views and to challenge the public's car-centric views, in order to elevate the awareness of the ridership experience. Ms. Martinez asks that Metro staff simply ride the bus 4 times per month. To challenge the public, Ms. Martinez asks for Metro staff to create the same type of challenge to go out to the public in March. Ms. Martinez also expressed her bottomless gratitude for all that Metro does every day. She could go on about how much happier and healthier that she is now that she is car-free but knows that it is habit and not words that make change.

The Board members thanked Ms. Martinez for her time and for her courage to speak and stated that they would like to explore this challenge with Mr. Rose as a good starting point of contact.

Agenda Item #4a: Administrative Reports

(E. Simpson)

- Metro continues to recruit for open positions.
- Ms. Strasser, Metro's Payroll/Benefits Administrator, recently retired. The position has been posted to Careerlink and Transit Talent.
- In anticipation of the Finance Director's retirement, the position has been posted to Careerlink and Transit Talent.

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- Metro's COVID Liaison Officer continues to monitor COVID cases and provide guidance to employees.
- Temperature monitoring kiosks have been installed and staff is working with the vendor to program the kiosks. The kiosks have been placed around the building. Employees will be required to check their temperature, answer questions, and acknowledge METRO's COVID procedures upon entry to the facility.
- Metro has been working closely with Douglas County Health Department and frequently communicating about COVID vaccines. Dr. Pour has advised that Phase 1A first doses are anticipated to be completed early February. As you may be aware, Phase 1B has designated essential workers tiers. Unfortunately, public transit is the final group in the Phase 1B to be vaccinated. DCHD has advised that may be 8-12 weeks before Phase 1B will begin. We will continue to monitor the vaccine distribution and inform the Board accordingly.

Agenda Item # 4b: Administrative Reports

(D. Jameson)

Last week we held 2 Maintenance department meetings, many topics were discussed, including additional training. We have two different in-house training sessions scheduled for February, the first will be from Voith Transmission the week of Feb 9th. The second one will be the week of Feb. 22nd, by New Flyer (NF). They will be focusing their training on the multiplex system. We continue to investigate additional training opportunities for Metro maintenance staff in the coming months.

Metro continues the purchase process for additional special tools for the maintenance department from the manufacturers.

Bus Operator Barriers: Shipments will continue for the NF buses over the next few weeks until fulfilled. We received a tentative ETA on the Gillig barrier re-shipment date of mid-February. We are still waiting on an ETA for the Alexander Dennis (AD) bus barriers, hopefully they will ship in Q1, 2021.

The final 6 NF buses remain as scheduled to start line entry tomorrow, Friday, 1-28-2021. They remain scheduled to arrival starting in late March.

Dialogue continues on the pre-production process with NF for the 3X 40' electric buses. At this time, these buses remain on schedule for delivery Q4, 2021. We continue working with our Engineering Team along with NF Engineering Team, so that Metro is prepared to support the electrical charging needs of these buses. NF is scheduled for a site visit in the near future.

Metro's COVID-19 mitigation continues with building and vehicle fleet sanitation every day. Buses continue to be traded out mid-day on ORBT & 18 Route and any others as necessary. Our daily mitigation efforts include fogging all areas within the building administration, the vehicle fleet, re-wiping down the entire operator's compartment, removing & cleaning the passenger fabric seat inserts, wiping down hard surfaces, doors and door handles, hand railing, all common areas and bathrooms. Finally, we are cleaning all ORBT stations five days a week and each station is deep cleaned every Saturday evening.

Metro will start ORBT refresher and NF new model training within the next couple of weeks. Dispatch continues to monitor on time performance as well as headway/bunching management and again, all staff have performed exceptionally well.

Finally, I wish to thank all staff for their tireless extra effort during the recent snow storms. It has certainly been a challenging winter to date.

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Agenda Item # 4c: Administrative Reports

(J. Rose)

- Metro continues to gain social media followers across all platforms. This month’s focus was around ORBT updates, including signage and events, and weather alerts for riders.
- The team is preparing upcoming communications, including ORBT Stop Shelters and digital slot signs.
- Metro continues to gain solid earned media coverage, with 12 general stories and 14 ORBT-specific stories valued at \$19,002/\$45,619 (ad) and \$56,659/\$136,865 (publicity) respectively.

Agenda Item #5: Request Approval of the 2021 Transportation Improvement Program

(L. Cencic for J. Rumery)

Staff requests approval to program the 2021 element of the 2020-2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to program new funds for the 2021 Program of Projects (POP).

This resolution satisfies the approved Local, State and Federal planning process requirements. Staff recommends programming new Urbanized Area Formula Apportionment Funds (5307) in the FY 2021 element of the TIP as shown in the 2020 Program of Projects below:

PROJECT	SOURCE	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
TRANSIT ENHANCEMENTS	5307	Total: \$25,000 Federal: \$20,000 Local: \$5,000	Acquire furniture & graphics
SUPPORT EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES	5307	Total: \$2,429,500 Federal: \$1,943,600 Local: \$485,900	Engineering, design & construction of admin/maint facility, office & shop equip, computer hardware & software, security, support vehicles & radios
CAPITALIZED OPERATIONS	5307	Total: \$1,128,375 Federal: \$902,700 Local: \$225,675	ADA Paratransit Operations
UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM	5307	Total: \$400,000 Federal: \$320,000 Local: \$80,000	Transit planning

Board approval will allow the projects to be updated and obligated for FY 2021. Projects will be submitted to MAPA for consideration at a future MAPA Board Meeting. This program of projects encumbers \$796,575 in local funds.

This item was sent to the procurement committee prior to the Board Meeting. Assuming committee concurrence, staff requests the Board approve the Resolution as presented.

Discussion was had.

Motion by Mr. Lawse; Second by Ms. Plucker

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ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS; MOTION CARRIES.

Agenda Item #6: Administrative Report

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic thanked Ms. Martinez for her comments and for her advocacy. There has been an ongoing internal conversation about this challenge and Ms. Cencic agrees that it should be explored further.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro has been following a couple of legislative bills. LB-661 is a bill that will make assault against a public transit worker a felony. This bill was introduced by Senator McDonnell, and Metro is supporting it. LB-83 will allow for virtual Board meetings into the future for certain jurisdictions. Omaha was not included in the covered jurisdictions, so an amendment has been requested to include the Omaha area specifically in regard to the future Regional Transit Authority. This bill will not require but will allow virtual Board meetings to occur, to make meetings more accessible to the public. Currently virtual Board meetings are only allowed through a limited executive order, but the current bill expires at the end of January 2021 so at this point, future Board meetings will be in person.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Metro continues to address Covid-19 impacts to employees. December impacted Metro employees more than expected but Metro is starting to see a slow-down in COVID-19 cases. Metro is currently working to deliver more safety protocols as quickly as possible.

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that Metro is working on the annual financial audit and working to respond to the FTA request for information about Metro's triennial review. Metro still does not have a date set for the in-person site visit. Both of these projects require heavy lifting by Metro staff.

Ms. Cencic updated the Board that Metro is working towards a strategic plan for future Metro service. Metro plans to build upon Connect Go efforts and translate that into an actionable plan for service over the next 5 years. Metro hopes to do public engagement later this Spring and try to get as much feedback from the public as possible. In-person meetings are still in question, so Metro is exploring ways to gather information virtually, and plan to put together a visioning document to guide Metro's future.

Discussion was had.

Agenda Item #7: Board Chair Report

(J. Lund)

Mr. Lund informed the Board that the Board is still talking with Sort Sol on a variety of changes to Metro's organization with the plan to formalize new committees. These three new committees will be to address Finance, Planning & Policy, and Operations. These changes will be in conjunction with re-evaluating job descriptions of Board members and the CEO. This Board Chair Report is currently being formalized and will be an agenda item going forward.

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Agenda Item #8: Executive Session

Mr. Lund entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session at 9:46 a.m.

Motion by Ms. Plucker; Second by Ms. Haase

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

Mr. Lund entertained a motion to return to Regular Session at 11:01 a.m.

Motion by Ma. Haase; Second by Mr. Lawse

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

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

Tuesday, February 25, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. to be held virtually or at Metro Transit Authority's Administrative Building.

Agenda Item #10: Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was entertained to adjourn the meeting at 11:01 a.m.

Motion by Ms. Haase; Second by Mr. Lawse

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

Mr. Jay Lund – Chair

Recording Secretary