

**AGENDA**  
**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**  
**REGIONAL METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF OMAHA**  
**2222 Cuming Street**  
**Omaha, Nebraska, 68102**  
**September 24, 2024**  
**9:00 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

**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)  
R. Sherping, Safety Director (Absent)  
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 9:02 am**

The Notice of the Special Meeting was published in the Omaha Daily Record on September 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 Public Hearing on the Proposed 2024 Annual Budget**

Public hearing for the public to voice either support, opposition, criticism, suggestions, or observations of taxpayers relating to the 2025 proposed budget.

Overall, the proposed levy in this budget which will be acted upon during the normal meeting is \$52,956,852.02, total receipts. The total resources available would be \$128,560,227 with beginning cash of \$23,781,500 with disbursements and transfers totaling \$101,681,433.73. The proposed budget is comprised of approximately \$62,500,000 of operating and almost \$38,000,000 of capital expenditures.

One public comment was heard:

Mr. Clyde Anderson 7020 Burt Street, in Omaha.

Mr. Anderson is currently a member of Metro's Transit Advisory Committee. He retired from Union Pacific after 31 years in Engineering and Operations. He transitioned to Omaha Public Schools working part-time for 11 years as a bus aide for students with special needs.

He attended this special meeting with initial concerns; however, after reviewing the detailed data in the board packet, he now has a better understanding of the budget. Mr. Anderson expressed his support for the 17% increase in operating expenses and noted that the 15% projected increase in service is something he also endorses. Additionally, Mr. Anderson voiced his support for the capital expenses associated with the bus purchase.

He also expressed his support for the K-12 Rides Free Program. As a resident living across the street from Lewis and Clark Middle School, he has observed a significant reduction in the number of school buses serving the area, made possible by students increasingly utilizing public transportation instead.

**Agenda Item #3 Adjournment at 9:07 am**

There being no further business, a motion was entertained to close the public hearing and to adjourn the meeting.

**Motioned by Haase; Seconded by Lund**

**ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES**

**AGENDA**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**REGIONAL METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF OMAHA**  
**2222 Cuming Street**  
**Omaha, Nebraska, 68102**  
**September 24, 2024**  
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**Authority Board:**

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

**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)  
R. Sherping, Safety Director (Absent)  
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 9:15 am**

The Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Omaha Daily Record on September 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. Regular Meeting: August 22, 2024

**Motioned by Plucker; Seconded by Haase**

**ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, 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.*

Clarice Dombeck is a candidate for the Elected Board of Directors for Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority District 2 and the current Metro Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) chair. She was before the Board as a representative for her community. She wanted to speak on the budget and what feedback she is hearing from community members and groups. Ms. Dombeck is suggesting a collaboration of some sort where the City of Omaha helps to fund the public transit system as a public service some examples are the way the police, and fire departments, as well as the public library, are funded. She expressed an interest in finding additional funding that does not primarily come from property taxes. Ms. Dombeck indicates that she understands that the board cannot directly deal with the issue, but she wanted to speak today on this platform for consideration.

Rose [last name inaudible] (Virtual) 1310 N 48<sup>th</sup> Ave. is an avid and regular bus rider who wanted to come forward for three reasons which are as follows:

First, this summer she rode the bus when the temperatures were well over 100 degrees with the windows open while the air conditioning was out of service on the bus. She informed the Board and the public that her evening driver almost passed out from these conditions. She expressed appreciation for her bus drivers indicating that one has been driving for 27 years. She would like to propose some policies and procedures for repairing these buses that go out on the road as well as accountability.

Second, she wanted to ask that the bus lines be expanded. Through conferences at work, she learned that one of the greatest disparities that her clients face in accessing medical treatment and supportive services is transportation.

Lastly, she is requesting that bus drivers be trained to use Narcan. The fentanyl epidemic continues to reach every corner of the United States and Omaha is no exception. Every life matters.

She was grateful for the time before the Board she understands change will not happen overnight.

The Board extended an appreciation to both for their service to the community and for speaking today.

### **Agenda Item #4 Administrative Report**

(L. Cencic)

Ms. Cencic began her report with ridership, which continues to be strong. In August, Metro carried 265,202 riders which averages to about 60,000 rides per week. K-12 Rides Free Program had about 50,000 rides with a total of 1.21 million rides since its inception.

Metro's Civil Rights and Inclusion Director/DBELO and Procurement and Contracts Manager attended two outreach events to promote doing business with Metro for small and disadvantaged business enterprises:

- Meet the Buyers organized by the Nebraska Business Development Center APEX Accelerator
- Nebraska Diversity Business Summit organized by the Mountain Plains Minority Supplier Development Council (MPMSDC)

These two events allowed Metro staff to connect with small and minority businesses and contractors and share about procurement opportunities. Staff also shared best practices to help attendees better understand contract requirements and how to be a competitive bidder.

The Sustainability Project is well underway. Metro is now in Phase 2 of the construction which is the most impactful phase and will last about three to four weeks. Ms. Cencic conveyed her appreciation to the staff for parking within the lines and their patience as parking spots lessened during this phase. The Project has also begun putting in the skylights in the bus barn to then be able to install the solar panels.

Three buses ordered a little over a month ago will be arriving later this week. It will take approximately two weeks to outfit them with technology and do the various inspections.

Last month, Ms. Cencic reported that the Senior Leadership would be attending an off-site workshop. Leadership did meet for the day and centered on a Leadership Charter that focuses on priorities and proficiencies that can be used to work and interact together while leading Metro.

Ms. Cencic was also happy to share that two of Metro's MOBY operators will be competing in Nebraska's Road-eo event this week. It tests MOBY operators on their knowledge of paratransit safety along with an obstacle course to test their mettle when it comes to driving skills. Last year, one of Metro's operators qualified to go to the national competition. Ms. Cencic communicated that Metro wishes them luck in the upcoming competition.

Lastly, Ms. Cencic announced that Randy Sherping, Director of Safety and Training, will be leaving Metro to accept a new opportunity in Flagstaff Arizona as Director of Operations. She expressed that while we at Metro will miss him, we congratulate and wish him the best in his new endeavor.

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

### **Agenda Item #5 Administrative Reports**

#### **Administration/Human Resources**

(D. Grant)

Mr. Grant reported in August Metro had three new employees start roles: Bus Operator and Utility Mechanic and one role was a promotion to a Mechanic Supervisor. In addition to those three new roles, Metro had 11 individuals who started throughout September.

Metro's HR department has posted four additional roles: Operations Administrator, Executive Operations Administrator, Maintenance Clerk, and Maintenance Coordinator.

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

## **Programs/Operations**

(K. Pendland)

Mr. Pendland informed the Board of some good news. On-time performance in August was down to 8% for early departures, while in September Metro is currently averaging 4% for early departures. This amazing progress is due to the hard work and diligence of our excellent Dispatch staff, Field Supervisors, and in no small part to the commitment of Operators to lower that number.

Mr. Pendland continues by saying that it is easy to see these statistics as just numbers, but they represent a massive increase in Metro's quality of service for riders. Metro connects people, places, and opportunities through quality transit services. He went on to thank all Operations staff, including Metro's Dispatchers, Field Supervisors, Operators, and Safety and Training staff for their dedication to and their reinvestment in Metro's Mission.

Service interruptions were still challenging throughout August. Metro's maintenance team is working hard to reduce service interruptions due to vehicle availability. On that note, Mr. Pendland reported that Metro is starting to see at least a reprieve in vehicle issues, as there has been a drop from an average of around 30 hours per day of affected service hours in August to an average of 10 hours per day in September for lost revenue hours due to vehicle availability.

On service interruptions due to Operator availability, Mr. Pendland's investigation with the Union leadership uncovered that many of these Operator availability hours are the result of when both the Operator and the vehicle were unavailable. While the data is not double counted, it is somewhat misleading. To that end, he is working with the planning team to determine how best to represent that data in the future to provide Metro with a clearer understanding of the situation.

Lastly, Mr. Pendland informed the Board that Metro is still a work in progress, but improvements across the board are being seen. He appreciates the patience that the Board and the public have shown Metro and advises that Metro will continue to strive to improve the quality of service.

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

## **Communications**

(N. Ebat)

Ms. Ebat reports that her department attended UNO's Durango Days and spoke with a few hundred students who were very excited to learn they get access to fare-free rides on Metro buses and ORBT with the MavRide Pass Program

Metro Staff also worked with a film crew to shoot some footage at ORBT stations downtown, it'll be used in a commercial for the engagement period encouraging people to fill out the survey for the city's Comprehensive Plan,

Metro has worked with DART in Des Moines to share with them what has been learned in doing robust community engagement during MetroNEXT, which is ahead of them launching their long-term strategic plan.

Ms. Ebat and Metro's Community Mobility Coordinator were able to attend a training the local chapter of the International Association for Public Participation held. It was to go over techniques for stakeholder mapping— essentially learning some new public engagement skills to identify all stakeholders who would have an interest in or be affected by projects.

Metro's Community Mobility Coordinator held three virtual training sessions to go over the basics for people who want to learn how to ride the bus in a comfortable small environment.

Ms. Ebat would also like to remind the public that the application period for Metro's Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) will close at the end of the day on October 1st. TAC is looking for several people who would like to join the current committee members in representing their community and helping provide feedback from the public to the Board and Metro staff. Ms. Ebat further explains that the committee is also a good way to learn more about how Metro operates and some of the considerations that go into the decisions that are made.

Metro is also continuing several partnerships. Currently working on finalizing some aspects of a partnership with the Omaha Public Library (OPL). The intention is to provide easy access to OPL's digital library from codes inside Metro buses. Anyone with a library card will be able to access eBooks, music and video streaming, magazines, audiobooks, and everything else available through OPL's digital collection. People without a library card will be able to sign up for digital access directly from the bus.

Ms. Ebat also informed the Board that Metro is working on a partnership with the Omaha Symphony on how the public can take transit when going to concerts and their other venues downtown, especially with having several ORBT stations quite close to their buildings.

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

### **Prior to Agenda Items #6 and 7**

Before requesting approval from the Board regarding Resolutions 2024-24 2025 Tax Levy and 2024-25 2025 Annual Budget, Mr. Clingman asked if it would be acceptable if he shared information regarding both the tax levy and the annual budget since the levy is foundational to the budget overall.

The assumptions for the 2025 budget are found in the board packet they detail the following:

Fuel is budgeted at \$3.05/gallon for diesel, \$3/gallon for gasoline, and \$3/gallon equivalent for CNG.

This budget will increase services over the course of 2025, ending the year with a 15% increase in service when compared to 2024 service levels.

This budget will add 6 new full-time positions and 1 temporary, part-time position.

Passenger fare revenue is budgeted at \$2,224,000 for 2025 This is lower compared to our 2024 budget; however, actuals continue to increase year over year. The one strong item is Metro's partnerships which include all the major universities in the Omaha Metro Area.

Property tax revenue in the proposed budget is \$52,956,852.02. This will require a levy of .10. This is 0.016 over the prior year's levy.

Metro's capital costs are budgeted at approximately \$37.1M. This will be a strong capital year with the arrival of the new buses through the course of 2025.

On the overall State form, Metro has no debt and has strong cash reserves. This allows Metro to be self-insured. Also, has local money in reserves to license the new buses when they arrive without being delayed by FTA.

Ms. Cencic also informed the Board the additional part of the cost/expenses and revenue is budgeted for a pilot project for Micro Transit. This will be supported by local philanthropic organizations so both the expenses and expected revenue of that pilot if it is realized in this budget.

**Agenda Item #6 Resolution: 2024-24 Request Approval of the 2025 Tax Levy** (W. Clingman)

**WHEREAS**, Nebraska Statute 18-822 (1) allows the Board of a Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority to annually certify their property tax levy for the fiscal year commencing on the following January 1; and

**WHEREAS**, Nebraska Statute 18-822 (2) requires the Board of a Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority certify their property tax levy by September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha, that:

- 1. The certified valuation from the Douglas County assessor is \$52,956,852,015.
- 2. The valuation per \$100.00 is \$529,568,520.15
- 3. The Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha proposes to adopt a General property tax request that will cause its tax rate to be \$0.10 per \$100 of assessed value.
- 4. The 2024-25 General property tax request be set at \$52,956,852.02
- 5. A copy of this resolution be certified and forwarded to the County Clerk on or before September 30, 2024.

**Motioned by Plucker; Seconded by Lund**  
**ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES**

**Agenda Item #7 Resolution: 2024-25 Request Approval of the Proposed 2025 Annual Budget** (W. Clingman)

**WHEREAS**, The Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha Nebraska is required to approve an annual budget under the Nebraska Budget Act; and

**WHEREAS**, a public hearing was held on September 24, 2024, at 9:00 o'clock AM at 2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE for the purpose of hearing support, opposition, criticism, suggestions, or observations of taxpayers relating to the following proposed budget as required in Nebraska Statute 13-506; and

**WHEREAS**, a copy of the budget statement shall be forwarded as provided by law to the Auditor of Public Accounts, State of Nebraska, and to the County Clerk of Douglas County, Nebraska, for use by the levying authority; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha, that:

2022-2023 Actual Disbursements & Transfers	\$ 41,855,413.00
2023-2024 Estimated Disbursements & Transfers	\$ 65,527,564.33
2024-2025 Proposed Budget of Disbursements & Transfers	\$ 101,681,433.73
2024-2025 Necessary Cash Reserve	\$ 26,878,793.44
2024-2025 Total Resources Available	\$ 128,560,227.17



Total 2024-2025 Personal & Real Property Tax Requirement	\$ 52,956,852.02
Unused Budget Authority Created for Next Year	\$ -

**Breakdown of Property Tax:**

Personal and Real Property Tax Required for Non-Bond Purposes	\$ 52,956,852.02
Personal and Real Property Tax Required for Bonds	\$ -

The Board approved unanimously.

**Motioned by Lund; Seconded by Haase**  
**ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES**

**Agenda Item #8 2024-26 Request Approval of Amended Standing Purchase Orders – Fiscal Year 2024** (W. Clingman)

The Board approves standing purchase orders that will exceed \$25,000 for each fiscal year.

For the 2024 fiscal year, a standing purchase order of \$100,000 was approved for security services at the Metro administrative/maintenance facility. It is anticipated that at the end of September, the current approved amount will be exceeded due to increased security hours throughout the year. To maintain security services through the end of the fiscal year an increase is being requested.

The requested amended amount for the standing purchase order for security services at the administrative/ maintenance facility is \$150,000.

The Board approved unanimously.

**Motioned by Lund; Seconded by Haase**  
**ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES**

**Agenda Item #9 2024-27 Request Approval of Fuel Contract** (L. Cencic)

Due to a dip in fuel prices, Metro determined that it was prudent to obtain bids for both diesel and gasoline fuel for next year. Metro’s current contract with Petroleum Traders expires in January 2025.

On September 4, 2024, Metro requested bids for both diesel and gasoline for a six (6) month period beginning in February 2025. Metro received four (4) bids for these contracts. The low, responsive, compliant bid for ultra-low sulfur diesel was from Agriland at \$2.298 per gallon for 195,000 gallons. The low, responsive, complaint bid for gasoline was also from Agriland at \$2.0225 per gallon for 60,000 gallons.

The CEO/Executive Director advised the Board Chair, Mr. Lawse, who agreed to the award of these contracts. Both proposed contracts are below the \$3.05/gallon budgeted for fuel for 2025. Metro’s current contract through January 2025 is for \$2.5730/gallon of diesel and \$2.1669/gallon of gasoline.

We are requesting full Board concurrence for two contract awards to Agriland in accordance with Metro’s Procurement Policy. The contracts with Agriland will be in the amount of \$448,110 for the ultra-low sulfur diesel purchase and \$121,350 for the gasoline contract.

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

The Board approved unanimously.

**Motioned by Haase; Seconded by Plucker**  
**ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES**

**Agenda Item #10 2024-28 Request Approval of A Change Order for Engine Overhaul Contract**

(L. Del Rio Lopez)

On September 27, 2023, Metro awarded a service contract for the overhaul of two (2) engines to MHC Kenworth in the amount of \$55,736.96. This contract was procured competitively and was determined at a fair and reasonable price.

The vehicles being overhauled have met or exceeded their useful half-life expectancy, and as a result, their need for maintenance and repair has increased. To continue their effectiveness and 12-year useful life their engines would need to be overhauled to their current specifications. Engine overhauls come with unforeseen additional repairs once work has started. Staff evaluated several options, and after a thorough analysis, additional repairs are necessary, emerged as the most cost-effective solution over the long term. Both engines had to be torn down and fully assessed as a part of the original procurement, which identified more items in need of repair than were originally known. For one of the buses, it was determined that it was more economical to replace the engine than to overhaul it. Additional unanticipated costs included but are not limited to a damaged crankshaft, piston bearings, and injectors, some of these parts had to be sent for factory refurbishment or be replaced by a rebuilt piece. This procurement will help maintain these two (2) buses in a state of good repair and allow them to fulfill their useful life.

Engines	Original Bid	CO1	Subtotal 1	CO 2	Subtotal 2	CO3	Subtotal 3	CO 4	Subtotal 4
Bus 1405	\$27,868.48					\$31,363.52	\$59,232.00	\$2,553.60	\$61,785.60
Bus 1407	\$27,868.48	\$5,868.88	\$33,737.36	\$12,310.57	\$46,047.93				
						<b>Total</b>	<b>\$107,833.53</b>		

Staff requested approval of the change orders to the original service contract in the amount of \$52,096.57, making the total cost of the contract including change orders \$107,833.53.

This cost is drawn from various 5307 grants as a part of the allowable preventative maintenance costs incurred by Metro.

The Board approved unanimously.

**Motioned by Plucker; Seconded by Haase**  
**ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES**

**Agenda Item #11 2024-29 Request Approval to Award Snow and Ice Management Services Contract**

(L. Del Rio Lopez)

Staff sought approval to award a contract for snow removal and ice management services for three (3) years with two (2) optional one-year extensions. The base contract will be for the 2024-2027 winter season. The IFB was published on August 26, 2024, and multiple potential bidders were contacted. Two bids were received by Ham Snow Removal and GSEC, LLC. Ham Snow Removal

was determined to be the lowest, responsive, and responsible bidder. The price is fair and reasonable, and the bid is otherwise in accordance with the Invitation for Bids (IFB).

Due to the nature of the work the contract was bid as a time and materials contract. The hourly rates for work range from \$135 to \$450 per hour. Material costs are also included on a per-pound basis. The estimated cost for the winter season is approximately \$149,372.54 per year of the contract based on historic pricing; however, this can vary depending on snowfall amounts and frequency. Staff sought approval of a contract for the base contract in the amount not to exceed \$600,000.00

The cost of this contract is funded with preventative maintenance 5307 grant funds, which typically reimburse cost at 80%.

The Board approved unanimously.

**Motioned by Plucker; Seconded by Haase**  
**ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES**

**Agenda Item #12 Board Chair Report**

(D. Lawse)

Mr. Lawse expressed his appreciation for all the work done by Metro staff. The Operations Committee discussed the challenges related to service gaps, including operator and bus maintenance issues, as well as the improvements being made to on-time performance. Since no other Committees had reports, he proceeded to close the meeting

**Agenda Item #13 Date, Time, and Place of Board Meeting**

Thursday, October 24, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.

Authority's Administrative Building

**Agenda Item #14 Adjournment at 10:08 am**

**Motioned by Plucker; Seconded by Lund**

**ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES**