



**SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT (METRO)  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES\*  
OCTOBER 22, 2021 – 9:00AM  
MEETING HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) convened on Friday, October 22, 2021, via teleconference.

The Board Meeting Agenda Packet can be found online at [www.SCMTD.com](http://www.SCMTD.com). \*Minutes are “summary” minutes, not verbatim minutes. Audio recordings Board meeting open sessions are available to the public upon request.

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- 1 CALL TO ORDER** at 9:04 AM by Board Chair Lind.
- 2 ROLL CALL:** The following Directors were **present** via teleconference, representing a quorum:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Director Jimmy Dutra</b>               | <b>City of Watsonville</b>             |
| <b>Director Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson</b> | <b>City of Santa Cruz LV 11:25A</b>    |
| <b>Director Manu Koenig</b>               | <b>County of Santa Cruz</b>            |
| <b>Director Donna Lind</b>                | <b>City of Scotts Valley.</b>          |
| <b>Director Bruce McPherson</b>           | <b>County of Santa Cruz LV 11:30AM</b> |
| <b>Director Donna Meyers</b>              | <b>City of Santa Cruz LV 11:09AM</b>   |
| <b>Director Alta Northcutt</b>            | <b>City of Watsonville</b>             |
| <b>Director Larry Pageler</b>             | <b>County of Santa Cruz</b>            |
| <b>Director Kristen Petersen</b>          | <b>City of Capitola</b>                |
| <b>Director Dan Rothwell</b>              | <b>County of Santa Cruz</b>            |
| <b>Director Mike Rotkin</b>               | <b>County of Santa Cruz</b>            |
| <b>Ex-Officio Director Dan Henderson</b>  | <b>UC Santa Cruz</b>                   |
| <b>Ex-Officio Director Vacant</b>         | <b>Cabrillo College</b>                |
| <b>Additional METRO staff:</b>            |  |
| <b>Alex Clifford</b>                      | <b>CEO/General Manager</b>             |
| <b>Julie Sherman</b>                      | <b>General Counsel</b>                 |

- 3 ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
Today’s meeting is being broadcast by Community Television of Santa Cruz County.
- 4 BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMENTS**  
Director McPherson relayed his experience with the tram from the Santa Cruz Boardwalk to Capitola Village and the possibility of a METRO connection.  
  
The Directors discussed access to public transit for the proposed Live Oak Kaiser facility. Director Koenig cautioned against a final decision until all factors have been considered.

Director Rotkin added when new uses of any kind come into the community, particularly where transit is critical, it's important that METRO not set a precedent readjusting service to accommodate specific business needs at the disadvantage of other community members.

CEO Clifford said a board report will be prepared to address proposed routes and transit access in the near future; an option may include asking Kaiser to share the costs of this route.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Lind moved to the next agenda item.

**5 ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Chair Lind announced the attached complimentary email will be shared and included in the published minutes.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Lind moved to the next agenda item.

**6 LABOR ORGANIZATION COMMUNICATIONS**

Joan Jeffries, speaking on behalf of herself, other employees and SEIU members, expressed serious concerns about the vaccine mandate METRO management intends to implement by December 31, 2021. The Union is currently in the meet and confer process and suggests a delay in the implementation. They also suggest METRO look at other Bay Area agencies' approach (see attached matrix). This mandate is not needed; METRO is in compliance with Governor Newsom's and federal policies. This implementation would cause more harm to METRO's ability to function. There is concern exemption requests will not be considered; resulting in METRO losing several employees with institutional knowledge.

James Sandoval, SMART Local 23, echoed Ms. Jeffries' comments, adding they are bargaining in good faith; however, they do not agree with the mandate. METRO has implemented a hiring bonus as an incentive to hire more Operators. If this mandate goes into effect, METRO may lose 20+ Operators, which will result in reduced service and riders left behind. He asked that the Board consider all facets of this mandate and apply it evenly across the agency.

Jordan Vascones echoed the previous comments and said the affected employees hold critical positions at the agency. These are not positions a temp can easily fill.

Voicing his personal opinion, Director Rotkin reminded the assembly this decision has come up a number of times. He hopes health and religious exemptions are taken seriously. It would be a shame if METRO cut some routes; but he is not willing to be extorted with regard to a public policy issue. Sending a message of safety is essential to the public and the community needs.

Director Rothwell echoed Director Rotkin's statements, adding vaccines have historically been mandated, which resulted in the (almost total) elimination of these previous diseases. In his opinion, only a clear, documented, medical reason should enable an unvaccinated employee to work at METRO. He supports the mandate.

Chair Lind said the Board agrees with management and provided direction to the CEO in support of this approach.

Hearing nothing further, Chair Lind moved to the next agenda item.

**7 METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC) WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

Hearing none, Chair Lind moved to the next agenda item.

**8 ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT EXISTING AGENDA ITEMS**

Hearing none, Chair Lind moved to the next agenda item.

## CONSENT AGENDA

- 9.1 ACCEPT AND FILE: PRELIMINARY APPROVED CHECK JOURNAL DETAIL FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2021
- 9.2 ACCEPT AND FILE: MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 24, 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING AND THE OCTOBER 8, 2021 SPECIAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
- 9.3 ACCEPT & FILE: THE YEAR TO DATE MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2021
- 9.4 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF DECLARING VEHICLES AND/OR EQUIPMENT AS EXCESS FOR PURPOSES OF DISPOSAL OR AUCTION
- 9.5 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF REAPPOINTMENTS TO THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC)
- 9.6 CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING SCHEDULE & LOCATIONS FOR THE 2022 CALENDAR YEAR
- 9.7 CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF CALPERS RESOLUTION TO UPDATE MEDICAL PREMIUM CONTRIBUTION RATES FOR MANAGEMENT

There were no public comments.

**ACTION: MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED**

**MOTION: DIRECTOR ROTKIN**

**SECOND: DIRECTOR PAGELER**

**MOTION PASSED WITH 11 AYES (Directors Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Koenig, Lind, McPherson, Meyers, Northcutt, Pageler, Petersen, Rothwell & Rotkin)**

## REGULAR AGENDA

- 10 **PRESENTATION OF EMPLOYEE LONGEVITY AWARDS: EFRAIN HERNANDEZ (20 YEARS) AND MARIA HERNANDEZ (25 YEARS)**

Chair Lind read Ms. Hernandez 'bio, recognizing both employees' contributions to METRO in absentia.

There was no public comment.

- 11 **ACCEPT AND FILE: STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM JOSH SHAW & MICHAEL PIMENTEL OF SHAW, YODER, ANTWIH, SCHMELZER & LANG**

Messrs. Shaw and Pimentel added commentary to the presentation, highlighting the impact of the Assembly Bills to METRO and other transit agencies.

In response to Director McPherson's inquiry, Messrs. Shaw and Pimentel said they are not aware of any self-help county funding allowances; however, they will pursue additional opportunities for better energy/power source supplies and funding thereof.

Public comment.

Mr. Shaw will provide a detailed update to AB237 in response to Mr. Sandoval's inquiry, saying it will become law in January 2022.

Chair Lind and CEO Clifford thanked them for an outstanding year of work and the invaluable support provided.

**12 ACCEPT AND FILE: FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM CHRIS GIGLIO OF CAPITAL EDGE**

Mr. Giglio added commentary to the presentation and clarified the differences between formula and competitive grants. Historically, Congress has been successful at locating funds to offset other things; but, we are running out of other sources. He added it may be possible to get support from 50 Democrats and the VP to increase the deficit, so we're not relying on offsets. He does not think the infrastructure bill will be passed by the end of this month as moderates are pressing for what they want to hold the Speaker's feet to the fire. They want to be bolder; but the votes are unfortunately not there.

Director McPherson and CEO Clifford thanked Mr. Giglio for his hard work and successes through the years.

There was no public comment.

**13 ORAL PARACRUZ UPDATE**

Daniel Zaragoza, Operations Manager, Paratransit Division, introduced Ken Hart, Swift Consulting, who provided a brief update.

Mr. Hart thanked the design team for the high quality plans and timely revisions provided. METRO has submitted an RTC grant application and will be on the November 10<sup>th</sup> RTC meeting agenda. He anticipates approval from the Planning Commission on November 24. The next steps will be preparing the construction documents, a timeframe of approximately three months; then, a six month approval process. The permit may be issued early September 2022, with construction undertaken in April 2023.

Director Rotkin asked if the Board could be helpful with the Planning Commission. Mr. Hart responded this doesn't seem to be necessary; but, he will keep Mr. Zaragoza informed after he looks at the proposed conditions.

There was no public comment.

**14 ACCEPT AND FILE: CRUZ ON-DEMAND MICROTRANSIT SERVICE SIX MONTH UPDATE**

John Urgo, Planning & Development Director, provided a brief update on the Cruz On-Demand Microtransit service and spoke briefly to the slides presented.

Director Northcutt will notify Cabrillo students of this resource, ensuring they know it's a one-year pilot.

Mr. Urgo to schedule a meeting with he, CEO Clifford and Director Dutra to discuss how to better serve the Watsonville community

CEO Clifford reminded the assembly this is a six-month review; no decisions are being requested or made. There is a delicate balance between serving our ParaCruz customers and the on-demand service to utilize our excess capacity. METRO's cost is greater than \$80 per ParaCruz trip. Mr. Urgo will return in the future with some decision points.

Public comment.

Nate Abrego, Local 23, agrees with the provided analysis, but the Union disagrees with the proposed alternatives; i.e., contracting out any service; they want the positions to remain union; expanding on-demand service will lead to the need to hire new employees and ParaCruz is already short Operators.

## 15 BOARD COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Chair Lind spoke to the staff report, reminding the assembly this action was a result of the September resignation of Watsonville City Councilmember Aurelio Gonzalez. The City of Watsonville has appointed Alta Northcutt to his seat as the METRO board Watsonville representative. Chair Lind is recommending Director Northcutt fill Director Gonzalez' seats on the SCCIC and SCCRTC.

Director Dutra requests that this seat stay in the South County. Director Northcutt accepted the nomination.

There was no public comment.

### **ACTION: MOTION TO ACCEPT CHAIR LIND'S SLATE AS PRESENTED TO FILL EACH COMMITTEE VACANCY ON THE SCCIC AND SCCRTC**

**MOTION: DIRECTOR ROTKIN**

**SECOND: DIRECTOR DUTRA**

**MOTION PASSED WITH 11 AYES (Directors Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Koenig, Lind, McPherson, Meyers, Northcutt, Pageler, Petersen, Rothwell & Rotkin) .**

## 16 CEO ORAL REPORT / COVID-19 UPDATE

There have been no promotions since the September board meeting. CEO Clifford welcomed the new hires:

- Miguel Duarte, Parts & Materials Clerk
- Alfonso Rico, Parts & Materials Clerk
- Carlos Fernandez, Parts & Materials Clerk
- Thomas Ferre, Database Administrator
- Jesus Estrada Almaraz, Paratransit Operator

CEO Clifford went on to provide the following updates:

- COVID updates:
  - There have been no new positive cases since September 10, 2021; however, there exists some concern of spiking after the holidays
  - METRO's vaccination rate is now 85%.
  - The mandatory vaccination policy is currently in the meet and confer process, with management targeting it's issuance with a deadline of December 31, 2021 for full vaccination compliance.
  - Two vaccination clinics will be offered at METRO.
- Two FTA audits are still ongoing with no anticipated negative outcomes
- On October 12, 2021, a Termination Notice was issued to Syncromatics. Isaac Holly, IT & ITS Director, added METRO is pursuing the 2nd ranked proposer in the initial procurement, Clever Devices, as the next contractor. Tests were run with Clever Devices and it responds very well to our needs.
- Marketing is working to increase ridership on the Watsonville circulator.
- The winter bid will reinstate service to San Jose State University (SJSU)
- The four 35' Gillig buses being built and delivered in 2022 will feature the new bus wrap design. (See attached schematic which was projected at the meeting.)

*Director Meyers departed at 11:09AM*

Director Northcutt invited the assembly to Cabrillo's ongoing housing and route discussions. Mr. Urgo will serve as METRO's point of contact and work with Director Northcutt on grant submissions, etc.

CEO Clifford is developing a new Operator recruitment model, which will require Union partnership. He reached out to CTAA asking other agencies' share their experiences/successes to address the hiring challenge; what makes the positions hard to fill; is it the area's cost of living? Director Northcutt thought some impact may be felt as a result of slower drivers' license issuance, past personal experiences which affect the pool of available drivers, etc.

*Director Kalantari-Johnson departed at 11:25AM*

*Director McPherson departed at 11:30AM*

Public comment

Mr. Sandoval said he's received many customer compliments on the e-buses. Mr. Sandoval suggested internal recruitment to fill Operator positions.

Mr. Abrego shared an Operator's anecdotal experience, noting it's more than pay, it's also the sense of relationship with the community that they develop over the years.

**17 REVIEW OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED IN CLOSED SESSION**

General Counsel Sherman announced the closed session item: Conference with Legal Counsel- Existing Litigation (Government Code Section 45956.9(D)(1). Palmadessa, Steve v. Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, et al.; Claim No. CLPA13048A.1, adding she did not anticipate a report out.

There was no public comment.

**RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION AT 11:50AM**

**RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION AT 12:10A/PM**

General Counsel Sherman announced there was no reportable action taken in the Closed Session.

There was no public comment.

**18 ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETINGS:**

Chair Lind announced the Special Board Meeting on November 12, 2021, the regular Board Meeting on November 19, 2021 and reminded the assembly to check the SCMTD website for venue updates, as we remain dependent upon the public health orders in place at the time.

**19 ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Lind adjourned the meeting at 12:10PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Pye  
Executive Assistant

# Attachment

**From:** kard831 <[kard831@gmail.com](mailto:kard831@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Kard's Kudos for Metro  
**Date:** October 21, 2021 at 12:02:35 PM PDT  
**To:** Donna Lind <[dlindslind@earthlink.net](mailto:dlindslind@earthlink.net)>

Hi Donna,

I wanted to share with you some of the positive experiences I have had since I began using the Metro. Keep in mind, I take Metro by choice not bc I can't drive or don't have a car but bc I can relax and get away from the day to day hustle while getting to places I need to go. It is like down time for me and I get to talk to so many different people which you know I love to do.

Here are some highlights:

- \* friendly and courteous drivers and staff- they always acknowledge passengers getting both on and off the bus
- \* safety comes first, but they always find a way to be helpful to anyone with a question re which bus, which stop, can I catch the 35 at ocean/water by this time, providing a mask if needed, helping those with ADA needs
- \* rules are enforced politely ie wearing a mask, no eating or drinking etc

If there is anything you think I could do to let the staff know how amazing and needed they are in people's day to day obligations I am happy to hear your thoughts and ideas.

Thank you, Kristin Ard : ) Happy and Proud to say I Ride the Metro!!!

# Attachment

Survey conducted 10/21/2021. Only 3 out of 13 agencies have mandated vaccination with no testing alternative (less than 25%).

|    | <b>Agency</b>  | <b>No Mandate, or Testing Option</b>  | <b>Mandate with No Testing Option</b>   |
|----|--|---|---|
| 1  | AC Transit   | No mandate.   |   |
| 2  | California High-Speed Rail Authority                               | Vaccine verification with a weekly testing alternative per Newsom's policy.   |   |
| 3  | Caltrans District 4  | Vaccine verification with a weekly testing alternative per Newsom's policy.   |   |
| 4  | City of Santa Rosa and Sonoma County                               | Vaccination or weekly testing.  |   |
| 5  | Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority                             |   | Plan on implementing a vaccination requirement by Dec. 15, with process to apply for medical/religious exemption.                             |
| 6  | Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority                          | Talking about it but have not done this yet.<br>Around 30% of their drivers are unvaccinated, plus they are short drivers by 25%. |   |
| 7  | Napa Valley Transportation Authority                               | No mandate.   |   |
| 8  | Pacific Gas & Electric   | No mandate.   |   |
| 9  | SamTrans/Caltrain  | No mandate; vaccine recommended with weekly testing option.   |   |
| 10 | San Francisco Bay Ferry / Water Emergency Transportation Authority |   | Vaccine mandate by Nov. 31; no testing option.  |
| 11 | San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA)              |   | SFMTA has implemented a vaccine mandate, with process to apply for medical/religious exemption. "Concerns abound regarding potential impact." |
| 12 | Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART)                             | Vaccine verification with a weekly testing alternative per Newsom's policy.   |   |
| 13 | Valley Transportation Authority                                    | No mandate.   |   |





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