



**Meeting Minutes**  
**October 29th, 2020, 4:30 p.m.**

**Virtual-Webex meeting**

| <b>Commission Members</b> | <b>Agency</b>         | <b>Present</b> |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Wayne Johnson             | Washington County RRA | X              |
| Jim McDonough             | Ramsey County RRA     | X              |
| Nicole Frethem            | Ramsey County RRA     |                |
| Dave Thiede               | City of Cottage Grove | X              |
| Myron Bailey              | City of Cottage Grove |                |
| Jane Prince               | City of St. Paul      | X              |
| Sandi Dingle              | City of St. Paul Park | X              |
| Mark Vaughan              | City of Hastings      | X              |
| Tom Ingemann              | City of Newport       | X              |

| <b>Staff</b>      | <b>Agency</b>         | <b>Present</b> |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Joe Ayers-Johnson | Washington County RRA | X              |
| Kurt Howard       | Washington County RRA | X              |
| Kim Napoline      | Washington County RRA | X              |
| Kevin Roggenbuck  | Ramsey County RRA     | X              |

| <b>Other Attendees</b> | <b>Agency</b> | <b>Present</b> |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Lonnie Garland         | SWCTC         | X              |

### **Agenda Item #1: Introduction**

Chair Wayne Johnson called the meeting to order by mentioning that due to COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting is virtual, and roll call was called.

Quorum was met.

### **Agenda Item #2: Approval of Agenda**

Councilmember McDonough made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Ingemann seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion Carried.

### **Agenda Item #3: Consent Items**

Councilmember Vaughn made a motion to approve the consent items, including minutes from the October meeting. Councilmember Ingemann seconded. Councilmember Prince abstained. All other commission members were in favor. **Approved.** Motion Carried.

### **Agenda Item #4: Draft 2021 Work Plan and Budget**

Mr. Ayers-Johnson presented the information for 2021 work plan and budget. The 2021 work plan is almost identical to that of last year. Washington County will continue to take on responsibilities that were formerly delegated to a communications consultant, as has been the case for the last few years. Funds have been set aside to bring a communications consultant on board in the event that Route 363 service begins. Ramsey County and Washington County are the Commission's only funding partners and the Commission has not been collecting dues for the last couple of years. The 2021 budget will be covered by the fund balance.

Commissioner McDonough made a motion to approve the 2021 Work Plan and Budget. Councilmember Thiede seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion Carried.

### **Agenda Item #5: 2021 Proposed Meeting Schedule**

Mr. Ayers-Johnson explained the meeting times and that the meetings will most likely be virtual. Chair Johnson noted it is a different location than last year, questioned the reason for this change. Mr. Ayers-Johnson explained the location change was due to construction at Newport. Mayor Dingle made a motion to approve the 2021 Proposed Meeting Schedule. Councilmember Ingemann seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion Carried.

### **Agenda Item #6: Presentation COVID Impacts on Metro Transit, Network Next – Scott Thompson, Senior Transit Planner, Metro Transit**

Mr. Thompson, Senior Transit Planner with Metro Transit presented the impacts of COVID on Metro Transit's operations. Mr. Thompson gave an overview of Metro Transit's COVID responses, such as requiring facemasks and cleaning protocols. Mr. Thompson explained the schedule adjustments made for routes due to a decrease in ridership of about 55-60% of pre-pandemic levels.. Express routes took the biggest hit in ridership percentage. Mr. Thompson further explained that Metro Transit is operating at 80% of its budget, some routes remained suspended but local bus routes have returned to pre-pandemic levels. While funding is down due to a decrease in farebox revenue, expenses were offset by CARES Act funding. Transit programs established pre-pandemic are largely being continued and future plans are centered around safety and public engagement efforts to collect information on what is most important to transit riders.

Chair Johnson asked about whether people are using the LRT as many local routes are unavailable. Mr. Thompson explained that it is common for people from the east metro to use

the Blue Line to access downtown Minneapolis and the LRT allows people to come and go all day as service is offered every ten minutes. Chair Johnson asked about the budget and what the start point number was used for the 2021 return to the office. Mr. Thompson explained that Metro Transit is following other agencies lead as to when employees will be able to return. Chair Johnson then asked if CARES Act funding will be needed next year. Mr. Thompson confirmed it will be.

Chair Johnson asked if bus drivers are responsible for policing how many people are allowed on the bus. Mr. Thompson explained that bus operators are responsible for this and that bus rides are limited to 10 people. Chair Johnson suggested that the limit of riders per bus could negatively impact people's schedule. Mr. Thompson explained that automated passenger counters are used to adjust capacities and mitigate schedule disruptions for riders.

Mayor Dingle asked if families are counted as one unit versus one person. Mr. Thompson replied that bus operators may use judgment on that situation.

Councilmember Thiede questioned why Red Rock Corridor was not represented in the aBRT corridors under consideration as part of Network Next. Mr. Thompson explained that the aBRT project is separate from regular route service planning of Network Next and that there may be opportunities to increase service in the Red Rock Corridor as part of regular route service planning. Mr. Ayers-Johnson added that the Red Rock Corridor project is considered a transitway in its early stages of planning, and would not necessarily be under consideration for aBRT service.

Mayor Dingle raised the point that there is uncertainty around what transit needs will be post-pandemic with many workers staying home and telecommuting. Chair Johnson agreed that it is difficult to determine what the future will look like given that the end of the pandemic is also a ways out.

#### **Agenda Item #7: Communications**

Kurt Howard, Washington County Planner, presented a communications update. Mr. Howard explained that communications predominantly take place on the Red Rock Corridor's Facebook page, which currently has 377 likes and 394 followers, which has increased slightly from January. Mr. Howard also explained that County staff has increased page posting per the commission's suggestion to do so at the last commission meeting. Mr. Howard opened the floor for questions. No questions or comments were offered.

#### **Agenda Item #8: Other**

- A. Commissioner Reports:** None of the councilmembers had an update.
- B. Next Meeting:** Chair Johnson noted the next meeting on January 21 will be virtual.

#### **Agenda Item #9: Adjourn**

Mayor Dingle made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Thiede seconded. All were in favor.  
**Approved.** Motion Carried.