



**SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT (METRO)  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES\*  
SEPTEMBER 23, 2022 – 9:00 AM  
MEETING HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) convened on Friday, September 23, 2022, 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 CALLED TO ORDER** at 9:00 AM by Board Chair Pageler.
- 2 ROLL CALL:** The following Directors were **present** via teleconference, representing a quorum:

<b>Director Kristen Brown</b>	<b>City of Capitola</b>
<b>Director Rebecca Downing</b>	<b>County of Santa Cruz</b>
<b>Direct Jimmy Dutra</b>	<b>City of Watsonville</b>
<b>Director Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson</b> <i>AR 9:04</i>	<b>City of Santa Cruz</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> <i>AR 9:04</i>	<b>County of Santa Cruz</b>
<b>Director Donna Meyers</b>	<b>City of Santa Cruz</b>
<b>Director Larry Pageler</b>	<b>County of Santa Cruz</b>
Director Ari Parker	City of Watsonville
<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 Alta Northcutt</b> <i>AR 9:04</i>	<b>Cabrillo College</b>
Michael Tree	CEO/General Manager
Julie Sherman	General Counsel

- 3 ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
Today’s meeting is being broadcast by Community Television of Santa Cruz County.
- 4 BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMMENTS**  
Ex-Officio Director Alta Northcutt expressed gratitude to METRO in supporting Cabrillo College students. There was some confusion during the first two weeks of school in providing rides to Cabrillo students. She reached out to CEO Tree and the situation was quickly resolved. Since then she has noticed an uptick in ridership.

Director Dutra thanked METRO for its presence at the Santa Cruz County Fair. He brought his 7<sup>th</sup> Graders to the Fair and it was a great experience. They enjoyed getting on the new bus that was on display as well as spinning the prize wheel. Even though this is an annual tradition, it is important that METRO continue to have this presence in the community and educate the public on the services it provides.

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

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

David Van Brink, member of the public, commented that the new bus shelters look great with the white lettering on top. He also mentioned the hanging plastic cards inside the buses are blocking the digital signage for riders. He appreciates the free fares METRO is offering. He suggested that with more lead-time, supportive organizations of METRO and transit users could help promote such a program.

Bonnie Morr, Legislative Representative of SMART Local 0023, expressed concern that the public can only see the speaker during the Board meetings. She also spoke of the medical checks mailed to retirees and mentioned that this is a hardship for those retirees that are not mobile. She requested they instead be direct deposited. Chair Pageler responded he would defer to staff to address these comments.

Lani Faulkner, Equity Transit, thanked METRO in supporting AB1919. She was disappointed that the Governor vetoed the bill. However, she was appreciative of the free fare program METRO recently launched and that Equity Transit's social media sites promoted it. She mentioned that she did not see a Spanish version of this promo on METRO's website. She thanked METRO for providing an important service to the community.

Director Pageler indicated there was an additional written communication received on September 22, 2022 (attached).

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

## **6 LABOR ORGANIZATION COMMUNICATIONS**

Brandon Freeman, Vice Chair of SMART Local 0023, apologized to the Board for some issues in getting the new schedule launched. We were able to compromise internally to make sure all of the service that is needed can be provided. He expressed concern that the current Bus Operator shortages are taking a toll in terms of fatigue. He thanked the Bus Operators, Transit Supervisors, Schedulers, Dispatch and Managers for making sure service is on the streets during these hard times. He also thanked CEO Tree for being hands on and finding solutions to issues that arise; that willingness to engage is appreciated. Lastly, he thanked the Board for the kind words expressed at the August meeting when he received his 10-year longevity award.

Director Pageler thanked Brandon and staff for providing the service needed during this staff shortage.

Director Rotkin requested an update on recruitment of Bus Operators in the CEO report. Director Pageler added that he hoped all of the Directors received the

METRO hiring cards and are distributing them to people who may be interested in driving.

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

**7 WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE METRO ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Having none, Chair Pageler moved to the next agenda item.

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

Having none, Chair Pageler moved to the next agenda item.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**9.1 ACCEPT AND FILE: PRELIMINARY APPROVED CHECK JOURNAL DETAIL FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST 2022**

Chuck Farmer, CFO

**9.2 ACCEPT AND FILE MINUTES OF:**

A. AUGUST 17, 2022 MAC MEETING

B. AUGUST 26, 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

C. SEPTEMBER 9, 2022 FINANCE, BUDGET AND AUDIT STANDING COMMITTEE

D. SEPTEMBER 9, 2022 PERSONNEL/HR STANDING COMMITTEE

Michael Tree, CEO/General Manager

**9.3 ACCEPT AND FILE: THE YEAR TO DATE MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT AS OF AUGUST 31, 2022**

Chuck Farmer, CFO

**9.4 ACCEPT AND FILE: THE FISCAL YEAR END MONTHLY BUDGET STATUS REPORTS FOR JUNE 30, 2022 AND ADOPTION OF THE PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF RESERVE ACCOUNT BALANCES**

Chuck Farmer, CFO

**9.5 APPROVE: RECOMMENDED ACTION ON TORT CLAIMS**

Curtis Moses, Safety, Security & Risk Management Director

**9.6 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION MAKING CERTAIN FINDINGS AND DIRECTING THAT THE BOARD AND ITS COMMITTEE MEETINGS WILL CONTINUE TO BE HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE**

Michael Tree, CEO/General Manager

**9.7 APPROVE: CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING THE CEO TO EXECUTE A 3<sup>RD</sup> AMENDMENT EXTENDING THE CONTRACT FOR FIVE (5) YEARS WITH STATE ELECTRIC FOR ANNUAL EMERGENCY GENERATOR LOAD BANK TESTING AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES, INCREASING THE CONTRACT TOTAL BY \$146,649**

Freddy Rocha, Facilities Maintenance Manager

**9.8 APPROVE: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION AND FUNDING FOR FOUR MAINTENANCE MECHANICS**

Margo Ross, COO

- 9.9 APPROVE: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION OF ACCOUNTANT III POSITION IN THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT  
Chuck Farmer, CFO
- 9.10 ACCEPT AND FILE THE QUARTERLY PROCUREMENT REPORT FOR 2ND QUARTER OF FY23  
Joan Jeffries, Purchasing Manager
- 9.11 CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING THE CEO/GM TO EXECUTE AN AMENDMENT TO THE PROTERRA, INC. CONTRACT IN ORDER TO PURCHASE RHOMBUS CHARGING EQUIPMENT FOR BATTERY ELECTRIC BUSES  
Freddy Rocha, Facilities Maintenance Manager

There were no public comments.

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

**MOTION: DIRECTOR ROTKIN**

**SECOND: DIRECTOR DUTRA**

**MOTION PASSED WITH 10 AYES (Directors Brown, Downing, Dutra, Kalantari-Johnson, Koenig, Lind, McPherson, Meyers, Pageler, and Rotkin). Director Parker was absent.**

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**10 EMPLOYEE LONGEVITY AWARDS PRESENTATION: LEONARDO PENA**

Chair Pageler acknowledged and thanked Mr. Pena for his 20 years of service at METRO.

There were no public comments.

**11 CEO ORAL REPORT / COVID-19 UPDATE**

Michael Tree, CEO/General Manager, expressed appreciation for both Fixed Route and ParaCruz Bus Operators and the hours they are putting in to make sure transportation needs are met. Staff recognizes that we are not up to pre-COVID service levels and that has created pass ups, especially on campus. That is certainly a challenge but is also an opportunity for METRO to capture that student ridership so that it endures throughout the quarter.

Our current class of Bus Operators is at nine and we hope to have them on the road in November. Our latest recruitment has provided 16 applicants. Staff has been working on how to have more classes to train applicants.

John Urgo, Planning and Development Director, suggested the free fare program. It is a great way to introduce new students and the public to the bus system. Ridership is up and demonstrated with an uptick of 20% in ParaCruz rides. Staff is going above and beyond to provide service to our riders and there is a great vibe at the agency seeing this increase in ridership.

There is currently only one positive case of COVID and all departments have left the minor outbreak status.

Our Safety, Security, and Risk Management and Fleet Maintenance Departments will host METRO's refresher training to the local fire departments on September

28, 2022. This will allow them to get acquainted with our electric buses and how to work with them in an event of an emergency.

As mentioned earlier, AB1919 (program for youth to ride free on public transit) was vetoed by the Governor, citing the bill would have significant impact on the state's general fund. METRO will continue to advocate for such a program.

Wondimu Mengistu, Capital Planning and Grants Program Manager, was selected to be on the California Transit Association's Legislative Committee. This committee decides how to support and emphasize legislation that moves through the state's legislative process.

There are two opportunities coming up to promote the bus system. The first is the California Clean Air Day on October 5, 2022 with METRO offering free fares that day. The second is UCSC Downtown Day on October 7, 2022. We will have a booth at the METRO Center to promote the bus system to students.

CEO Tree shared a few slides (attached) of the Santa Cruz County Fair and the new bus shelters. He recognized all of the volunteers that helped at the Fair as well as Danielle Glagola, Marketing, Communications and Customer Service Director for her coordination of the Fair and the new design of the bus shelters.

Additionally, we are going to unveil new trash receptacles to accompany the stops on Soquel Drive. They will be attractive and keep the area clean.

CEO Tree reminded the Board of the upcoming workshop being held on Friday, October 14, 2022. Some of the topics to be reviewed:

- Results of community survey
- Guest transit planner
- Zero-Emission buses and the implementation plan
- Innovative partnerships with Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Save the Redwoods League designed to increase ridership and protect the environment.
- Housing projects.

Director McPherson commented that the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary recently celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and was glad that CEO Tree was able to attend the event. The importance of public transit and protecting the environment are vital in moving the agency forward.

Director Rotkin expressed appreciation for staff managing the shortfall of Bus Operators and pass ups that happen at the beginning of the school term. He also commended CEO Tree for the quick response METRO provided in helping with the transportation needs of a Ukrainian refugee family. In listening to Mr. Freeman's comments and other METRO employees, it is nice to hear that employees are feeling good about the CEO/General Manager and the work he is doing for the agency. Michael has been out there meeting and working with people and we should not take that for granted.

Lani Faulkner asked if the upcoming workshop will be recorded for the public and if the public will be able to attend. CEO Tree responded that it is a public meeting

and the public is invited to attend. We will post an agenda when we get closer to the date with the details and the meeting will be recorded.

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

**12 ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING**

Chair Pageler announced the next regular board meeting is on October 28, 2022 at 9:00 AM via teleconference.

**13 ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Pageler adjourned the meeting at 9:37 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bauer  
Executive Assistant

# Attachment

**From:** [John Urgo](#)  
**To:** [oelm@ucsc.edu](mailto:oelm@ucsc.edu)  
**Cc:** [Donna Bauer](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Public Comment  
**Date:** Thursday, September 22, 2022 5:06:10 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Hi Oliver,

Thank you for your comment and concerns. As you may or may not be aware, Santa Cruz METRO is facing an unprecedented shortage of bus operators, which forced us to temporarily reduce service this fall. This included service changes to Routes 4, 22, 35, and the Watsonville Circulator.

As Route 22 was the lowest ridership UCSC route and could be covered entirely by Route 20, we made the hard decision to temporarily suspend Route 22 and serve the Coastal Science Campus in both directions on every trip with Route 20. We understand that an 80-minute route is inconvenient; however, we purposely aligned the schedule with the M-W-F passing period schedules on campus as these are the times of greatest demand (it is nearly impossible for one bus to align with the differing M-W-F/T-Th class times at both the main and Coastal Science Campuses).

We anticipate being able to bring the Route 20 frequency to every 60 minutes in the winter, dependent on the hiring and training of new bus operators.

Sincerely,

JOHN URGO  
Director, Planning & Development  
T: (831) 420-2537 | [jurgo@scmtd.com](mailto:jurgo@scmtd.com)  
Santa Cruz METRO  
110 Vernon Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060



**From:** Oliver Elm <[oelm@ucsc.edu](mailto:oelm@ucsc.edu)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 22, 2022 4:12 PM  
**To:** [boardinquiries@scmtd.com](mailto:boardinquiries@scmtd.com)  
**Subject:** Public Comment

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# Attachment

Please exercise caution when clicking links or opening attachments.

Hello,

This comment applies to agenda item 5.

I am a student at UCSC who, like thousands of other students, relies on the Metro for getting to and from class. You recently discontinued the 22 line and changed the 20 line's trips from 60 minutes to 80 minutes. These lines were the only way for students to access the Coastal Science Campus, and routes were already limited. Suddenly, this year, these routes have been reduced even more. This poses a major problem for students who rely on the Metro to get to class on time, and having only one line with an 80-minute trip is unacceptable. This will result in hundreds of students arriving to lectures extremely late or missing them entirely, and I am baffled that no greater effort has been made to preserve these bus lines. I strongly urge the board not to neglect the students that depend on them, and to instead put an effort toward restoring at least some of the functionality of service between UCSC and the Coastal Science Campus.

Thank you.







SANTA CRUZ METRO



