

# Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

## Committee Members Present:

Atlas-Ingebretson, Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Johnson, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran, Chair Zelle

## Committee Members Absent:

Gonzalez

## CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Zelle called the regular meeting of the Council's Committee of the Whole to order at 4:02 p.m. on Wednesday, March 17, 2021 on the following roll call vote:

Aye: 13 Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Fredson, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran, Chair Zelle

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gonzalez

Not Recorded: 3 Atlas-Ingebretson, Ferguson, Johnson

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Vento, seconded by Atlas-Ingebretson to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2020 regular meeting of the Committee of the Whole. **Motion carried** on the following roll call:

Aye: 15 Atlas-Ingebretson, Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran, Chair Zelle

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gonzalez

Not Recorded: 1 Johnson

## BUSINESS

12021-53: That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute contract 19P321 with New Flyer of America Inc., to provide 143 base order biodiesel sixty-foot transit buses (including optional equipment) with options to purchase up to 29 additional replacement and expansion buses in an amount not to exceed \$121,997,561.

It was moved by Barber and seconded by Wulff.

**Motion carried** on the following role call vote:

Aye: 11 Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Lee, Lilligren, Muse, Wulff, Zeran, Chair Zelle

Nay: 4 Atlas-Ingebretson, Lindstrom, Sterner, Vento

Absent: 1 Gonzalez

Not Recorded: 1 Johnson

Council Members had questions and comments about the business item, including the number of buses that would be dedicated to Orange Line, how delaying the procurement could delay the Orange Line, maintenance costs for electric vehicles, and the impact of this procurement on the Electric Bus Program at Metro Transit. Council Member Chamblis noted that this was not an easy decision for the Metropolitan Council to make. She would also like the Council to monitor how the electric buses are working on shorter routes. Council Member Barber clarified that right now electric vehicles currently accounts for one-third of ridership as light rail transit. She also noted that not passing this procurement would delay the opening of the Orange Line. Council Member Barber gave more information about the process of ordering buses to be built and that staggering the bus procurement would need to restart the entire procurement process.

## INFORMATION

1. Citizens League Metro Transit Police Review Update (Michelle Fure, Amanda Koonjbeharry, Marika Pfefferkorn)

Michelle Fure, Manager, Public Involvement, and Amanda Koonjbeharry and Marika Pfefferkorn, Citizens League, shared an update on the Metro Transit Police Review Project. The scope of this work encompasses transit safety, including safety on and near transit, the impact of community on transit safety, community impact of interactions on transit, and hearing from different voices in the community. This review is informed by prior work and data. The project team has formed a stakeholder advisory group, which includes Council members, Metro Transit and Metro Transit Police Department leadership, Council Community Development leadership, transit operators, the Equity Advisory Committee, local business interests, and pass customers, such as Metropass and College passholders. The community advisory group includes those with a broad range of interests, including community members who use transit, youth and students, and cultural communities. Significant engagement will take place now through May to June, and results will be compiled in June. At that point they will define the next phase of the project.

Council Members had questions and comments regarding public engagement practices, accountability and follow up on actions. Council Member Atlas-Ingebretson also asked how she can be involved in this work; Fure responded that she will connect with her and will find ways to be involved.

2. Quarterly SWRLT Update (Jim Alexander, 612-373-3880)

Jim Alexander, SWLRT Project Director, gave an update on the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Project. SWLRT, also known as METRO Green Line Extension, is 14.5 miles long with 16 stations. It will provide single seat trips to downtown Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota, and St. Paul. Customers will also be able to connect to the MSP Airport and Mall of America via the Blue Line. The Council received the federal funding grant agreement on September 14, 2020. Other 2020 construction highlights include 35% completion of civil construction, eight of 16 stations underway, 23 of 29 bridges completed, five of eight tunnels underway and 47% of retaining wall work completed. The current stage of construction sequencing is structures, track, and stations, including bridges, tunnels, walls, track, buildings, and roads and trails. Elements impacting the project schedule are the corridor protection wall required per the BNSF agreement, and the secant wall, caused by unforeseen soil conditions that necessitated an alternative construction method. Both of these elements are major projects by

themselves; when taken together, they have a significant impact on the project's overall schedule due to their scope and complexity. Other updates included the delivery of 13 light rail vehicles, and the real estate acquisition status.

Jon Tao, Equity Consultant from the Office of Equal Opportunity gave a DBE and Workforce Update. Civil DBE participation as of January 2021 has exceeded the goal of 16%, with 20.3% DBE participation. Systems DBE participation has also exceeded the 12% DBE goal, with 15.6% participation. Tao also shared tables with disaggregated DBE contract data.

Sam O'Connell, Senior Manager in Community Affairs, gave a SWLRT Communications and Outreach update. 2020 construction communication updates currently have more than 16,600 subscribers with a 46% open rate. The 24-hour construction hotline received 270 calls in 2020, and there were hundreds more non-hotline calls and emails from community members to outreach staff. Construction information workgroups held meetings in Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park, and Minneapolis. In February and March of 2021, outreach staff held virtual community town halls highlighting 2021 construction activities. They plan to return to in-person events when it is safe to do so.

Council Members asked for a clarification on the DBE disaggregated data, workforce and DBE trends outside of Minnesota. Council members asked for more information about the outreach team and alternate language abilities.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Bridget Toskey  
Recording Secretary