

# Minutes

Committee of the Whole



**Meeting Date:** January 18, 2023

**Time:** 4:00 PM

**Location:** 390 Robert Steet

## Members Present:

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|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chair, Charlie Zelle       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Pacheco, District 6     | <input type="checkbox"/> Francisco Gonzalez, District 12         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judy Johnson, District 1   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Lilligren, District 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> Chai Lee, District 13                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reva Chamblis, District 2  | <input type="checkbox"/> Abdirahman Muse, District 8             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kris Fredson, District 14    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deb Barber, District 4     | <input type="checkbox"/> Raymond Zeran, District 9               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phillip Sterner, District 15 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Molly Cummings, District 5 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Peter Lindstrom, District 10 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wendy Wulff, District 16     |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Susan Vento, District 11     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> = present                    |

## Call to Order

A quorum being present, Council Chair Zelle called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council's Committee of the Whole to order at 4:03 p.m.

## Agenda Approved

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

## Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Vento, seconded by Barber to approve the minutes of the December 21, 2022 regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council's Committee of the Whole. **Motion carried.**

## Information

### 1. Quarter 4 Metro Transit Safety & Security Action Plan Update

Lesley Kandaras, Chief of Staff, Metro Transit, began with an overview of the Safety and Security Action Plan, which emerged from the Council's Metro Transit Police Review Work Group. The Safety and Security Action Plan is currently comprised of 40 action items organized into three areas of work: 1. Improving conditions on the system, 2. Training and supporting employees, and 3. Engaging customers and partners.

Interim Chief Rick Grates gave an update on the Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD). Year 2022 calls for service were up 15% compared to 2021, and 2022 crime reports were up 54% over 2021. There were notable increases in 2022 in the areas of narcotics, weapons, assault, and liquor law violations. Vandalism and property damage are the most frequently reported crimes, followed by simple assault. Chief Grates also shared an update on recruiting and retention strategies, which include a market increase for wages, one-day hiring and interview process, lateral officer recruitment, and CSO tuition reimbursement. Chief Grates also discussed relational policing, which is an update that has been added since the Q3 Safety and Security Plan Update. Relational Based Policing (RBP) intends to build relationships founded in trust while working collaboratively with the community to address public safety concerns. RBP includes the use of non-law enforcement partnerships to increase the perception of safety on the system. Council Member Vento requested a map of calls for service to demonstrate where incidents occur. Council members had questions and comments regarding calls for service and

ridership, security issues and growing concerns in downtown St. Paul, Central Station reopening timing, the supplemental officer program, and identifying partners. Council members also shared comments regarding educational requirements for officers and the inclusion of officers in the discussion of educational requirements, working with other groups to have a roundtable discussion about complex social issues, the short time-period of reporting, and lateral officer recruitment. Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra raised the issue of the drug crisis and how it is connected to other crime. Council members also had questions and comments regarding how MTPD is sharing positive improvements with customers, Central Station block and the closure of the vertical connection, drug overdoses and Narcan usage, and appreciation for the Text for Safety and response time.

Kandaras, and Leah Palmer, Interim Manager, Bus Operations, Marilyn Porter, Director, Engineering and Facilities, and Pam Steffen, Manager, Customer Relations, shared an update on the Safety and Security Action Plan implementation status as well as examples of projects and programs in progress. Council members had questions and comments about non-law enforcement staff, administrative citations, and legislation. Council members asked for more visuals of before and after as well as dynamics of implementation. Council members also commented on funding invested in mental health and addiction, and asked if there are specific things the Council can do to facilitate the work of Metro Transit.

## 2. Addressing Homelessness in the Region

This item will be moved to a future meeting due to time constraints.

## Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

## Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Council's Committee of the Whole meeting of January 18, 2023.

Approved this 1st day of February 2023.

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### Council Contact:

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