

**BI-STATE DEVELOPMENT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
(Virtual Meeting)
OPEN SESSION MINUTES
November 19, 2021**

Board Members in Attendance via Zoom

Missouri

Rose Windmiller, Chair – Absent
Vernal Brown, Secretary
Fred Pestello
Nate Johnson
Sam Gladney

Illinois

Justin Zimmerman, Vice Chair
Herbert Simmons, Treasurer
Irma Golliday (joined at 8:32 a.m.)
Terry Beach
Derrick Cox

Staff in Attendance via Zoom

Taulby Roach, President and Chief Executive Officer
Barbara Enneking, General Counsel and Deputy Secretary
Brenda Deertz, Director Executive Services
Myra Bennett, Manager of Board Administration
Jessica Mefford-Miller, Executive Director Metro Transit
Kevin Scott, General Manager Security
Patti Beck, Sr. Director Media and Public Relations
Ted Zimmerman, Vice President Marketing and Communications
John Langa, Vice President Economic Development
Trenise Winters, General Manager MetroBus
Tammy Fulbright, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer
Andrew Ghiassi, General Manager Safety/Chief Safety Officer
Kimberly Evans, MetroBus Operator
Jackie Williams, MetroLink Light Rail Operator
Jerome Pampkin, Call-A-Ride Van Operator

Others in Attendance

Erin Stumpf, ASL Interpreter
Brett Runge, ASL Interpreter
Paul Hampel, representing St. Louis County Executive Office
Don Roe, representing St. Louis City Mayor's Office
Reginald Howard Sr., President & Business Agent of Amalgamated Local 788
Justin Sobeck, Missouri Department of Transportation
Joshua Katz, Illinois Department of Transportation
Lindbergh Askew, III, Illinois Department of Transportation
Alexis Billingslea, Illinois Department of Transportation

1. Open Session Call to Order

8:30 a.m. Vice Chair Zimmerman called the Open Session of the Bi-State Development Agency, Board of Commissioners Meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

2. Roll Call

8:30 a.m. Roll call was taken, as noted above.

3. Proclamation Presentations

8:32 a.m. Vice Chair Zimmerman noted that he would like to start today's meeting with some special recognition for Metro Transit Operators who have gone above and beyond to serve the St. Louis region during this global pandemic. He introduced three of the dedicated operators who were in attendance at the meeting: Kimberly Evans from MetroBus, who has had perfect attendance during this pandemic; Jackie Williams from MetroLink, and Jerome Pampkin from Metro Call-A-Ride. He noted that Reginald Howard, President and Business Agent of Amalgamated Local 788 was also in attendance. He thanked the Operators in attendance, as well as their fellow operators, for their service, especially during the last 19 months as they faced challenges unlike any we have seen before in our history. He stated that, echoing the Board of Commissioners' appreciation, are Taulby Roach, Jessica Mefford-Miller, Trenise Winters, Jeff Butler and Martin Gulley.

Vice Chair Zimmerman presented a proclamation to the Operators, as follows:

On behalf of the Bi-State Development Board of Commissioners, we do hereby recognize the operators of MetroLink, MetroBus and Metro Call-A-Ride for their exemplary Service to the St. Louis Region during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In bestowing this honor upon the Operators, the Bi-State Development Board of Commissioners recognizes the exceptional service and dedication they bring to the Metro Transit organization and the St. Louis region; and

WHEREAS, the St. Louis region, like every other part of the nation has been, and is, greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, throughout the pandemic, the Operators of MetroLink, MetroBus and Metro Call-A-Ride provided exemplary service to the St. Louis region, diligently, day in and day out, serving on the front line to provide public transit service for the St. Louis region; and

WHEREAS, the Operators of MetroLink, MetroBus and Metro Call-A-Ride have a long-standing record of excellence and of going beyond and above the standard and routine to provide exemplary transit service to the region.

NOW THEREFORE, be it proclaimed, that the Bi-State Development Board of Commissioners expresses its sincerest appreciation to the operators of MetroLink, MetroBus and Metro Call-A-Ride and declares today, Friday, November 19, as MetroLink, MetroBus and Metro Call-A-Ride Operator Day.

President and CEO, Taulby Roach, stated that Metro Transit is one of Bi State Development's enterprises, and we operate public transit services for the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County

in Missouri and in St. Clair County in Illinois. He stated that our transit partners in these jurisdictions would also like to give special recognition to our transit operators. He introduced Paul Hampel, representing St. Louis County Executive Sam Page. Mr. Hampel presented a proclamation to the Operators, on behalf of St. Louis County.

President and CEO Roach introduced Don Roe, representing St. Louis City Mayor Tishaura Jones. Mr. Roe presented a proclamation to the Operators, on behalf of St. Louis City.

President and CEO Roach noted that St. Clair County Board Chairman Mark Kern also wanted to recognize our hardworking transit operators and he provided this special proclamation for today. Mr. Roach read the proclamation, as follows:

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 global pandemic brought new challenges to our nation, the bi-state region and to St. Clair County in 2020 and 2021; and

WHEREAS, access to public transit reached a critical level, especially for front-line workers at hospitals, urgent care centers, clinics, health care facilities, pharmacies, grocery stores, nursing homes and other businesses and organizations; and

WHEREAS, operators for Metro Transit went above and beyond to provide essential transit service for the St. Clair County Transit District community, even during the most uncertain points of the global pandemic; and

WHEREAS, these operators are committed to transporting citizens back to work and other important destinations to help the economy recover; and

WHEREAS, the resilience and dedication demonstrated by these operators has been exceptional and courageous;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED that I, Mark A. Kern, County Board Chairman, do hereby proclaim November 19, 2021 as "Transit Operators Day" throughout St. Clair County.

President and CEO Roach thanked the Operators in attendance for their commitment to moving the St. Louis region, in spite of a global pandemic, and expressed appreciation to all of the operators at MetroBus, MetroLink and Metro Call-A-Ride for their dedication and service.

4. Public Comment

8:43 a.m. Vice Chair Zimmerman noted that several public comment cards were received for today's meeting, and those comments were distributed to the Commissioners. He stated that he would like to thank the public for their input, and stated that these comments are important to the Board. He noted that, due to time constraints and the amount of business to be conducted at today's meeting, the comments would not be read aloud; however, the comments are contained in the meeting materials on the BSD website, and the comments will also be included in the minutes of today's meeting. Vice Chair Zimmerman stated that, as all of the comments received pertain to service reduction and workforce shortage issues, Jessica Mefford-Miller, Executive Director of Metro Transit, and President & CEO, Taulby Roach, will be providing an update and additional information regarding these issues at today's meeting, under the Operations Report. He noted that he would like to look into a better way of addressing the comments.

The following public comments were submitted for the meeting:

Name: Tony Barsanti
Representing: Myself
Topic: Bus Lines/Frequency

Comments: Hello,

If we are to thrive as a metro area and provide our residents with the ability to lead the lives they want, it won't be possible without a robust, reliable transit system that gives people transportation options other than owning one or multiple vehicles. Plainly, we need to drastically increase both the number of bus routes and their frequency. While it would benefit everyone in the STL Metro area, north city and county would stand to benefit the most, since these areas have been shown to have the lowest rate of car ownership, therefore finally providing residents there a reliable and affordable source of transit. Lastly, as usage rises, traffic congestion would plummet, reducing the need for constant road/highway widening and repairs, and the fewer sources of engine exhaust would greatly improve air quality. It's a win-win for everyone, and needs to be done desperately. In a modern, advanced society, a typical family shouldn't be forced to have two car payments just to get to work and live their lives. We need more options.

Name: Richard Bose
Representing: myself
Topic: Bus service

Comments: Please redouble your efforts to staff bus service. Coercing people to spend money on cars is burdensome.

Name: John Nash
Representing: Myself
Topic: Bus Driver Shortage, Frequency Changes, and Route Adjustments

Comments: We need to make it easier to become a bus driver, not penalize the riders for poor leadership. Raise the pay, incentivize the training, and make bus routes more frequent and comprehensive.

Spending money on security will do nothing except satisfy the suburban population who hold the misconception that public transit is riddled with crime. Reallocate that money toward bus driver pay, upgrading stations and bus shelters, and generally spending money in ways that actual riders would benefit from. Otherwise, the 'shortage' will continue to get worse and ridership will decrease when we prioritize security over reliability.

Name: Austin Archinal
Representing: Austin Archinal

Topic: Bus Frequency and Safety

Comments: In the time of this pandemic, safety aboard public transit vehicles is greatly affected by the frequency of the routes. I know many factors must go into determining schedules, but if passengers are regularly riding two-to-a-seat with some standing on the #70 or #11 or #10 etc (and with no enforcement of the long-standing mask mandate, I might add), the safety of public transit passengers is put at greater and greater risk. A large factor, perhaps the largest, at play in this mess is the low wages paid to drivers. I work in the back of a retail shop and have been paid more for years, I'm getting a raise soon. Treat the drivers well so that the routes can at a healthier pace for everyone.

Name: Nathan Kwarta

Representing: Myself and the other poor and working class of St. Louis

Topic: Buses and Drivers

Comments: Bi-State needs to increase pay and benefits for Bus Drivers so that our region can rely on dependable, frequent bus service. New Bus Drivers in Kansas City make nearly two dollars more an hour. As the backbone of the system, they deserve higher than starting wages than what is essentially minimum livable wage.

We should be listening to ridership, we are screaming for frequency to get to jobs, school, doctor's appointments, etc. This is life and death for many. We should also consider moving funds for hiring safety contractors to improving safety through frequency. Initiatives like Bus Rapid Transit lines, which are inexpensive to roll out and provide stable lines to re-imagine how the system can benefit those who use it most.

Name: Kyle Green

Representing: Brustl.org

Topic: Public Transportation

Comments: This city needs to prioritize public transportation. Buses have been delayed or showing up not at all, as of late. It's not hard to understand that when you pay drivers a minimal wage, and they see they can just simply drop off Amazon packages for more money, they would never want to interact with the public. This city has a transportation problem and the only news we ever hear about transportation is for that dumb--- trolley in the loop that goes nowhere. (No offense Joe) the civic center station which was built to make riders more comfortable and provided restrooms and a heated area, is a glass walled break room for police and metro employees. We need more drivers running lines and on time. People will pay for it if it's reliable and safe. Also don't say it's a dollar a ride. It's more expensive now than before the pandemic to catch a bus than the metro without a monthly pass. I ride our metro system everyday, yet it feels more and more like the city and county don't care about people who ride public transportation.

Name: Erica Brooks

Representing: Erica Brooks & Gabriel Cornelius

Topic: Reconsider the Temporary Suspension Bus Services for Bus Route #79 on November 29, 2021

Comments:

Dear City of Ferguson and Bi-State Development Agent,

We, my son Gabriel Q. Cornelius and I, Erica M. Brooks, the Grassroots Organizers were at this juncture in 2019 spearheading the campaigning to retain Bus Route #79, as well as retaining access to affordable, convenient, and safe public transportation after 7pm and on weekends. At that time, there was a feedback process which started in 2017 which we weren't informed about by the City of Ferguson. It was only when my Facebook notification appeared on my phone that we demanded a chance to give our feedback as a community and had a opportunity to pursue a campaign for 6 months to retain Bus Route #79.

However, this time, as a community we were notified on November 5, 2021 which is 24 days before the changes. It came up on your website and I was sent a text on that same day, November 5, 2021. It explain that our bus service, Bus Route #79 would be "TEMPORARILY" suspended after 8pm. <https://www.metrostlouis.org/upcoming-schedule-changes/>

This change is similar to the cuts Bi-State's project, Metro Reimagined and Ferguson's former City Manager Jeffrey Blume were trying to arrange before (No bus services after 7pm, no services on the weekend and by to cut out the Suburban Ave. and Dade Ave. , This is the neighborhood portion of Bus Route #79. Nevertheless they wanted to retain the business portion of Bus Route #79 in the special business district of Ferguson, MO. In addition, the former City Manager, Jeffrey Blume told me in my face that he empathized with Metro's business sense totally excluding to importance of his residents (students, elderly, taxpaying citizens, low-income, the disable and anyone else who would have had to walk a mile to access affordable, convenient, and safe public transportation. He didn't care about us walking more than a mile to the bus stop, physical or health challenges, our safety, the weather, carrying our belong-ings for more than a mile, etc. This short notice puts a strain on our financial circumstances and job opportuni-ties, increases in the homelessness and joblessness, creates unsafe neighborhoods and challenging situations for the physically disable. In addition, it doesn't fully live up to the mission of the Transportation & Mobility section in the OurFerguson 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The mission of Ferguson when it comes to Transportation & Mobility is as follows:

"Transportation & Mobility in OurFerguson At its essence, the transportation is about connecting people to their community. It is made up of the streets and sidewalks, buses and greenways that run throughout the city and the region. When the network functions properly, it provides mobility for all people, regardless of means or ability. It connects people to employment, commerce, entertainment-and to each other. When it is meaning-fully integrated into a place, it can create interactions and vitality. When transportation fails, where it is broken, it adversely affects health, limits opportunity, and can isolate rather than connect. "(Page, 68)

This is why our City of Ferguson need to intercede on our, the Community's behalf to let Bi-State know that "Temporarily Suspension on bus services after 8pm which could led to a permanent

change when Bi-State sees that this change suites them well. In addition, the City of Ferguson and the steer committee of the Our Ferguson 2040 Comprehensive Plan didn't put the correct bus route number in the original or description of the route of Bus Route #79. After I, Erica M. Brooks brought to Brian Hurd, Rise Community Development, Program Manager of the planning team for the comprehensive plan attention that's when he looked into the situation. The bus route number was changed from #70 to 79, but the description of the route is still just going down Florissant Road and not altering between Suburban Ave. and Dade Ave., as well as Florissant Road. This is an opportunity for the current changes of Metro STL to Temporarily suspend the of services without changing the description of the Our Ferguson 2040 Comprehensive Plan. As a result, it will all go back to the original mission of Metro Reimagined and Jeffrey Blume's, the former Ferguson City Manager's plan in 2019 to cut out Suburban Ave. and Dade Ave. and just service Florissant Road. This is the description from the comprehensive plan:

Availability of Transit

Metro operates three bus routes that directly serve the City of Ferguson: the #74 (north-south along West Flo-rissant Avenue), the #61 (east-west along Chambers/Hereford Road), and the #79 (North Florissant Road serv-ing the west side of the city). All three routes provide service to the North County Transit Center, just north of the City of Ferguson, providing connectivity to the broader Metro transit network. (Page, 69)

The incorrect description needs to be changed to option #3 which we, as the community of Ferguson chose in 2019 during our Ferguson Public Transportation Town Hall on Saturday, May 19, 2019.

In order to create a beneficial situation for the community of Ferguson to have access to affordable, convenient and safe public transportation on Bus Route #79, the follow opportunities should be retained for the bus riders and created for the bus drivers:

1. Our services should not be suspended after 8pm, but maintained by offering the current bus drivers the bo-nus Metro is offering as an incentive to the new bus drivers. If the bus drivers are already in place, why not ac-commodate them through the COVID-19 pandemic to be encouraged to stay. I would think that Metro should be able to afford this after the CARES ACT Funds and The ARPA Funds as a financial lost and health risk for the bus drivers and the passengers. https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/st-louis-public-transit-company-offers-2-000-signing-bonuses-for-new-drivers-electricians-and/article_ef5668e1-7e1a-Sc7b-9e29-bed2120a93b0.html

2. Metro said, "Evening service in North St. Louis County will be available with Via Metro STL from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., seven days a week. Via Metro STL is an on-demand transit service that lets you hail a ride using the Via app when you need it - no schedule or advance booking required." <https://www.metrostlouis.org/upcoming-schedule-changes/> As we know, having a scheduled bus service is more reliable and safe. We will know where and where the bus service will pick us up no matter the weather and a traffic delay. In addition, we won't have a clue if the Via Metro STL is in our area or if there is room in the vehicle according to the COVID-19 social dis-tance mandate.

3. Last, but not least, as taxpaying residents, when Bi-State/Metro receive our sales tax dollars from St. Louis County, it is contractually promised by Bi-State/Metro monetarily will provide us with access to reliable, afford-able, convenient and safe public transportation.

City of Ferguson and Metro STL, deciding to make this last minute changes doesn't demonstrate that you both are looking out for our livelihood, our financial stability and/or our safe. Please reconsider this changes.

Name: Aura Burns
Representing: Bus rides
Topic: No driver

Comments: Bi-state has the nerve to charge \$78 for a bus pass but yet they have no drivers early in the morning when people are trying to get to work or late in the evening when people are trying to get home the absence of drivers is not known by the riders until the bus doesn't show and there you are standing 1 to 2 hours waiting for a bus you need to fix this problem you need to fix it fast. The bus riders of St. Louis Missouri deserve better we deserve a service that is prompt reliable and secure if I'm paying \$78 for a bus pass a bus Better show up and be on time and have a polite courteous driver.

Name: Allison Andrelichik
Representing: general public
Topic: increasing staff pay

Comments: As a regular rider of metro (bus and train), it is a hard and thankless job. This results in needing a strong work force, so it only makes sense that base pay would increase and drivers/operators would be compensated appropriately.
With the low pay and lack of safety precautions on the bus, I have noticed it negatively impacts the availability of buses, making travel time longer and longer, which makes it more difficult to rely on metro as a way to get to work. I believe increasing pay to staff will reduce this and benefit the st louis community.

Name: Mia Salamone
Representing: myself
Topic: Bus driver pay

Comments: I strongly encourage Bi-State to improve starting pay and benefits for bus drivers, so that we can fill our steep operator shortage and reduce the amount of time riders will spend waiting at bus stops this winter. Starting pay at Metro is \$15.88/hr, while starting pay across the state in Kansas City is \$17.48/hr.

Name: Ellie Gund
Representing: Idk
Topic: Bus Driver Pay

Comments: Bus drivers do essential work for our community to function. Their job is incredibly challenging, and they work so hard to get us where we need to go. They deserve to be paid more! Increasing bus driver pay will be an important step towards alleviating the bus driver shortage.

Name: Josiah Gundersen
Representing: Resident of St. Louis City of the 20th Ward
Topic: Bus Cuts and Wages in the St Louis Region

Comments: As someone who cannot afford to own a car currently and who relies heavily on bus transportation to get from my apartment in South City up to my job in midtown on a regular basis, the news that a bunch of bus routes are going to be cut or occur with less frequency is extremely alarming. This will hurt the most vulnerable communities here in St. Louis who rely heavily on public transportation to get around the city for work and to meet their basic needs. Especially as winter is fast approaching, less frequent bus stops will leave so many people waiting in harsh weather conditions waiting for buses to come. I strongly urge Bi-State Development to raise the starting hourly wage in order to encourage more people to become bus drivers to fill the demand that is there. I have high respect for the work that my bus drivers do to get me around the city. They ensure that I am safe as they transport me to and from work and they do the best work in dealing with all the ins and outs that come with driving around complete strangers all day long and helping them find their way through the city. I strongly support the idea that my respect for the work that bus drivers do be reflected through a higher wage which will help encourage more citizens to take part in the important work that bus drivers provide for this vital piece of infrastructure in our city. Thank you for reading and hope you strongly consider my points as Bi-State Development moves forward in how they are modifying the infrastructure of transportation.

Name: Kathy Boykin
Representing: myself
Topic: bus drivers

Comments: Hello, I ride the bus every day. Some of these drivers need either customer service training or to be let go. I don't know why it's so difficult for some of them to know how to handle high-stress encounters with passengers. That's where the training comes in. However, there are some who allow their feelings to guide them and react when there's a complaint made against them. This has happened to me. However, the driver is still driving. I will continue to press for better service. The metro bus is my only transportation, so it's a necessity that I join this conversation. I take the #70 everywhere. That line used to have a regular schedule, but not anymore. Since COVID 19 disrupted everything, that #70 schedule has been, too. I don't understand why there are fewer buses. But, standing in cold weather after you've become acquainted with regular service is unsettling. I get home later and it's already dark when I leave

work. Some bus drivers do a good job of keeping order on that line, but a lot of people don't feel safe riding the bus even. There are just not enough metro police or police in general in St. Louis. That #70 line needs to return to regular service because Grand Center is not always a safe place to wait, especially at night. Is St. Louis so poor that they can't protect their own businesses? Overall, Metro's service has improved and I'm glad about that much. It's time to continue making it better for the passengers.

Name: Annie Rice
Representing: 8th Ward Alderwoman
Topic: Increasing bus driver pay and keeping lines running

Comments: Understanding that there are staffing difficulties nationwide, we cannot afford to cut Metro bus lines any further. They are already suffering, and unreliable, infrequent public transit negatively effects our workforce and economy in huge ways. We need BiState and Metro to lead here - competitive salaries to recruit and pay drivers to keep these lines running, because without reliable transit, especially as the temperatures drop, our whole region suffers. Transit is essential. If there is any COVID money left, this is a necessary use.

Also, as temperatures drop, please do everything possible to reopen shelters, especially if you have to make reductions to frequency, as people need safe places to wait for busses and trains. If pay increases are needed to attract staff for the shelters, please do that.

Any way I can be of use in my role with the city, please let me know. - Alderwoman Annie Rice

Name: Mary Timmel
Representing: Myself
Topic: Bus driver shortage

Comments: I want to encourage BiState to improve starting pay and benefits for bus drivers so we can begin to fill the steep operator shortage and reduce the amount of time riders spend waiting at bus stops this winter. All St. Louisians deserve access to efficient transit, especially as the weather is turning colder.

Name: Mark A Loehrer
Representing: Myself
Topic: Driver compensation

Comments: I am disgusted to have learned that current hourly wages for metro bus drivers are lower than what I make to sit in a chair and stare at a computer all day. These drivers are putting their lives at risk in the midst of a global pandemic and are owed a decent living wage.

Now I know nobody on Bistate's board actually rides the bus, much less the son of the city development agency director who implemented Team 4, but you gotta at least have the business acumen to know that well paid drivers translates to improved job performance and happier transit riders.

Name: Mary Waters
Representing: Self
Topic: Bus Driver Shortage

Comments: The bus driver shortage needs to be addressed. Now that Congress has passed the infrastructure bill, I'm sure we can find money to pay our bus drivers the wages they deserve -- they make almost \$18/hr in Kansas City, and we can do better. This way our routes can resume their regular frequencies (or maybe even add buses!), and properly staffed so that the drivers only have to work 40 hours a week if they choose, because overworked drivers aren't safe drivers. Our bus system needs drastic improvement.

Name: Kelly Stout
Representing: Self
Topic: Metro Bus cuts

Comments: As a downtown public transit commuter, I urge the board to increase wages and benefits for drivers. And to work harder to attract the employees needed to increase and improve bus service. Reducing operations and frequency, and keeping them at reduced levels, disenfranchises commuters and frankly is a poor approach to operation and management. Further, Metro cutting/limiting service because it is unwilling or unable to attract employees, reflects poorly on its ability to contribute to our region's growth. If St. Louis commuters can't rely on our public transportation then we work to secure alternative means we can rely on. My point being that routine stop cancellations does not serve any form of a service model. Creating a flourishing public transit requires commitment and effort from Metro.

I'm asking that Metro prioritizes employee hiring/retention and increases bus service frequency, for the good of riders and the region.

Name: Jonathon Hunt
Representing: Myself
Topic: Service cuts

Comments: Please consider increasing driver pay so you can hire and retain enough staff to keep from cutting bus service. I have a car but often take the bus to work or events downtown as it is far more convenient - but the buses have to actually run for this to be convenient.

Name: Imran Hanafi
Representing: Self
Topic: Bus cuts

Comments: Public transit is the life-blood of communities. Workers in many industries had existential moments during the pandemic and many have changed direction. Drawing them back to bus driving may mean higher pay or more benefits. Maybe partner with social organizations that are training people for jobs to get back on their feet, or students in technical colleges etc.

We've got to figure out staffing bus drivers so that bus transport does not dwindle into an ineffective system.

Name: Dr. Mary Angelica Painter
Representing: Self
Topic: Bus routes/availability/access

Comments: Bus availability and scheduling has caused hardship to myself, my neighbors, and others in the community since there has been inadequate service across St. Louis. I would like to note that I am abhorrently against cutting services, especially after Metro-Reimagined. That being said, the lack of advertisement on the HUGE service cuts is going to cause hardship for many bus riders. Riders are unaware of the service cuts, which could cause them to be late/miss doctor's appointments, job interviews, work, school, church, and other activities that are vital to those in our community. Some risk losing their jobs (and some have already) due to the lack of service. Not notifying the public properly will only exacerbate this issue further.

With the cold months ahead of us, the lack of indoor warming stations and the ones we do have remaining closed during the winter will be a detriment to the health of denizens across St. Louis. With the cuts to service, plus the lack of advertising of cuts, AND warming stations remaining closed has a high likelihood of leading to poor health outcomes, including possible death, of bus riders. After living through almost two years of the pandemic, I feel this negligence is especially absurd.

Finally, the service problem stems heavily from the low-pay and poor treatment of drivers, which is leading to poor retention and inability to hire. Without drivers, our bus service, and frankly our city, cannot function in a coherent way that serves the community. Please consider pay increases and protections for drivers, keeping service at it's current state (if not, advertise it more), and keep indoor warming stations open. The current plan is the opposite of what leads to great transit service; like many public goods, if you build good, quality, affordable, accessible, and adequate bus service, people will come and use it. This should be the goal of St. Louis.

Name: AJ Robinson
Representing: Myself
Topic: improve starting pay and benefits for bus drivers

Comments: I rely on transit to get to work, doctor's appointments, and errands. Buses are especially important because I do not live in walking distance to a metrolink station, however the shortage of drivers has made it increasingly difficult. I need Bi-State Development to take leadership in ensuring reliable bus service by increasing the pay, benefits, and working conditions for bus drivers. We need to hire and retain our bus drivers to maintain a healthy environment and economy. Kansas City starting pay for bus drivers is \$17.48. We should have at least that, as well as opportunities for workers to advance.

Name: Zachary Harvey
Representing: Me
Topic: Make transit free (or at least Metrolink)

Comments: If you want to improve ridership and allow people to build their lives around transit, make it free! Fated transit is so antiquated especially in a city as car centric as STL. People on public transportation yearn for a car, reverse the trend and get people back on public transportation!

At least do metrolink.

Name: Mitchell Manar
Representing: Bus Riders United
Topic: Poor service reliability on the 70

Comments: I was relying on the 70 South to take me home from the Grand transit center. The poor reliability of the scheduling on that line made my commute unpredictable, and I have since switched my mode of transit. Please hire more drivers to make this crucial line of service more reliable.

Name: Liz Kramer
Representing: Self
Topic: Bus Driver Shortage

Comments: Dear Bi-State Commissioners,
I am concerned about the reductions in service that have already happened as a result of the driver shortage, and those that are scheduled to go into effect later this month. I was previously a consistent bus rider, but as a result of the disruptions in service, I have pushed myself to use other methods of transportation (particularly biking) so that I do not get stuck somewhere without a bus. However, it is a great privilege that I have other options, and many in our community do not. I ask the Board to pursue all available options to fill these driver gaps — particularly in prioritizing raising pay and creating safe environments for drivers. I understand that the budget is complicated, however, starting pay rates of \$15.88 is not reasonable for a difficult and critical job. Increasing starting pay to a competitive rate is critical. Thank you for your consideration, Liz

Name: Patrick Kutz
Representing: Myself
Topic: Driver pay, zero fare, and don't eliminate/reduce service

Comments: I would like to make three requests/comments - 1) that metro/bi-state transit operators are paid higher hourly wages 2) that Metro/bi-state moves to a zero fare model similar to what has been approved in Kansas City and other parts of the country, and 3) that routes are not eliminated or moved further apart as is planned in the coming weeks.

Name: Ian Doig
Representing: Myself/7th ward
Topic: Lack of services

Comments: St. Louis is known for its lack of good bus service and public transportation. We need to invest in ourselves and increase the pay for bus drivers so we can have more frequent lines and warming centers! This is America. No one should have to go cold because we don't 'have' the money

Name: Mitch Eagles
Representing: Bus Riders United
Topic: Hire bus drivers

Comments: Metro's website claims that they are "aggressively" working to fill our labor shortage - a shortage that is threatening to leave people waiting on buses in the cold all winter. It is clear that none of this board (or leadership of Metro & Bi-State) relies on the bus, so I hope that the comments submitted by fellow bus riders will clarify that we want more than for you to say "we've tried nothing, and we're all out of ideas!" It seems you have tried one thing: a starting bonus. But people take jobs for the ongoing income, not the starting bonus.

If we're having a hard time hiring bus drivers, we should look to what our neighbors across the state are doing (apparently with some significant success!). Kansas City's starting wages for bus drivers are several dollars higher than Metro's. Given that St Louis bus drivers haven't seen a raise for six years and yet they kept transit running through this pandemic, I would say it's about time they get one. It's also possible that we're having a hard time hiring when Bi-State screwed over these drivers by quickly returning to front-door boarding less than 3 months into the pandemic: when a driver has to face every single passenger boarding, that is a troublesome vector for a respiratory pandemic.

Another thing you might not know since you don't ride the bus: the bus is more expensive for many people than it was before the pandemic began. With the elimination of paper transfers it costs \$1 to ride the bus, then \$2.50 to get on the Metrolink. That is more than the \$3 two-hour passes we had previously. Given the lack of weekly or monthly fare-capping, and given how

many riders still use cash, this is a real slap in the face. Thankfully, bus drivers understand: a lady in front of me used her last 40 cents to pay all she could for bus fare, and the driver let her pass. That's okay with me! With the cuts we've already had, and especially with the coming cuts, many people are paying more money for much less service.

We also don't have access to transit info in the mornings, evenings or weekends. We can only get info about if our bus is actually coming Monday thru Friday, 7am-6pm. Surprise: a LOT of people need info outside these hours. This is actually vital to making bus riders safe (as are maintaining the bus shelters we have - I have one stop that I have been trying to get repaired for almost a year now: being at a bus shelter with no walls feels much safe... and rather cold in the wind!)

Since Metro treats us as "customers" maybe the following analogy will help. When a business really doesn't get it right, they will often comp their customer, so as to maintain customer loyalty. You seem to assume that people still using Metro in the cold at this point are stuck with Metro. And many are so-called "captive riders" who can't go anywhere else. But unfortunately, they will still leave. They will buy a car they can't afford, and they will go further into debt so as to make it to work and not lose their jobs. High gas prices are one of the only times that we actually see transit use rise, and now could be a chance to get more people using the bus! But Bi-State is squandering it, probably out of incompetence, but the scale of the incompetence reeks to me of malice.

As I've said in the past: I would love to see any of this board attempt to use the bus for even just a week. You know how bad it is in the winter when you start your car and it's still cold? Well when you get on the bus, it's immediately warm, and I love that. But when the bus doesn't show, or if you miss it by a minute and have to wait on the next one, or if you have to transfer and wait outside for half an hour because our indoor waiting areas are *still closed* (and have been for over a year and a half despite very hot days and very cold ones), that is no fun, and can be really rather dangerous. And for an organization that talks so much about safety, it seems there's a whole realm of safety you seem to forget about.

Name: Erica Brooks

Representing: Erica Brooks & Gabriel Cornelius

Topic: Reconsider the Temporary Suspension Bus Services for Bus Route #79 on November 29, 2021

Comments:

Dear Bi-State Development Agency Board of Commissioners, Pres. Taulby Roach and Executive Dir. Jessica Mefford-Miller:

It is my mission to demonstrate how removing Bus Route #79 after 8pm and replacing it with Via Metro STL is not in the best interest of the citizens of Ferguson's health, physical and mental well-being, our economy, the future employment of unionized bus drivers and the climate change.

This is not our first rodeo to retain Bus Route #79. In 2019, our City of Ferguson when Mayor James W. Knowles, III and Interim City Manager Jeffrey Blume were in office didn't inform us as a city that you Bi-State were planning on cutting out our Bus Route #79 from the neighborhood portion with the intent to keep servicing on Florissant Road.

F.Y.I. By happen stands I found out about the Our Ferguson 2040 Comprehensive Plan in 2019 when it was being compiled, and in a draft form. I noticed some incorrect information in the plan, and brought it Rise Community Development Program Manager Brian Hurd's attention. Bus Route #70 was there as the bus line to service Old Ferguson West instead of #79. The description of its route of service was that of the route Metro original scheduled before the plan to cut the bus stop at Suburban Ave. & Dade Ave. instead of the route we, as a community retained as a result of our, Gabriel and my campaign. It currently has Bus Route #79 just goes down Florissant Road. Brian, corrected the bus number from #70 to #79, but not the description. When I looked at the matrix which talked about individuals and community groups for input, there was nothing there which was not true. This incorrect information led me to believe that it was an open door to the changes you are making to fulfill in revisions you will have in the future. Also, it blatantly dismissed our success journey of retaining Bus Route #79 in 2019.

While walking to my Bus Route #79, to my surprise it appeared as a notification from Metro on my Facebook page of the discontinuation of Bus Route #79 on September 30, 2019. We, my son Gabriel Q. Cornelius and I, Erica M. Brooks, were daily bus riders and the Grassroots Organizers to retain Bus Route #79. We got on the bus at Suburban Ave. and Dade Ave. Stop ID#3722 and #3649. It was at that moment that we begin our successful quest to retain ACCESSIBILITY to reliable, safe, affordable, convenient and ACCOUNTABLE public transportation, because #Blacklivesmatter. Metro Reimagined was creating invisible economic gated communities. You continuously give your business partners and the affluent and wealthy people access to state of the art transit services, free bus services and invest in their neighbors to make them vibrant and welcoming. On the other hand, the bus riders who NEED public transportation CONSISTANTLY experience route cuts, shortened routes and rerouted bus services, but we know it's on its way and where it will take us. We are the first to be disenfranchised and the last to be considered when you chose to play chest with our lives when you feel you want to use our sales tax dollars for the latest transit technology which is not for us (the low-income urban African American bus riders).

This brings me to the drastic changes you decided to spring on us as a community leaving us no time to prepare for your Via Metro STL. Metro's 24 day notification to cut our service before 8pm and not include us in the zone of services in the original plan in May 2021 for the Via Metro STL spoke volumes about how you were planning to segregate Ferguson by creating a socioeconomic gated wall in Ferguson like the 1975, Councilman Carl Kersting proposed building a 10-foot fence between a Ferguson neighborhood and the adjacent city of Kinloch. Somewhere along the lines, the map was reconfigured. However, this still leaves me to wonder about Metro's primary moral and financial intent. There are a few detrimental factors that are plaguing this world's state of existence already. The coronavirus pandemic is resulting in the loss of families and friends in astronomical numbers. It's effecting our cohabitation in the workplace creating financially hardship and joblessness in our community. Mental devastation is the tipping point at which we are striving to overcome. Unfortunately, some of us have been trapped in the state of homelessness and drug addiction to escape all the trauma. Crime is rampant, as well as attacks on law enforcement. And if Metro really cared and didn't have such money hungry intent, you would have concerned some key issues that will result from the use of Via Metro STL:

- We will be more vulnerable to contracting and transmit COVID-19 regardless we receive the experimental injection;
- There will be an increase in the spread of COVID-19 as a result of the small vehicles, Via Metro STL which has a limit of 4 passengers in close proximity which doesn't promote safety or enforce the 6 feet social distancing mandate according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention;
- The high frequency of transporting passengers in and out of a vehicle doesn't allow time for the drivers to maintain a sanitized environment;
- It will strain our socioeconomic and mental plight to maintain our jobs and provide for our family, as well as our communities;
- This careless and drastic transition will lead to an increase in homelessness;
- This has forced us in an unpredictable place of dealing with wondering if Via Metro STL has the ability to proficiently service the high demand of passengers at the same rate as Metro or better due to Via Metro STL's capacity limitation vs. the Metro Bus which has the capacity of about 30 to 40 passengers on a bus at a time;
- * Legally, when an issue arises, is Via Metro STL accountable to Metro in addition to the State of Missouri and the MO Transportation Commissioners;
- * With the increase in gas prices and the amount of mini vans Via Metro STL and Metro is putting on the streets, you are increasing the amount of greenhouse gas emission that's being trapped in the sun's heat resulting in more global warming;
- * If the massive demand of passengers goes beyond Via Metro STL ability and cause them to increase their prices will Metro increase their prices?;
- * If the gas prices continue to increase will Metro and Via STL increase their prices? And will we find out before the price change happen?;
- * Using Via Metro STL as a stabilizer instead of the main source of transportation would have allowed us to gauge the effects of it in our community and it will limit the possibilities of a super spreader of COVID- 19 or questioning if Via Metro STL is able to handle the massive and immediate volume of services that will be demanded from their drivers and technical infrastructure. F.Y.I. In 2019, Metro's system technical system crashed just days before the implementation of the Metro Reimaged;
- * Partnering with Via Metro STL give Metro leverage to replace their unionized bus drivers in the face of contractual disagreements;
- * As a result of the unanticipated 24 day notification of the implementation of the Via Metro STL, how many people did Metro have to displace to meet the requirements for the demand of the services of Via Metro STL?;
- * If Via Metro doesn't meet the demands of service due to the high volume of passengers, when will Metro decide to return Bus Route #79, and use Via Metro STL as an offset source of transportation?;
- * Is Metro a private shareholder with Via Metro STL and will any of the gains be reinvested into our community?;
- * When Lyft was introduced to South and West County, the Central Corridor and Downtown, they all had express routes, main routes and the Metro link to service them. So, why didn't we, in Ferguson and North County have the chance to have an alternative source of transportation (s)?;
- * Why are we paying \$2 and \$3 when they paid \$1 for Lyft?;
- * Will Metro, Via Metro STL of both reimburse our communities for neglectfully transitioning our access to transportation without allow time to assess the effectiveness of both

Bus Route #79 and Via Metro STL to insecure the viability of our health and safety during the coronavirus pandemic and for the stability of our economy.

Bi-State Board of Commissioners, Pres. Roach and Executive Dir. Mefford-Miller, your sudden unassessed transition will leave us, the community of Ferguson and North County in a state of limbo, uncertainty and a point of no return. We need you to consider a safer transition that enforces the mandated 6 feet social distancing, an economically productive source of transportation to maintain jobs and a financially stable in our community, a global friendly transportation partnership that will reduce the amount of gas emission, not increase gas prices due to the demand for gas and utilize both Via Metro STL and Our Bus Route #79 to insecure access to safe, reliable, affordable, convenient, and ACCOUNTABLE public transportation. We all will be happier, healthier and economically stable during this COVID-19 Pandemic.

I would like for my questions to be addressed. I can be reached at this email: erimon2@yahoo.com. Thank you all for your time and consideration.

Name: David DePriest

Representing: N/A

Topic: Transit Funding and the Bus Driver Shortage

Comments: I am a student who relies on public transportation to get to and from school and work. Over the past year, I have witnessed first hand how bus service has deteriorated and public transit has been neglected. I encourage Bi-State Development to put real money towards paying and recruiting bus drivers, expanding routes, and fixing up and building out bus stops. It is unacceptable that many bus stops are unsheltered and oftentimes inaccessible (meaning that one has to cross a busy street with no light or stand in the street itself to catch them).

Cities like Kansas City and Boston have made buses fare-free, have implemented bus rapid transit, and seen tremendous growth in their ridership. St. Louis can and should follow, making the bus something that people want to use, not just have to use.

Name: Kevin Montes

Representing: Myself

Topic: Busses

Comments: I depend on the bus to go to work. The recent reductions in the frequency of some of the routes leaves me and fellow bus riders waiting longer and longer in colder and colder weather. The App frequently has phantom busses that are scheduled to come and never arrive. I implore you consider doing whatever needs to be done to alleviate this situation. The functionality of transit relies on its convenience and frequency, and the loss of either will promote a vicious cycle of lower ridership, fewer fares, less dollars, and more cutbacks. Thank you.

Name: Edward Smith
Representing: myself
Topic: Bus driver shortage

Comments: Please increase the wage of bus drivers to help fill the staff shortage and increase retention. Also, please return to rear-door entry to allow for driver and rider safety from COVID-19.

Name: Reno DuBois
Representing: Bus Riders United
Topic: Bus Service Cuts & Federal Infrastructure Funds

Comments: Hi there, I'm a daily transit rider and bus rider that is continuing to be affected by the decreased frequency and service cuts affecting STL Metro. Something has to be done about the bus driver shortage - lower frequency and cancelled trips is affecting riders who depend on buses showing up to get them to their jobs and to work. With fewer buses out, folks are left in the cold for longer. We can't let this be the norm for Metro service! I'm not sure what it's going to take - offering more pay, increasing support for current operators, etc, but we have to take action now, as this situation is bad and will only get worse. In addition to that, with federal money coming in to St. Louis for transit and other infrastructure uses, I'd love to have a focus on more than just trains - adding things like Bus Rapid Transit routes (that could serve as many riders or more as a North/South MetroLink!), more electric buses, higher frequency routes all over the city. The MetroLink is super useful (and I ride it most days) but we could be adding more bus infrastructure that would help transform getting around this city in 4 years instead of 10, with less cost than installing light rail. I'm optimistic about the possibility of transit for this city, but I hope we can focus on getting this bus driver shortage fixed, and then expand transit infrastructure across the city.

Name: Benjamin West
Representing: myself
Topic: Bus service cuts

Comments: The planned cuts to bus service are an unacceptable degradation of transit service which many people must depend on for work and daily needs. Bi-State is not unique in facing pressure from its employees to raise wages, and so it should not be uniquely stubborn in refusing to do so. That accommodations to casino patrons and sporting event attendees on Metrolink are not being comparably scaled back only underscores the unfair nature of these service cuts.

Name: Kenneth Warner
Representing: Ward 15
Topic: Bus Driver Shortage

Comments: It is imperative that Metro raises the pay of bus drivers in order to fill the driver shortage. Bus driving is a difficult and often thankless job and is certainly worth more than \$15 an hour, especially in the current difficult economic environment. Metro needs to commit to its riders and hire more drivers. A strong Metro is vital for our community. Thank you for reading this comment.

Name: Gina Becnel

Representing: Brustl

Topic: Issues I've had with the bus and metro service in the last 30 days

Comments: -bus is late

-bus doesn't show

-customer support disagreeing if i qualify for a free Lyft -waiting in the cold due to closed warming centers, and bad bus stops -waiting in the wind due to broken wind shield at the 11 Civic stop -little to no advertisement of huge service cuts

-5-15 min frequency cut to my daily rider

As a rider, metro's disinterest in doing right by me and people like me simply because we ride the bus daily to work instead of the light rail bi monthly to sports games downtown is frustrating and embarrassing. This is a public service. There's no reason to leave riders in the cold while 5 security guards sit, on their phones, in a warming station. There's no reason to waste money on turnstiles while our system lacks a low income fare or any kind of free fare program. There's no reason to call drivers essential without giving them a living wage or one that includes hazzard pay raises. There's no reason to continue to invest in the light rail security while the basic infrastructure of the system is failing to service those that need it most.

In a letter to stlpr, ceo of bi state thanked riders for their patience in upcoming weeks while service is cut. I'm not sure what riders he's talking about because i have no patience. I'm tired of waiting. Tired of waiting for the bus to come. Tired of waiting for my driver to make a fair wage. Tired of waiting for bi state to listen to the people that *need* this system to prioritize them. We shouldn't have to wait. We deserve better.

5. Approval of the Minutes of the October 1, 2021, Board of Commissioners, Open Meeting

8:45 a.m. The minutes from the October 1, 2021, Meeting of the Board of Commissioners, were provided in the Board packet. A motion to approve the minutes, as presented was made by Commissioner Cox and seconded by Commissioner Gladney.

The motion passed unanimously.

6. Review of Notes from the Cancelled Board of Commissioners Meeting on September 24, 2021, Open Meeting

8:45 a.m. Notes from the cancelled meeting of the Board of Commissioners on September 24, 2021, were provided in the Board packet. Vice Chair Zimmerman noted that a vote is not needed, since the meeting was cancelled, due to a lack of a quorum, and the notes were provided as information only.

7. Report of the President

8:46 a.m. President and Chief Executive Officer, Taulby Roach, noted that he and staff have reviewed all of the public comments submitted. He stated that many of the comments are regarding the reduction in service, however the Agency has been forced to make these reductions, solely due to the workforce constraints the Agency is experiencing. Mr. Roach stated that this is absolutely not a financial move, but only due to the availability of labor. He reported that staff has been out on the routes, meeting with people one on one, regarding these issues. He stated that he understands that people are not happy with the reductions, but the Agency is doing everything it can to attract additional employees. He noted that the Board authorized a \$2,000 signing bonus for new employees, along with a \$1,000 referral bonus for current employees who refer a new employee. Mr. Roach stated that the Agency will continue to look at these types of benefits, as we go forward. He commended employees for doing a great job during this difficult time, many of whom are working overtime shifts to keep St. Louis moving, and stated that we need to stand behind these front line workers. Vice Chair Zimmerman noted Board support for the employees and for the incentive programs being offered, and he asked that staff continue to bring ideas to the Board to assist with these difficult issues.

8. Report of the Audit, Finance, & Administration Committee

8:49 a.m. Vice Chair Zimmerman stated that a virtual meeting of the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee was held on October 15, 2021, at 8:30 AM. He noted that the draft minutes of that meeting are included in the meeting materials, under Item #8.

He reported that the AFA Committee is introducing one (1) item for consideration, with the Committee's recommendation of approval, under Item #13: 23rd Amendment to the Bi-State Development Agency of the Missouri-Illinois District and Local 788 Amalgamated Transit Union, AFL-CIO, Employees' Pension Plan.

He noted that several informational items were presented to the Committee, including:

- IAD Audit Follow-Up Summary – 1st Quarter – FY2022
- IAD Status Report – 1st Quarter – FY2022
- IAD SSO-Status Report – 3rd Quarter – Calendar Year 2021
- Pension Audits Update
- Treasurer's Report
- Procurement Report

9. Report of the Operations Committee

8:51 a.m. Vice Chair Zimmerman gave a report of the Operations Committee, in Chair Windmiller's absence. He noted that a virtual meeting of the Operations Committee was held on October 15, 2021, immediately following the Audit, Finance & Administration Committee Meeting, and he noted that the draft minutes of that meeting are included in the meeting materials, under Item #9.

He stated that the Operations Committee is introducing seven (7) items on the Consent Agenda for consideration, under Item #12, with the Committee's recommendation of approval.

Those items include Item #12:

- a. Parkway Interlocking / Richmond Heights Turnout Design Contract Extension (Resolution #1165)
- b. Contract Modification: MetroLink Structures Inspection Program (Resolution #1166)
- c. Contract Modification: Time Extension and Contract Amount Increase - On-Call General Engineering Consulting (GEC) Communications Systems Engineering Services (Resolution #1167)
- d. Contract Award – North County Transit Center & Civic Center Transit Center Cleaning Service (Resolution #1168)
- e. St. Louis Downtown Airport Surplus Property, 4320 Vector (Resolution #1169)
- f. 2021 Annual Surplus Property Holdings (Resolution #1170)
- g. Extension of Pilot Fare Programs to Promote Access, Equity, and Ridership (Resolution #1171)

He also reported that, at the August Committee meeting, an Operations Report was provided by Jessica Mefford-Miller, Executive Director Metro Transit.

10. Report of the Safety & Security Committee

8:52 a.m. Commissioner Simmons stated that the Safety & Security Committee, scheduled to be held in October, was cancelled; therefore he has no report at this time.

11. Adjustment of Consent Agenda

8:53 a.m. Vice Chair Zimmerman asked if there are any adjustments to the Consent Agenda.

12. Consent Agenda Items

8:53 a.m. Consent Agenda Items:

- a. Parkway Interlocking / Richmond Heights Turnout Design Contract Extension (Resolution #1165)
- b. Contract Modification: MetroLink Structures Inspection Program (Resolution #1166)
- c. Contract Modification: Time Extension and Contract Amount Increase - On-Call General Engineering Consulting (GEC) Communications Systems Engineering Services (Resolution #1167)
- d. Contract Award – North County Transit Center & Civic Center Transit Center Cleaning Service (Resolution #1168)
- e. St. Louis Downtown Airport Surplus Property, 4320 Vector (Resolution #1169)
- f. 2021 Annual Surplus Property Holdings (Resolution #1170)
- g. Extension of Pilot Fare Programs to Promote Access, Equity, and Ridership (Resolution #1171)

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda Items, as presented, was made by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Beach.

The motion passed unanimously.

13. 23rd Amendment to the Bi-State Development Agency of the Missouri-Illinois District and Local 788 Amalgamated Transit Union, AFL-CIO, Employees' Pension Plan (Resolution #1172)

8:54 a.m. Vice Chair Zimmerman stated that, as noted in the Committee report, this item has been recommended for approval by the Audit, Finance & Administration Committee. Commissioner Beach made a motion to approve this item, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Simmons.

The motion passed unanimously.

14. Memorandum of Understanding between Citizens for Modern Transit, St. Clair County Transit District and Bi-State Development for the Development of a Bus Stop at Belleville MetroLink Station (Resolution #1173)

8:54 a.m. President/CEO Roach gave an overview of this item, noting that the item is sponsored by the Agency's partner at St. Clair County Transit District. He noted that there will also be a similar project at the North Hanley station, which does not require Board approval.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve this item, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gladney.

The motion passed unanimously.

15. Authorizing the President and CEO to Pursue Plans and Financing for the MetroLink Secure Platform Project (Resolution #1174)

8:56 a.m. President and CEO Roach noted that this Project is going well, and he reported that the Agency has secured several public sector commitments regarding the Platform Project, in excess of \$5 million. Staff is moving forward with design plans for this Project. He noted that Board approval is needed to accept these commitments for the Project, and he reported that additional commitments are pending. Mr. Roach stated that he is asking for Board approval to accept these funds for the Project. He noted that the Agency is forming very valuable public/private partnerships who see the value of Metro and MetroLink. Commissioner Cox stated that he supports accepting these funds, and posed questions regarding the time frame for the Project. President and CEO Roach stated that the Agency will be securing commitments of \$13 million for the Project, with the legal portion of this completed by January 2022. He noted that staff is working in parallel on the design portion of the Project. He reported that, once the Project is put out to bid, he estimates that the construction will take approximately 24 – 30 months; however, this is only an estimate at this point, and a more accurate timeline will be forthcoming. Commissioner Cox stated that he is excited about this Project, and asked when the construction will be started. President and CEO Roach noted that today's vote will open the door to move forward on the Project; however, the Project will need the endorsement of our funding partners. He noted that this Project is in the development stage, and staff will have a more accurate timeline, once all of the funding is secured. Vice Chair Zimmerman noted that this is a great consensus builder, and is pleased to see this Project moving from concept to reality. He noted however, that he does not want to forget about MetroBus during this process, as there needs to be long-term focus on that system, as well. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve this item, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cox.

The motion passed unanimously.

16. New Board Policy, Section 30.090 – Donation and Gift Policy (Resolution #1175)

9:04 a.m. President and CEO Roach reported that, regarding the previous agenda item, once funds are secured, those agreements will be handed over to General Counsel, Barbara Enneking, for review. Ms. Enneking noted that currently, there is no Board Policy in place for these types of donations; therefore, a new policy is needed, and staff is requesting approval of a policy to allow the Agency to accept these funds. Commissioner Zimmerman asked if there are current policies in place regarding acceptance of gifts and gratuities by individual employees. Ms. Enneking noted that the Agency has rules and policies in place regarding those types of issues; however, there is no policy in place for the acceptance of public donations such as the ones previously noted for the Platform Project, creating public/private partnerships. Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve this item, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gladney.

The motion passed unanimously.

17. Approval of the 2022 Board & Committee Meeting Schedule.

9:07 a.m. Vice Chair Zimmerman noted that a draft schedule of 2022, Board and Committee meeting dates was distributed to the Board of Commissioners in October, for review. He noted that staff has received no objections to the dates, and he stated that, if there are no objections and no discussion, a motion is needed to approve the schedule. Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve this item, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pestello.

The motion passed unanimously.

18. Operations Report

9:08 a.m. Jessica Mefford-Miller, Executive Director Metro Transit, provided an Operations Report, noting that she would like to focus on responding to the public comments that have been received. Ms. Mefford-Miller thanked the public for their concerns and their input, noting that the Agency is responsible for accountability to its customers. She noted that Metro is committed to providing competitive pay and benefits to its employees, as well as providing sustainable service to its customers. Ms. Mefford-Miller supplied information on recent missed trips. She noted that Metro is currently facing a tremendous challenge with regard to service, in light of worker shortage issues. She stated that the goal of Metro is to operate at 90% of pre-pandemic levels; however, as with other companies, the Agency is struggling to attract and maintain operators. Ms. Mefford-Miller stated that, unfortunately, service levels have had to be reduced, in order to ensure that the buses arrive, on time, for the scheduled routes, and she noted that, under the current situation, Metro must put resources where they are most needed. She noted that these are very difficult decisions, and the Agency does not take these issues lightly. She reported that many routes are being supplemented by the use of on-demand mobility services, in an attempt to be more responsive to our customers. With regard to the work force shortage, Ms. Mefford-Miller stated that sign on bonuses and incentive bonuses have been initiated, and that attrition has subsided somewhat. She also reported that, within the last 2 weeks, certain positions have been offered to retirees, on a part-time basis, compliant with IRS guidelines, to supplement the workforce. In addition, the employment age has been decreased to 18 from 21, in order to attract new employees, along with the development of training and mentoring programs to assist the new employees.

Ms. Mefford-Miller noted that Metro is continuing to make progress to improve the system, with station enhancements, maintenance and rehabilitation programs, and vehicle modernization. She noted that a grant application has been submitted for the electrification of DeBaliviere, and there are ongoing conversations with St. Louis City and County regarding the expansion of MetroLink.

Vice Chair Zimmerman posed questions regarding the referral and incentive programs. Ms. Mefford-Miller stated that over 40 referrals have been submitted, and approximately 60 employees have been hired since September, with the incentive programs. She noted that an update will be provided in December.

Commissioner Gladney asked that staff suggest a better way in which to address the public comments that are submitted. He asked Ms. Mefford-Miller if she feels progress is being made with the incentive programs. Ms. Mefford-Miller stated that she feels that Metro is on a better path, however she also feels that things are moving too slowly, and that Metro must address the issue of employees who are leaving for other opportunities. She reported that she is working with the ATU on employee issues. Ms. Mefford-Miller also noted that several public comments suggested the use of stimulus money for employee wages. She noted however, that those funds are a one-time payment for assistance, and she stated that salary changes must be made in such a way that they are sustainable in the future.

Commissioner Simmons asked if the Board could be provided with an updated list of Metro capital projects. Ms. Mefford-Miller noted that a list will be provided.

19. Unscheduled Business

8:28 a.m. Vice Chair Zimmerman noted that there is one item to be addressed under Unscheduled Business: the **State Safety Oversight: 2021 Annual Update**.

Andrew Ghiassi, General Manager Safety/Chief Safety Officer; Justin Sobeck, Missouri Department of Transportation; Joshua Katz, Illinois Department of Transportation; Lindbergh Askew, III, Illinois Department of Transportation; and Alexis Billingslea, Illinois Department of Transportation gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding this item. This item was presented as information only, and no action of the Board was needed.

President and CEO Roach thanked the Board for their patience in adding this item to the agenda, and thanked the IDOT and MoDOT representatives for their work on this update and presentation. He noted that, by statute, it is required that these updates be given to the Board of Commissioners.

20. Call for the Dates for Future Meetings

9:45 a.m. Myra Bennett, Manager of Board Administration noted upcoming meetings as follows:

Board of Commissioners Special Meeting:	Friday	December 10, 2021	8:30 AM
Safety & Security Committee Meeting:	Thursday	January 20, 2022	8:30 AM
Operations Committee Meeting:	Friday	January 28, 2022	8:30 AM
Audit, Finance & Administration Meeting:	Friday	January 28, 2022	9:30 AM
Board of Commissioners Meeting:	Friday	February 18, 2022	8:30 AM

21. Adjournment to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing legal, confidential, or privileged matters, as permitted under Bi-State Development Board Policy, Chapter 10, Section 10.080; (D) (1) – Legal, (D) (2) – Real Estate, and (D) (10) – Auditors

9:45 a.m. Chair Windmiller asked for a motion to move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing legal, confidential, or privileged matters, as permitted under Bi-State Development Board Policy, Chapter 10, Section 10.080; (D) (1) – Legal, (D) (2) – Real Estate, and (D) (10) – Auditors. The motion was made by Commissioner Brown and was seconded by Commissioner Simmons.

The poll of the Board being as follows:

Fred Pestello – Yea
Vernal Brown – Yea
Nate Johnson – Yea
Sam Gladney – Yea

Justin Zimmerman – Yea
Herbert Simmons – Yea
Irma Golliday – Yea
Terry Beach – Yea
Derrick Cox – Yea

The motion passed unanimously.

The Board of Commissioners moved into Executive Session at approximately 9:47 a.m.

22. Reconvene to Open Meeting

10:11 a.m. Vice Chair Zimmerman noted that the Board has reconvened to the Open Meeting.

Commissioner Pestello made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2021, Board of Commissioners, Executive Session, as presented, as a closed record. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Simmons. The poll of the Board being as follows:

Fred Pestello – Yea
Vernal Brown – Yea
Nate Johnson – Yea
Sam Gladney – Yea

Justin Zimmerman – Yea
Herbert Simmons – Yea
Irma Golliday – Yea
Terry Beach – Yea
Derrick Cox – Yea

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Pestello made a motion to approve the Draft – Year End Financial Audit (Resolution #1176), as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Johnson. The poll of the Board being as follows:

Fred Pestello – Yea
Vernal Brown – Yea
Nate Johnson – Yea
Sam Gladney – Yea

Justin Zimmerman – Yea
Herbert Simmons – Yea
Irma Golliday – Yea
Terry Beach – Yea
Derrick Cox – Yea

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Simmons made a motion to approve the Agreement, regarding the TIGER Grant Project (Resolution #1777), as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cox. The poll of the Board being as follows:

Fred Pestello – Yea
Vernal Brown – Yea
Nate Johnson – Yea
Sam Gladney – Yea

Justin Zimmerman – Yea
Herbert Simmons – Yea
Irma Golliday – Yea
Terry Beach – Yea
Derrick Cox – Yea

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Golliday made a motion to approve the Agreements for the Emerson Park MetroLink Communications Center (Resolution #1178), as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pestello. The poll of the Board being as follows:


Fred Pestello – Yea
Vernal Brown – Yea
Nate Johnson – Yea
Sam Gladney – Yea

Justin Zimmerman – Yea
Herbert Simmons – Abstain
Irma Golliday – Yea
Terry Beach – Yea
Derrick Cox – Yea

The motion passed.

23. Adjournment

10:15 a.m. Vice Chair Zimmerman asked if there was any further business, and being none, Commissioner Simmons made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown. Unanimous vote in favor was taken. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:15 a.m.


Deputy Secretary to the Board of Commissioners
Bi-State Development