Topeka Metro
Board of Director's Minutes
February 17, 2026
Quincy Street Station boardroom

MEMBER'S NAME	ORGANIZATION	PRESENT / ABSENT / EXCUSED
Candis Stiles, Chair	Topeka Metro	Present QSS
Fátima Pérez-Luthi, Vice Chair	Topeka Metro	Present via Zoom
Michaela Saunders	Topeka Metro	Present QSS
Rodd Miller	Topeka Metro	Present via Zoom
Beverly Hall	Topeka Metro	Absent
Scott Tummons	Topeka Metro	Absent

Staff/Visitors	ORGANIZATION	PRESENT / ABSENT / EXCUSED
Bob Nugent, General Manager	Topeka Metro	Present QSS
Richard Appelhanz, Chief Financial Officer	Topeka Metro	Present QSS
Keri Renner, Director of Marketing & Comm.	Topeka Metro	Present QSS
Jessica Moberly, Director of Planning	Topeka Metro	Present via Zoom
Denise Ensley, Chief Operations Officer	Topeka Metro	Present via Zoom
Alan Parrish, Director of Maintenance & Facilities	Topeka Metro	Present via Zoom
Terri Miller, Director of Human Resources	Topeka Metro	Present via Zoom
John Cassidy, General Counsel	Topeka Metro	Present via Zoom
Jared Culbertson, Director of IT	Topeka Metro	Present via Zoom
Shawn Auten, Scheduler	Topeka Metro	Present via Zoom

TOPIC	KEY DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDED ACTION / STATUS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Call to Order	Candis Stiles, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.	4 of 5 members present.	Candis Stiles
Approval of Board Minutes	Minutes from January 20, 2026, Board meeting were reviewed.	**MOTION:** Michaela Saunders moved, and Rodd Miller seconded, to accept the January 20, 2026, TMTA BOD meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed 4-0.	Candis Stiles
Public Comment	N/A		Candis Stiles
Department Reports	**Planning** – Jessica said ridership is higher this year vs. last year due to a heavy snowstorm in early January that shut down early on a Saturday and then not operating for two days. **Operations** – Candis mentioned that there were 32 incidents in January. Denise said she could clarify that there were 27 incidents in December and this January there were more incidents than in the past. The winter weather has affected us. It has been really cold and snowy the last few months. **Maintenance** – One of the vehicles needed a new engine. It is a 2014 and has 400,000 miles on it. **Finance** – Richard had nothing to add to his report.		Jessica Moberly Denise Ensley Alan Parrish Richard Appelhanz
Action Items	Finance Report Accepted as presented.	**MOTION:** Michaela Saunders moved, and Fátima Pérez-Luthi seconded the motion to accept the January 31, 2026, financial report as presented. The motion passed 4-0.	Candis Stiles
Continuing Business	Proterra discussion – Bob said that Topeka Metro sent a letter (Notice to Cure) to Phoenix Motor Car (Proterra) in June of 2025 about the contract to purchase the three electric vehicles. It stated that they were not fulfilling their contract. We have received no response from them since. Rodd Miller responded that our potential risk is we may have to pay a million dollars instead of paying $3 Million for three buses that don't work. He	**MOTION:** Rodd moved to with Phoenix and we need to ask FTA about getting hybrid buses, and not all electric, Fátima Pérez-Luthi. Motion passed 4-0.	Bob Nugent

	made a motion to be done with Phoenix contract and ask the FTA if we could procure hybrid buses not electric buses.		
	TMTA Board Assessment: Bob and Candis discussed a board self-assessment in January and developed a survey. Bob provided three versions (short, medium, and long) to evaluate board effectiveness, including whether the board is providing direction and input, using time effectively, and fulfilling its responsibilities. Candis selected the short assessment plus one section from the medium as a starting point since this is the first time conducting the assessment with this board. Board members will be asked to complete the assessment individually and send email responses to Bob for compilation. Results will be reviewed at the March 6, 2026, study session. All members present agreed with the timeline.		Candis Stiles
	Bob and Candis discussed potential recommendations for the future of the MOD service, including alternative service models and possible community partnerships. Staff recently met with JUMP on February 5 to discuss community needs such as food deserts and job access. JUMP asked questions but did not present a specific proposal and expressed interest in possibly advocating for additional service; Bob suggested they present their ideas at a future board meeting since any decision would require board approval. Discussion also included whether MOD should continue as currently structured, be modified to serve specific areas of the city, or be discontinued and replaced with another service. One concept discussed was the possibility of a "shopper shuttle" that would pick up passengers in designated areas on specific days and transport them to grocery stores such as Walmart or Dillons, then return later to take passengers home.		Bob Nugent

	Candis shared insights from a Kansas Board Member Conference she attended last July, where a medium-sized transit agency discussed using public transit to address social determinants of health. Bob noted similar efforts to reduce long travel times to grocery stores by creating more direct service so riders can return home sooner—an issue sometimes referred to as "melting ice cream," where long bus trips make it difficult to transport cold groceries. The agency also designated certain days for grocery trips and others for medical appointments. Candis suggested exploring how Topeka Metro could better utilize existing vehicles and potentially partner with organizations such as the housing authority and health department to improve service access. Fatima emphasized the importance of developing a long-term plan for service within the organization rather than relying solely on outside initiatives, while still allowing partners such as JUMP to advocate for the plan. Discussion focused on whether MOD funding should support expanded fixed-route service—such as adding an additional hour to existing routes—or be retooled for targeted trips like grocery shopping or medical appointments. Bob noted that the final hour of service has historically been challenging for riders who work late shifts. Other options discussed included selling MOD vehicles to generate capital funds or using them during peak service times. Fatima suggested focusing on three priorities: evaluating whether to add an hour of service or redirect MOD for specific trip purposes, determining what best fits Topeka Metro's needs, and reducing financial losses where possible. Candis emphasized the importance of clearly communicating the cost of service to stakeholders, noting that four vehicles represent roughly $2 million in value, about a quarter of current operations.		Candis Stiles
New Business	N/A	N/A	
Executive Session	N/A	N/A	
Adjourn	The meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.	Michaela Saunders moved to adjourn	Candis Stiles

		the meeting and Fátima Pérez-Luthi seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.	

Respectfully Submitted,

Keri L. Renner, Board Secretary