

Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Services

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

**\*\*Due to our fiber connections being cut, and Finance needing to use my office, member Bobby Whyte and I used the security office for the Zoom meeting\*\***

Meeting called to order at 10:20a.m. by Josh Bruns

Committee Members Present: Anthony Fadale, Kim Dietrich (RCIL), Mike Nolting, Mary Thomas, Deborah Dawkins (ETSC), Staci Wunder (TARC), Kristin Stock (Astra).

Committee Members Absent: Nancy Johnson, Brian Snodderly, Topeka Rescue Mission Representative, Mark Webb.

Minutes sent to members from last meeting were approved as written. With a question from Mr. Fadale. He asked about the three-year term, as this will be his third year. He specifically asked after the three-year term if he is eligible to be re-appointed or is someone else chosen. The members discussed this and Mr. Bruns read the current by-laws to them regarding the terms. The members voted unanimously to allow a member to be re-appointed after the three-year term. The members discussed whether after the second three-year term a member can be re-appointed. The by-laws state that they may, if no one else is interested in the position, they may be re-appointed. The members voted unanimously to allow this.

Mr. Bruns started off introducing new member Bobby Whyte (consumer), and Staci Wunder from TARC, who is taking over for Shelby Frye. Brandon Hatfield was present at the last meeting for TARC and will be their alternate.

Mr. Bruns sent the members' attachments to this meeting's safety topic, that being securements.

Mr. Bruns stressed the importance of our passengers being fully secure in their mobility devices. He explained that Metro has had a few incidents where an operator had not fully secured a mobility device. Mr. Bruns told the members that all Topeka Metro operators are continually trained in securing passengers. Mike Nolting asked how they could forget to secure a wheelchair. Mr. Bruns explained that there were several factors involved in the incidents we have had and noted that any operator that fails to fully secure a passenger is disciplined accordingly. All members were happy to hear that we take this matter seriously. Mr. Bruns explained the newer system in the fixed route buses (Q-Pod), and how mobility devices should be secure in all of our vehicles. Mr. Bruns asked the members to let him or a supervisor know if they heard any of their clients that were transported without being fully secured. All members agreed that they would do so.

Mr. Bruns told the members of the upcoming MOD vote by the TMTA Board of Directors. The meeting is this coming Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Mr. Bruns explained that the MOD has lost significant ridership since raising the rate from \$2.00 to \$6.00. Mr. Nolting stated that that was a big increase. Ms. Dawkins said, to think about the area it was in. The question was asked if we had thought of a discount program or lowering the fee to \$4.00. Mr. Bruns told the members that two (2) public meetings were held in April to get public feedback on the proposal. Only three (3) people showed up to the meetings. Ms. Stock asked what the fee was before and after raising it. The question was asked, if the meetings were held in the MOD area or at QSS. Mr. Bruns stated that the meetings were held in the area at Deer Creek Community Center.

Mr. Bruns sent a picture of Metro's new Gillig electric buses for the members to see. He explained that supervisors and operators are currently being trained on operation of the buses with a tentative rollout of early June. Mr. Nolting asked about the potential of fire, as he has seen videos of electric buses catching fire. Mr. Bruns explained that charging the electric buses is key to keeping the batteries at peak performance and charging capabilities. He told the members we only charge them to around 85%, to allow the regenerative braking to charge the batteries as they are driven. If the batteries are fully charged and driven as they should be, the batteries will over charge and could cause an electrical issue. Mr. Nolting asked if one of the electric buses could be brought out and shown to the members, prior to being put on the streets? Mr. Bruns said he would ask if that could be done. Mr. Bruns also told the members that Metro has acquired 5 new Glaval buses for our lift passengers. The buses should be in service, sometime in June.

Mr. Bruns stated that was all he had for the meeting and asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Fadale asked, given the fact that fuel prices have gone up and will probably continue to do so, what impact will be on the budget, how can they contact the board for comment?

Mr. Bruns told the members that the Board of Directors meets twice a month. The first meeting is a study session, and no public comment is allowed. 10-days after the study session, they have their monthly meeting and public comment is allowed. Mr. Bruns explained that our fuel is purchased through a bid process. The maintenance director puts out the bid to all eligible transport companies and the lowest bid wins. The cost for our fuel isn't the same as what we pay at the pump.

Mike Nolting asked when the next ride guides will be printed. Mr. Bruns told him, if we are making any changes to the next run-cut, new ride guides will be printed in July or August. Mr. Nolting said, the current ride guides "suck" and are useless unless you are in transit. Mr. Nolting said the old rides guides were much better and easier to understand, the new one doesn't tell you where anything is and makes no sense. Deborah asked what exactly makes it bad, Mike said, it just doesn't make sense. Mr. Bruns said he would take these comments to the planning department. No other questions were raised. The meeting adjourned at 11:00a.m.

