

Metro Public Safety Advisory Committee
General Committee Meeting #12
MINUTES

Wednesday, October 06, 2021

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

I. Call To Order

A. **Zoom Meeting Protocols**

Facilitator Richard France called the meeting to order. Facilitator Thomson Dryjanski announced Spanish and American Sign Language interpreter services would be available throughout the meeting.

B. **Agenda**

Facilitator France reviewed the agenda for the day.

C. **Roll Call**

Present: Ashley Ajayi, Carrie Madden, Charles Hammerstein, Chauncey Smith, Clarence Davis, Constance Strickland, Darryl Goodus, Fabian Gallardo, Florence Annang, Glenda Murrell, James Wen, Jessica Kellogg, Jose Raigoza, Maricela De Rivera, Mohammad Tajsar, Dr. Sabrina Howard, Ma'ayan Dembo, Scarlett de Leon

Absent: Andrea Urmanita, Esteban Garcia, Raul Gomez

D. **Approval of Meeting Minutes for 09/22/21**

A vote was taken to approve the meeting minutes for the September 01, 2021, meeting.

Minutes approved unanimously

E. **Update of PSAC Membership**

Imelda Hernandez provided a membership update that Ron Rodney is no longer part of PSAC and Fabian Gallardo filled his role as one of the ex officio members.

II. General Public Comment

Public comment was taken from meeting participants. The following comments were shared:

- A. Commentor Anisha Hingorani with the Advancement Project and Alliance for Community Transit LA reiterated the Board's mandate for PSAC's creation and urged the PSAC to oppose any proposal that continues a status quo harmful policing model. They believe the focus should be investing those funds in care-based solutions, including non-policing jobs services and programs.
- B. Commentor Soto shared their experience riding Metro as a quadriplegic. They hope PSAC will add extra security during peak hours on the light rail and subway.

III. Discussion

A. **Discussion with Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins**

- a. Metro Chief of Staff Nicole Englund introduced Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins.

- b. **Introductory Comments:** CEO Wiggins thanked members of PSAC for their commitment and volunteering. She shared her priorities for PSAC, highlighting the opportunity to rethink public safety and a lead an equitable recovery from the pandemic.
 - i. She stressed her support in a new holistic approach to public safety. She announced changes in Metro's structure, including moving the homeless outreach unit and the proposed transit ambassador program from the system safety and law enforcement department, and adding a newly created customer experience department.

- c. **Tackling Structural Racism:** Member Ashley Ajayi asked CEO Wiggins to talk about other considerations in which Metro could think about structural racism prior to the killing of George Floyd, an event that the PSAC motion is grounded in.
 - i. CEO Wiggins responded that while the motion was spurred by George Floyd's death, it was one of many opportunities Metro have to redesign the agency to have authentic community engagement and input. She also emphasized that a focus on transformational change now is key, as this window of opportunity might close as we move out of the pandemic.

- d. **Facing Opposition:** Member Mohammad Tajsar remarked on the courage needed to face the challenges for a truly transformative moment. He asked CEO Wiggins if she is ready for those challenges and how she planned to handle opposition.
 - i. CEO Wiggins replied that resistance to institutional change is to be expected but having clear values – like the work PSAC is doing on the mission and values statements – helps move past the resistance because there are guiding principles in place.
 - ii. Member Tajsar also commented on the importance of committing long-term funding to make change happen.
 - 1. Wiggins responded that while Metro should not focus solely on money, it is important, and the agency must look at the reallocation of resources to support desired outcomes and values.

- e. **Implementing Community-driven Projects:** Member Clarence Davis expressed his appreciation with CEO Wiggins' presence and shared the negative role that law enforcement has had in his community. He asked Wiggins how PSAC can envision Metro implementing the ideas of the people going forward. Member Davis cited projects that have been promised and have not come to fruition.
 - i. CEO Wiggins responded that there are two key things about this moment that make it different: 1) the Board is making time to listen to the community about public safety and 2) the pandemic has made clear that Metro was not measuring the right things and needs to improve.

- f. **Commitment to Public Safety Alternatives:** Member Scarlett de Leon asked CEO Wiggins what her long-term commitment is to alternatives to law enforcement and divestment from police.
 - i. CEO Wiggins replied that she is committed to alternatives to policing at Metro and thinks it's critically important to get clarity on what PSAC's vision for public safety and the required ecosystem of services is.

- g. **Perceptions of Public Safety:** Member Chauncey Smith asked CEO Wiggins what her thoughts are on how to achieve improved perceptions of public safety on Metro, when many current issues being raised in public comment are not issues for law enforcement, such as cleanliness or homelessness.
 - i. CEO Wiggins noted that having a strong cleaning program and creating a free bystander training program is a priority for them in keeping Metro safe and clean.
 - ii. Member Smith also asked for an update on the recent board motion regarding compensation for advisory bodies and whether it's possible to receive the aggregated data concerning law enforcement incidents on Metro.
 - iii. CEO Wiggins shared that the compensation policy for the PSAC was approved in July. Wiggins also shared that disaggregated data should be getting to members soon and that moving forward, this data should be publicly available to improve accountability practices.

B. Debrief on Metro Operations, Safety, and Customer Experience Committee Report

- a. **Special OCSE Session:** Facilitator France invited committee members to participate in the special Metro Operations, Safety, and Customer Experience Subcommittee meeting tomorrow at 9:00 AM.

- b. **PSAC Process:** Speaking on an internal memo containing Metro staff recommendations on discussions in the Infrastructure Protection Services ad-hoc committee, Member Smith shared his concern that recommendations must come first to PSAC General Committee before Metro Board, in order to protect the integrity of the process. He felt the memo that had been shared was operating in contravention to the process that was established from the outset of the committee.
 - i. Englund clarified that Metro staff was requested to report on what will be coming before the board next month and provide a preview of several actions coming to the board in the November/December cycle, including the extension on the infrastructure protection services and law enforcement contracts.
 - ii. She shared that the Metro staff recommendations in the internal memo were not meant to undermine the PSAC process and that the memo was addressed to PSAC, not the Metro Board.
 - 1. Member Smith responded that moving forward there needs to be a conversation about an efficient process that is respectful of what PSAC aims to embody.
 - a. Englund invited PSAC to continue the conversation on additional amendments and recommendations that are not included in this memo, as it is an iterative process.

- c. **Contract Extensions:** Member de Leon asked for clarification on why the contract extension needs to be for a year instead of six months, as previously suggested by some PSAC members.
 - i. Englund explained that a six-month extension is not enough time to complete a procurement process.
 - ii. Facilitator France added that when this was previously discussed, it was concluded that the committee does not have enough time to fully consider all of the contract extension ramifications. Metro must act on its own if staff recommends extending the contract; this would happen without PSAC's approval of the extension.

C. Reviewing the Mission and Values Statement for Public Safety on Metro

Committee members reviewed the statements which had been drafted by the facilitators. See [slides 15-18 of the presentation deck](#) for those materials.

- a. **Public Engagement:** Facilitator France began the discussion by sharing the results of public engagement on the mission and values statement process.
 - i. He shared the key themes included passenger safety, diversity and inclusion, law enforcement and security, accountability, community, shifting away from law enforcement, and public health.
- b. **Mission Statement:** The following mission was shared:
 - i. *"We are a responsible caretaker of the transit community that provides services, resources, and interventions that promote safety, compassion, and respect."*
 - ii. *"We safeguard the transit community by taking a holistic approach to public safety. We recognize that each individual is entitled to a safe, dignified, and humane experience on Metro."*
 - iii. These statements are one cohesive mission statement, to be read as arranged above. They are divided for the sake of identification during discussion.
- c. **Feedback on Mission Statements:** Facilitator France noted the committee member preference for the second. statement Members were less responsive to the first statement. He invited members to make comments on the statements.
 - i. Member Jose Raigoza shared that the first does not seem innovative and feels like business as usual.
 - ii. Member Constance Strickland echoed the previous comment and added that "we" feels generic. If "we" is going to be used, then it should read "We at Metro" to have more heart.
 - iii. Member Davis agreed with Member Strickland's comment and added Metro can keep going by including phrases related to agency growth and development with the public and community groups, to improve how Metro treats their riders.
 - iv. Member De Rivera advocated to remove "transit community" because Metro is a countywide system and transit community is too vague.
 1. Member Ajayi cautioned against removing it and is interested in having further conversations about that phrase.
 2. Member Annang echoed Member Ajayi's comment that transit community resonates with them.
- d. **Community-Centered Approach:** Facilitator France opened discussion to the first value statement, which reads *"We commit to pursuing a community-centered approach to public safety. This means working in partnership with communities to build trust, identify needs, and surface alternatives to traditional law enforcement models."*
 - i. Member Strickland noted that the emphasis on community, compassion, and diversity feels vague and lacks meaning. They expressed they do not like the use of the word marginalized in other value statements and would prefer more specificity, rather than using the word "community" (e.g., specifying "neighborhood").
 1. Member De Rivera responded that they do not feel the word neighborhood is a good replacement for community as it fails to capture the different experiences of various groups.

2. Facilitator France invited committee members to share alternative terms to articulate the concept of community and in place of the term “marginalized communities.”
3. Member Madden noted that the word community is used too many times and there should be more spelling out of who is included.
 - a. Member Strickland agreed and added that there should be a list everyone comes to an agreement on.
- e. **Emphasizing Compassion:** The second value statement reads “*We are committed to treating all transit users, employees, and community members with dignity and respect. Compassion, fairness, and kindness are key pillars of our approach to public safety.*”
 - i. Member Annang expressed that the second value on compassion resonated the most with them.
 1. Member Ajayi shared that they generally have positive reactions to the second value and suggested swapping out “fairness” for “equity.”

D. Time Permitting Items: Chairperson Discussion

- a. Facilitator France encouraged the committee to take a look at the slide deck for results on the chairperson discussion. This will be discussed again in the future.

IV. General Public Comment

Public comment was taken from meeting participants. The following comments were shared:

- A. Commentor representing the LA County Police Chiefs’ Association stated his opposition to defunding the police.

V. Adjournment

- A. Meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM

VI. Next Steps

- A. The committee will reconvene on October 20, 2021.