



**SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT (METRO)
PERSONNEL/HUMAN RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES*
NOVEMBER 8, 2024 – 10:30 AM**

A regular meeting of the Personnel/Human Resources Standing Committee of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) was convened on Friday, November 8, 2024.

The Committee Meeting Agenda Packet can be found online at www.SCMTD.com. *Minutes are “summary” minutes, not verbatim minutes. Audio recordings of Board meeting open sessions are available to the public upon request.

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1 CALLED TO ORDER by Director Brown at 10:36 AM.

2 SAFETY DEBRIEF

Gregory Strecker, Safety, Security & Risk Management Director, provided a debriefing on safety, emphasizing METRO’s evacuation routes.

3 ROLL CALL: The following Directors were **present** via teleconference, representing a quorum:

Director Kristen Brown	City of Capitola
Director Rebecca Downing	County of Santa Cruz
Director Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson	City of Santa Cruz
Director Donna Lind	City of Scotts Valley
Director Vanessa Quiroz-Carter	City of Watsonville
Corey Aldridge	CEO/General Manager
Julie Sherman	Legal Counsel

4 ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE PERSONNEL/HUMAN RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

Having none, Director Brown moved to the next agenda item.

5 ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS FROM AGENDA/ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT EXISTING AGENDA ITEMS

Supporting documentation for Item 6 was distributed to the Board Members and public present and will be uploaded to the website after the meeting.

Hearing nothing further, Board Chair Brown moved to the next agenda item.

6 WAGE STUDIES PROCESS REVIEW

Corey Aldridge, CEO/General Manager, spoke to the material handed out. He emphasized the purpose of the study was to pay competitive, fair and equitable wages for management so that we can retain employees. It has been several years since a wage study has been performed for management. Unlike the unions who have a contract in place that controls how and when wages get studied, management does not. METRO plans to put a policy in place in 2025 and will bring it to the Board for approval.

He reviewed how the equity study was performed and the ten peer agencies used for comparison purposes. The recommendations that came back from METRO's vendor, Gallagher, are reflected in the Market Compensation Data – Differentials report. It shows what the salary splits should be for all the management positions. The data was then evaluated and CEO Aldridge promoted a few of METRO's management staff. Because of the change in titles, the wages listed in the report were not used for those positions. He expressed concern on presenting this information going forward since it can easily be misunderstood.

Director Lind responded that she appreciated the information presented and had heard from managers who had been promoted but the compensation was not in alignment with the promotion. She concurred with the CEO that METRO does not want to lose management staff and was glad that the agency is taking steps to rectify the situation.

Director Kalantari-Johnson commented that the intent of having this on the agenda is to articulate the process that has been in place and used in this study, and how we will move forward as an agency. She looks forward to a policy coming before the Board.

Director Downing asked if a cost-of-living allowance (COLA) was included in this study and CEO Aldridge replied that it was not. Director Lind added that sometimes it is hard to compare and find a true apples-to-apples comparison because often staff is doing multiple jobs and there is not a specific position that you can accurately compare it to. She understood the reason for making the adjustments that CEO Aldridge made.

Board Chair Brown asked about the SEIU positions in red listed in the report. Dawn Crummié, Chief Human Resources Officer, explained that these positions listed in red highlight the pay between the represented position and the next step of management.

Jordan Vascones, SEA President – SEIU 521, commented that he didn't expect this study to be published today but was happy it was. He expressed concern that there hasn't been consistency in how this wage study and equity adjustments were made with management and the unions. He expressed frustration that the union's process involves jumping through bureaucratic hoops to justify any reclassifications. The

union must prove that members have taken on additional duties above what their job description reflects. However, management did not go through this same scrutiny. Members feel that they have been cheated and low balled on wages. If management feels the effects of the economy, it is even more significant for union members. He was in favor of a formal policy and process being created so there is equity and fairness to all employees.

CEO Aldridge responded to Mr. Vascones' concerns and stated that the difference between the management process and the SEIU process is that for SEIU, there is a union contract agreement in place that METRO is required to follow. The wage studies performed for SEIU, the process, the comparator agencies that are used, and how it is done is laid out very clearly and agreed upon by the parties. It is highly unusual to have a labor contract that not only negotiates a COLA or a yearly annual increase, but also has language that allows studying positions during the contract. Most contracts with labor organizations are for a percentage increase every year and do not include additional wage studies throughout the year.

Board Chair Brown asked when the next contract negotiation will take place. CEO Aldridge replied 2026. Ms. Crummié added that METRO recently renegotiated the language of the article for reclassifications outside of the typical contract negotiation period. It was voted on and approved by the union and a side letter was signed.

Sarah Zimmerman, Interim Research Director for SEIU Local 521, noted these reports being discussed were not in the agenda packet and asked when access will be available. Staff reiterated the documents are available to the public in the room. Board Chair Brown responded that the report will be added to the online agenda upon conclusion of this meeting.

Director Kalantari-Johnson responded that the intent of the Board was to discuss what the process will be in the future and looks forward to the policy being brought to the full Board to discuss and vote on. She pointed out that diving into the details of this report is not standard practice, is unprecedented, and has already been approved by the Board.

Board Chair Brown clarified that no action will be taken on this matter. CEO Aldridge affirmed that it is only informational.

Hearing nothing further, Director Brown moved to the next agenda item.

7 ADJOURNMENT

Director Brown adjourned the meeting at 11:01 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bauer
Sr. Executive Assistant