

# Metro

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Metro

## Minutes - Final

Tuesday, April 30, 2024

10:30 AM

Metro Regional Center, Council Chamber,

<https://zoom.us/j/615079992> Webinar ID:

615 079 992 or 888-475-4499 (toll free)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LgKxiAN1Au0)

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**Council work session**

This meeting will be held electronically and in person at the Metro Regional Center Council Chamber.

You can join the meeting on your computer or other device by using this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/615079992> (Webinar ID: 615 079 992)

**10:30 Call to Order and Roll Call**

Council Deputy President Hwang called the Work Session to order at 10:30 a.m.

**Present:** 6 - Councilor Gerritt Rosenthal, Councilor Mary Nolan, Juan Carlos Gonzalez, Christine Lewis, Duncan Hwang, and Ashton Simpson

**Excused:** 1 - Lynn Peterson

**10:35 Presentations**

10:35 Recognition of May 5 as the Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous People

Presenter(s): Katie McDonald, Tribal Affairs Liaison, Metro

Council Deputy President Hwang introduced Katie McDonald, Tribal Affairs Liaison, Metro to present on the Recognition of May 5 as the Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous People.

*Presentation Summary:*

Katie McDonald (she/her), Tribal Affairs liaison, Metro shared her excitement particularly excited to have members of their indigenous employee affinity group present, acknowledging their significant contributions to the cause. She then passed the floor to Michael Lee to begin the presentation, noting that their staff would introduce themselves as the presentation progressed.

Michael Lee, (they/ them), and Felicia Teba (she/they), delved into the significance of MMIP, highlighting the plight of thousands of indigenous individuals who have gone missing or been murdered, each with their own unique stories and backgrounds. Emphasizing the importance of

honoring everyone and seeking justice, she provided alarming statistics and personal anecdotes to underscore the severity of the issue. Throughout her presentation, she urged for systemic reforms and increased support for indigenous communities, citing historic injustices and ongoing struggles. She detailed Metro's efforts to observe MMIP Day and called for support from the council and the community, advocating for increased funding, improved data collection, and coordinated efforts to address the crisis. They closed with a plea for united action to prevent violence against indigenous people and expressed gratitude to the presenters and collaborators for their efforts in raising awareness and seeking justice.

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#### *Council Discussion*

Councilor Hwang wondered if there has been any budgeting opportunities for culturally specific program and interventions.

Katie McDonald discussed the Community Education and Stewardship Team within the Parks and Nature Department, highlighting their role in leading programming at natural area sites and responding to requests from tribal organizations and urban indigenous community members. She emphasized the team's belief in the importance of connecting to the land for spiritual safety and community building, particularly in the context of traumatic experiences.

Councilor Nolan thanked the Tribal Affairs team in their efforts sharing difficult stories and the historical significance to the Council.

Councilor Rosenthal posed a question regarding international coordination and remembrance efforts for missing and murdered indigenous peoples, noting the persistence of the issue across the Americas and inquiring about similar initiatives in Canada and Mexico.

Felicia Teba (she/they), noted the seriousness of the issue in Canada, particularly highlighting the Highway of Tears in British Columbia where many indigenous individuals have gone missing. While they were unsure about international recognition of the problem, they referenced the United Nations Declaration of Rights for Indigenous Peoples, which emphasizes the ongoing effects of colonization on indigenous communities worldwide. Drawing connections to discussions about boarding schools, they mentioned conversations among First Nations communities in Alaska, the United States, and Mexico about similar institutions that contributed to the disappearance and violence against indigenous people.

**10:50 Work Session Topics:**

10:50 Department Budget Presentation: P'5/Expo/Convention Center

Presenter(s): Steve Faulstick (he/him), GM Visitor Venues  
Craig Stroud, Executive Director Oregon Convention Center  
Robyn Williams, Executive Director Portland'5 Centers for the Arts  
Ruby White, Director of Culture & Community, Portland'5 Centers for the Arts  
Matthew Rotchford, Executive Director Portland Expo Center  
Ashley Sloan, MERC Finance Manager

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)

With no further discussion, Council Deputy President Hwang moved to the next agenda item.

Council Deputy President Hwang introduced Steve Faulstick (he/him), GM Visitor Venues, Craig Stroud, Executive Director Oregon Convention Center, Robyn Williams, Executive Director Portland's Centers for the Arts, Ruby White, Director of Culture & Community, Portland's Centers for the Arts, Matthew Rotchford, Executive Director Portland Expo Center, Ashley Sloan, MERC Finance Manager to present on Department Budget Presentation: P'5/Expo/Convention Center.

Steve Faulstick (he/him), GM Visitor Venues, expressed gratitude for the hard work put in by directors and their teams to develop a successful budget plan for fiscal year 2025. He emphasized the goal of delivering excellence through jobs, economic impact, and community benefit, acknowledging both the opportunities and challenges faced by the venues. Steve highlighted efforts to address safety and security concerns, noting ongoing progress towards a full recovery for the city amidst challenges such as inflation and rising costs. Faulstick passed the presentation to Robyn Williams, Executive Director Portland's Center for the Arts. Robyn Williams (she/her), Executive Director Portland's Center for the Arts highlighted the significant investment in security and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work, expressing pride in the progress made. With a focus on both challenges and opportunities, she outlined the financial overview presented by Ashley Sloan, Finance manager, Metro, detailing the revenue and expenses projections, capital projects, and performances measures for the year ahead. Despite a positive business outlook, Robyn emphasized the need for sustainable solutions to address the operating deficit and maintain financial stability in the long term.

*Council Discussion*

Councilor Lewis raised two questions concerning the pie chart, specifically inquiring about the breakdown of the 15% government funding and the inclusion of the P five foundation within the 3% categorized as "other" in the global budget.

Robyn Williams (she/her), mentioned that public funding, totaling about \$1.3 million out of a \$60 million budget, primarily supported building maintenance in Portland. Additionally, they received lodging tax revenue and funds from the Portland Five Foundation, which exclusively supported their youth education program with an annual average between \$100,000 to \$130,000. Emphasizing the importance of viewing the budget as a holistic set of investments, she hoped for representation of the foundation's contributions. The 15% revenue growth expectation was attributed to a strong year, particularly driven by successful Broadway shows and other commercial events, although concerns were raised about potential rate increases and a desire to stabilize rates for nonprofit and resident companies.

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Councilor Rosenthal (he/him) questioned discrepancy between a 15% increase in revenues, a 12% increase in costs, and a 7% increase in deficit, wondering if capital needs were the primary or sole cause of this discrepancy.

Robyn Williams (she/her) stated that the main cost for the deficit is the roof repairs.

Steve Faulstick (he/him), noted that while it had once been at \$14 million, significant expenditures on projects like the cooling tower and roof had reduced it to its current level,

prompting a discussion on what constituted a healthy reserve or end balance.

Councilor Hwang noted that their fund balance has been depleted due to capital expenditures without a corresponding plan for replenishment, leaving them in a precarious position until they addressed the need for a robust strategy moving forward. Top of Form

Steve Faulstick (he/him) remarked on the uniqueness of how fund balances were perceived within the venues, especially concerning capital needs and future city engagement. Mentioning a future bond through the VFIG for \$40 million to invest in P Five capital as a potential backstop, he highlighted ongoing efforts to collaborate with the city and explore opportunities with their IGA to address the situation, acknowledging the uncertainty surrounding potential future capital projects.

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Robyn Williams (she/her), noted that their operating budget, excluding capital, wasn't sustainable as expenses consistently surpassed revenues, primarily due to personnel costs. While some personnel expenses were covered by others, many had to be covered internally, particularly affecting their ability to subsidize nonprofit users of their halls extensively. She emphasized the need to identify strategies to maintain operations and affordability while continuing to support their buildings, audiences, and shows.

Councilor Nolan pointed out that there was a systemic deficit in their operations, leading to a simple choice between increasing revenue or reducing expenses. They raised questions about how their generosity towards local nonprofit organizations compared to their peers and how

they fared in terms of corporate support for venue operations. They also questioned how they measured up in terms of maintaining the functionality of investments, particularly in comparison to the visibility of capital contributions.

Robyn Williams (she/her) delineated the challenges faced by performing arts centers managed by governmental entities versus those run by 501 organizations, highlighting the latter's ability to leverage revenue from Broadway presentations for donations and budget balancing. As a partner rather than a presenter of Broadway, they faced economic constraints, particularly regarding staffing and operational costs, exacerbated by their commitment to deeply subsidizing arts organizations. The difficulty in garnering donations for infrastructure projects led to a shift towards funding education programs, while the broader challenge remained in navigating sustainability amidst escalating costs, prompting discussion.

Councilor Rosenthal inquired about projecting labor costs, recalling signed contracts of uncertain duration, which hindered accurate projections. He also raised concerns about the potential impact of decisions regarding the Keller, anticipating varied effects on future projections depending on the outcome. He further highlighted that the renovation would indeed disrupt Broadway shows for a period of two years or longer, seeking confirmation on the accuracy of this assertion.

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Robyn Willims explained that their labor contracts typically span three years, allowing for projections within that timeframe. She emphasized the significance of the Keller building as a major revenue generator, expressing concerns



about potential revenue loss if renovation necessitated closure for an extended period, while still navigating discussions on available options for the Keller.

Councilor Lewis (She/her) directed attention to the Schnitzer building, where recent investments were made alongside issues such as AC failures and roof concerns. Expressing the need to delineate between operational needs and capital asset management, she sought projections on when discussions with the city of Portland regarding the aging building should be revisited, emphasizing the urgency of initiating those conversations.

Steve Faulstick (he/him), mentioned that the last facility condition assessment was conducted in 2016 and explained ongoing discussions with the city, aiming to conduct an updated assessment during the summer. Emphasizing the importance of formalizing decisions based on the assessment findings, he anticipated progress in allocating resources based on the updated evaluation.

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Robyn Williams (She/her) passed the presentation to Matthew Rotchford (he/him) Executive Director Portland Expo Center and Ashely Sloan (she/her) Finance Manager, Metro.

*Presentation Summary:*

Matthew Rotchford (he/him) discussed expressed gratitude towards various teams and individuals for their contributions, including Chuck Dills and Sabrina Catalina, as well as the guidance from the Merck Commission in preparing the budget. Following the established format, he outlined the agenda for the presentation, starting with Expo's department investment progress and concluding

with budget modifications and a Q&A session. Throughout the presentation, he highlighted Expo's achievements, community partnerships, diverse events, and efforts to expand into emerging sports markets, underscoring the Expo center's role in economic generation and community building. Rotchford passed the presentation to Ashely Sloan to present on the Expo's budget.

Ashley Sloan (She/her), Finance Manager, Metro, provided a detailed overview of Expo's budget projections, including revenue expectations from parking rates and government funds, alongside expenditure increases for personnel, materials, and services. The operating deficit was projected, considering a metro transfer and the last year of debt service expenses. Additionally, she highlighted capital projects, focusing on H VAC replacements, and emphasized the strategic decision to front-load spending for building upgrades, addressing deferred maintenance challenges. Finally, she acknowledged the ongoing efforts to support community events and partnerships while striving for economic resilience and sustainability.

*Council Discussion*

Councilor Lewis inquired if there were any remaining staff that might be moved from variable-hour to regular status or have their FTE increased in future years.

Ashley Sloan (She/her), Metro finance manager stated that there is no update on the status currently, but she can provide the numbers to council soon.

Councilor Rosenthal inquired if the fiscal year 2023 results showed a break-even, followed by a loss in 2024, asking if the \$1.3 million loss was due to capital expenses. He clarified that this was mainly due to a shift in capital project

efforts and cuts to some projects to prioritize front-loading the HVAC system replacement, which was necessary for the 25-year-old systems.

Matthew Rotchford (he/him) suggested to look at the contingency line as well as the funding balance line.

Councilor Nolan (they/them) question about the combined operating and capital budgets for P5 and Expo, and whether the request for \$400,000 from the general fund was prioritized to cover specific expenses like debt service, personnel increases, or air conditioning units. They inquired about the prioritization process and decision-making criteria.

Ashely Sloan (she/her) finance manager Metro, explained that explained that the operating and capital budgets were combined due to the current reliance on a single source of funds, as opposed to having different restricted sources in the past. The department prioritized its budget based on what was needed for the fiscal year and made a general fund request accordingly. The process focused on the total general fund ask, regardless of whether it was for capital or operations, and aimed to reach an acceptable fund balance level for the fiscal year.

#### *Presentation*

Craig Stroud (he/him) the executive director of the Oregon Convention Center, presented the OCC's fiscal 25 budget. He outlined the presentation agenda and highlighted the economic impact, jobs supported, and taxes generated from events, noting the negative effects of fewer national

conventions post-pandemic. He mentioned the count of conventions and large consumer shows, expressing concern over low numbers for fiscal years 26 and 27. Stroud also emphasized OCC's sustainability achievements, including LEED Platinum recertification, and discussed the hiring hold on new and vacant positions due to financial constraints. He then handed the presentation over to Ashley Sloan (she/her), OCC's finance manager.

Ashely Sloan (she/her), finance manager, presented the OCC's fiscal 25 budget, highlighting a 5% increase in service charges, raising their budget from \$28 million to \$29.8 million. To manage expenses, personnel costs were limited to a 2% increase by defunding five positions, while materials and services saw a 3% rise due to utilities and market influences. Despite these measures, the OCC faced a \$1.1 million operating deficit and planned to cover a \$7.1 million capital outlay from the fund balance, leaving a projected ending fund balance of \$12.6 million. Stroud detailed OCC's three balanced revenue sources, emphasizing the shift in food and beverage revenues towards retail concessions, the lag in transient lodging taxes to pre-pandemic levels, and increased client pricing sensitivity. She emphasized the alignment of programs with strategic targets and the importance of performance measures for assessing organizational health and making informed decisions. She noted that central services departments, including finance, HR, IT, communications, and capital asset management, provide essential support for these efforts. She concluded by mentioning the development of support and logistics measures to improve enterprise-wide processes and handed over to Brian Kennedy to discuss finance.

*Council Discussion*

Councilor Nolan (they/them) questioned how many

restrooms will be converted to all-gender bathrooms.

Andrew Scott (he/him), Deputy COO, stated that around six to eight single-user restrooms will be installed with plumbing to be determined.

11:50 Department Budget Presentation: Central Services

Presenter(s): Presented by:  
Ryan Kinsella, CAM Director  
Lia Waiwaiole, Communications Director  
Julio Garcia, HR Director  
Rachel Tull, Chief Information Officer  
Brian Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)

*Presentation Summary*

Lia Waiwaile from central communications explained the role of communications practitioners across the organization. She clarified the structure changes in November 2021, where department-specific communication teams were moved into their respective departments, with the funding shift happening this year. Her presentation focused on the centrally funded part of communications, which supports all Metro departments without their own communications teams, emphasizing investments in media sponsorships, equity measures, and performance tracking tools to enhance communication strategies and public engagement. Lia Waiwaile passed the presentation to Julio Garcia (he/him), HR director. Julio Garcia (he/him), HR Director highlighted the significant activities from 2023. Key metrics included, conducting pay equity focus groups and culminated in implementing a new compensation framework for non-represented employees,

including new classification criteria and wage scale. Employee benefits included the implementation of paid leave programs and a new benefits administration module, with a significant increase in retirement plan participation over the course of five years. Furthermore, he reported busy year in recruitment, training, and employee relations, with significant strides in training programs and a 15% increase in recruitment efforts. Gracia passed the presentation to Rachel Tull (she/her), Metro Chief Information Officer.

Rachel Tull (she/her), Metro CIO, discussed the 2023-24 investment progress, noting the addition of three staff members: an IT project management office manager to enhance IT project capacity, a systems analyst dedicated to solid waste software at transfer stations, and a help desk supervisor to manage remote service calls. Significant projects included implementing new software at the transfer station, enhancing zoo software, and expanding remote software capabilities. They also introduced a Microsoft security and user management portal, increased single sign-on applications, streamlined onboarding/offboarding processes, and moved core systems to an offsite data center. Additionally, she highlighted an equity metric showing significant progress in providing network accounts to variable-hour employees, aiming for better accessibility, and understanding of requirements. Lastly, she mentioned ongoing strategic initiatives in process improvement, website accessibility, and offsite data center management, emphasizing collaboration and efficiency improvements across the agency.

#### *Council Discussion*

Councilor Rosenthal raised several questions about various

budget items, including redundancy in food recycling allocations for venues, a significant increase in the finance department's budget, details on human resources training courses, and the consistency of dashboard formats across departments. Additionally, he inquired about the coordination between IT and other departments, particularly regarding the proactive consideration of artificial intelligence implications.

Andrew Scott (he/him), Deputy COO, Metro, explained that while communications teams for each department assist with their respective dashboards, there is some information sharing across teams. Central coordination exists for performance measurement dashboards, but individual departments create their own specific dashboards. Addressing a question about food waste, he clarified that there are no specific budget requests for tracking food waste. The sustainability team collaborates with the OCC on a multi-state pilot project aiming to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030 and ensures compliance with sustainability goals as part of their contract with Levi.

Councilor Lewis (she/her), questioned whether there are specific areas requiring deeper resource investment to address potential cultural issues or microcultures within departments.

Julio Garcia (he/him), HR Director expressed that the numbers are a positive indication of the success of their safe workplace campaign, which has increased awareness and comfort in filing complaints. He emphasized that the high volume of cases reflects the effectiveness of the small department handling them and highlighted the use of a new case management tool for deeper assessments. He also noted an uptick in accommodation requests and assured that trends are monitored closely, offering to provide

detailed follow-ups and additional briefings as needed.

**12:50 Chief Operating Officer Communication**

There were none.

**12:55 Councilor Communication**

Held off until the next meeting on May 2nd, 2024

**1:00 Adjourn**

There being no further business, Council President Hwang adjourned the Metro Work Session at 1:15pm

Respectfully submitted,

*Anushka Kargathara*

Anushka Kargathara, Legislative Assistant