

# **Metro**

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**Metro**

## **Minutes**

**Thursday, November 20, 2025**

**10:30 AM**

**Metro Regional Center, Council chamber;  
<https://zoom.us/j/615079992> (Webinar ID: 615079992) or  
253-205-0468 (toll free), [www.youtube.com/watch?  
v=XWoc0VNV-B0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWoc0VNV-B0)**

**Council meeting**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Deputy Council President Simpson called the meeting to order at 10:31am.

Councilor Lewis shared remarks honoring Transgender Day of Remembrance.

**Present:** 7 - Council President Lynn Peterson, Councilor Duncan Hwang, Councilor Mary Nolan, Councilor Gerritt Rosenthal, Councilor Juan Carlos Gonzalez, Councilor Christine Lewis, and Councilor Ashton Simpson

**2. Public Communication**

Art Lewellen shared his opposition for the Rose Quarter I-5 project.

**3. Consent Agenda**

3.1

Attachments: [October 30, 2025 Council Meeting Minutes](#)

3.2

Attachments: [November 4, 2025 Council Meeting Minutes](#)

**3.3 Resolution No. 25-5542 For the Purpose of Confirming Reappointments to the Metro Committee on Racial Equity**

Attachments: [Resolution No. 25-5542](#)  
[Exhibit A](#)  
[Staff report](#)

**The consent agenda was approved unanimously.**

**4. Presentations**

**4.1 Presentation of the Parks and Nature and Natural Areas Oversight Committee Annual Reports**

Presenter(s): Jon Blasher (he/him), Parks and Nature Director  
Cary Watters, Oversight Committee Co-Chair  
Erin Upton, Oversight Committee Co-Chair

Attachments: [Staff report](#)  
[Attachment 1 - Community Report](#)

Deputy Council President Ashton Simpson introduced Parks and Nature Director Jon Blasher and Oversight Committee Co-Chairs Cary Watters and Erin Upton to share the annual reports from the Parks and Nature and Natural Areas Oversight Committee. The co-chairs discussed their involvement with the committee.

Presenters discussed restoration and maintenance, protecting the land, park improvements, community investments, education and stewardship. They shared their total spending and next steps for their committee.

Councilor Hwang expressed gratitude for the co-chairs' leadership

Councilor Lewis shared support for the work of the committee.

## 5. Resolutions

- 5.1 **Resolution No. 25-5538** For the Purpose of Terminating the Intergovernmental Agreement Between Metro and the City of Portland Under Which Metro Manages the Portland's Centers for the Arts

Presenter(s): Craig Stroud (he/him), General Manager, Visitor Venues  
Rachael Lembo (she/her), Interim Executive Director, Portland's

Attachments: [Resolution 25-5538](#)  
[Staff Report](#)

Deputy Council President Ashton Simpson introduced the resolution and welcomed Portland City Councilor Jamie Dunphy to speak on behalf of the resolution.

Councilor Dunphy expressed his support for the resolution.

Presenters described the background of Portland's Centers for the Arts (P's) and shared staff recommendations. They discussed the status of Metro's involvement and asked Council for feedback.

Councilor Lewis asked where the City of Portland will find the money that they will need to manage the facilities.

Rachael Lembo responded that Metro has worked hard this year to balance their operating budget. She noted that this was not an easy process and that they had to reduce their staff to achieve their balanced budget. Lembo added that the City of Portland has a major infrastructure plan, and they are aware that the Portland's facilities need to be part of that plan, but she does not know where the money is coming from.

Councilor Lewis stated that Metro has invested greatly in the building, citing capital improvement projects such as replacing the roof and HVAC systems. Rachael Lembo affirmed that the improvements cost around \$9 million, if not more, noting that they have replaced the roofs of 3 buildings. Rachael Lembo added that before the Covid-19 pandemic, they were making \$1-\$3 million in net positive funds, but after the pandemic, they did not generate that sort of net positive income. She added that due to the slowing of revenue, they have had challenges funding further capital projects.

Council President Peterson arrived at 11:35am.

Councilor Lewis asked for clarification on the rates for the venues. Rachael Lembo responded that the rates are available on the website, and they are set in advance. She added that there are different levels of discounts on rental rates.

Councilor Lewis asked the presenters to explain the readiness elements of the transfer. Rachael Lembo responded that they have a draft termination agreement, and they are actively in negotiations with the City of Portland. She stated that the negotiations are progressing well but recognized that there is a lot of work to be done after the agreement is signed.

Councilor Hwang asked what they can do to make sure there is an inclusive process and discussion, noting a worry about public transparency during this transition.

Rachael Lembo responded that there was a group of twenty external stakeholders who met over a six-month period, and that they have also been engaging with local nonprofits. She noted that going forward, she is happy to speak with anyone who reaches out with questions or concerns.

Councilor Hwang requested that staff prepare an FAQ on the website.

Councilor Juan Carlos Gonzalez asked how the transition will work.

Rachael Lembo responded that because they are a large operation, it will take a lot of intentional effort to make sure the transition is seamless. She noted that they will make sure staff have what they need. She added they have high level draft timelines to transition the major operational components.

Craig Stroud noted that the City of Portland will receive these venues as fully functional business units.

Deputy Council President Ashton Simpson left the meeting at 11:50am.

Councilor Nolan asked how this move, when completed, will affect the ability of the region to think regionally about arts and culture.

Rachael Lembo responded that Metro is uniquely situated to think about regional issues, and the operation of these venues does not change that. Lembo cited the community placemaking grant program, GLEAN art program, and future vision as examples of arts and culture regionalism that Metro leads.

Councilor Nolan shared concern about Metro stepping back from regional leadership of arts and culture if they part from these

venues.

Councilor Hwang asked what the transition costs will be, asking how it will be apportioned and if they are using reserves.

Rachael Lembo responded that they will share more about that when they come back with their budget in 2026.

Councilor Hwang asked if Metro would split costs with the City of Portland.

Rachael Lembo responded that costs will be incurred by both parties. She noted once they have signed the agreement, Metro will know more about their capacity needs.

Councilor Hwang asked about changing the transition day if necessary, requesting clarity on if there are clauses where they can push the timeline back if necessary.

Rachael Lembo responded that it will be hard to do that later in the process, but they should be able to change the date if they decided to do so in the next few months.

Craig Stroud noted that there is no visible interruption of service or change of service and the transfer of ownership will have excellent results for the public.

Council President Peterson stated that these facilities have been cherished by the region and that she thinks this is the right time and right decision. She appreciated staff for their work and added that they will be there to support the City of Portland and Metro staff.

Councilor Lewis asked Councilor Jamie Dunphy to speak on the City of Portland's commitment to organized labor in these facilities.

Rachael Lembo responded there is a state statute that governs the transition of operations from one government to another. She added that the statute does have staff protections and that they are discussing that in negotiation.

Councilor Dunphy shared that they are committed to protecting the union jobs and ensuring a seamless transfer that recognizes the dignity and professionalism necessary for workers. He noted that he is a union member himself.

Councilor Lewis stated that there will be benefits that are lost and changed even with the best intentions. She requested extensive planning to ensure the best outcomes for employees.

Councilor Dunphy stated that unions will be in the front and center of their discussions.

Deputy COO Andrew Scott shared that they do not anticipate broad public engagement around this transfer besides with the key stakeholders.

Councilor Hwang shared that his constituents have some questions about this transfer and are surprised. He stated that he would like a community listening session, online survey, or some combination of those types of activities to ensure people are informed.

Council President Peterson stated that she wants a minimum of a least one virtual listening session between the city of Portland and Metro to get feedback on the transition.

Councilor Nolan noted that Metro and the City of Portland have done a lot of engagement with the people engaged in the venues themselves. They stated that they would not suggest, given the timeline they are working with, a large process of public engagement and input, citing worries that this may push their transition date back.

Councilor Lewis stated that it may be a little late for Metro be the main listener and encouraged the City of Portland to be open ears to the community. She agreed with Councilor Nolan that this is a regional challenge.

Councilor Hwang asked if it is one resolution with two date options for the COO.

Rachael Lembo affirmed this.

**A motion was made by Councilor Hwang, seconded by Council President Peterson, that this item be adopted. The motion passed by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 5 - Council President Peterson, Councilor Hwang, Councilor Nolan, Councilor Gonzalez, and Councilor Lewis

**Excused:** 2 - Councilor Rosenthal, and Councilor Simpson

**5.2 Resolution No. 25-5533 For the Purpose of Amending the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget and Appropriations Schedule and Fiscal Year 2025-26 Through Fiscal Year 2029-30 Capital Improvement Plan to Provide for Changes in Operations**

**Presenter(s):** Amanda Akers, Budget Manager  
Cinnamon Williams, Budget Director

**Attachments:** [Resolution 25-5533](#)  
[Exhibit A](#)  
[Exhibit B](#)  
[Staff Report](#)  
[Attachment 1 - Summary of November 2025 Amendments](#)  
[Attachment 2-9](#)

Councilor Lewis introduced the resolution. Presenters discussed budget amendments and capital improvement plan changes. They shared the actual changes to the adopted budget and the appropriation changes. Presenters shared the full-time equivalent changes, general fund changes, and all other substantive changes.

Councilor Hwang asked what the balance is in their contingency fund, noting that they need to make sure the money will last until the



end of the fiscal year.

Cinnamon Williams responded that the contingency fund for is \$33.2 million after these changes, noting that there are enough resources to cover these changes in the fiscal year.

Councilor Lewis noted that understanding the general funds spent on new staff in relation to the contingency fund, as well as where the budget sits, is important. She acknowledged that Metro just went through a painful period with layoffs, adding that most of those layoffs were from funds outside of the general fund.

**A motion was made by Council President Peterson, seconded by Councilor Hwang, that this item be adopted.**

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 5 - Council President Peterson, Councilor Hwang, Councilor Nolan, Councilor Gonzalez, and Councilor Lewis

**Excused:** 2 - Councilor Rosenthal, and Councilor Simpson

#### **6. Chief Operating Officer Communication**

Deputy COO Scott provided an update on increased Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activities. He shared that 650 people have been arrested by ICE so far in the Metro area, noting reports of people being afraid to leave their homes. He shared that they will come back with a proposal to be responsive to the needs and requests from the community.

Deputy COO Scott also thanked the Zoo staff for their work at the Oregon Zoo Lights. He added that the Metro community campaign is going on now and folks can drop donations around MRC.

#### **7. Councilor Communication**

None.

8. Adjourn

With no other business, Councilor Lewis adjourned the meeting at 12:22pm.

*Georgia Langer*

Georgia Langer, Legislative Coordinator  
December 9, 2025