

Metro

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Metro

Minutes

Tuesday, May 13, 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/live/rbQ03cVAI78?si**

Council work session

10:30 Call to Order and Roll Call

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

Present: 6 - Council President Lynn Peterson, Councilor Christine Lewis, Councilor Juan Carlos Gonzalez, Councilor Mary Nolan, Councilor Ashton Simpson, and Councilor Gerritt Rosenthal

Excused: 1 - Councilor Duncan Hwang

10:30 Work Session Topics:**10:30 Central Services Budget Presentation**

Staff provided performance updates for central services broadly.

Councilor Gonzalez asked to review indicators of a healthy region from peer cities. Councilor Rosenthal then asked how resilient economies are defined. Staff noted that industry mix, small business success, and tax structure are among the indicators.

Councilor Lewis asked about public access to the benchmarks online and suggested spending more time thinking strategically about benchmarks for each aspect of Metro's diverse array of services.

Staff reviewed each central services budget: Human Resources; Capital Asset Management; Central Communications; Finance and Regulatory Services; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Information Technology.

Councilor Rosenthal asked a clarifying question about staffing for recruitment and employee relations, and staff explained that reductions in employee relations are not feasible, but FTE in recruiting had been reduced.

Councilor Gonzalez asked the types of learning available for staff DEI training hours. Staff highlighted expanded online courses, special trainings from experts, and applications to receive credit for independent learning like conferences and reading.

Councilor Rosenthal asked a clarifying question about naming conventions and staff confirmed that “REDI” is a term used to describe DEI planning in Parks and Nature.

Councilor Gonzalez asked if trainings are measured for effectiveness. Staff agreed more data to show the value of trainings would be helpful and they reflected on the annual employee engagement survey results regarding DEI in the workplace.

Councilor Lewis asked how the agency is tracking the benefit of employee resource groups, and staff said that expanding the number of ERGs and the timekeeping tracking for participation in the future will be beneficial for metrics.

Jeff Baer introduced himself as Metro’s new Interim Chief Information Officer.

Councilor Nolan asked about Metro’s response time for public records requests and asked staff to compare them to other agencies. Staff reported that average response times may be skewed from outlier requests.

Councilor Nolan also asked for results of third-party evaluation of Metro’s IT department and standards applied to local governments. Staff said a recent report identified the need for more resources in cybersecurity.

Councilor Lewis asked about energy use and resilience for data storage. COO Madrigal confirmed redundancy would

be a benefit following event like the Cascadia Subduction Zone. Staff also confirmed that Metro's existing energy use is renewable.

Councilor Rosenthal asked whether Metro had employed AI to streamline certain tasks, such as collating information and translation. He also identified the audit process as a functional metric agency wide. Staff noted Metro is currently considering best practices for AI.

12:00 Office of Metro Attorney Budget Presentation

Staff provided an overview of the upcoming budget.

Councilor Lewis asked if the materials and services budget were adequate to support necessary outside legal counsel, and Metro Attorney MacLaren noted that contracted services are supported by the departments litigating the issues.

Councilor Gonzalez expressed support for legal supporting legal education, and Metro Attorney MacLaren confirmed that OMA runs the summer clerkship program.

1:15 Council Office/Office of the Chief Operating Officer/Government Affairs & Policy Development Budget Presentation

Staff presented the budget for these departments.

Councilor Rosenthal asked staff to clarify M&S amounts across the budget, and Amanda Akers, Budget Manager, provided clarifying information.

Councilor Lewis asked about the Risk and Safety assessment scope and impact on savings. Lewis expressed her support for this work.

2:15 Council Budget Discussion

Councilor Lewis appreciated the improved budget process this year and asked Councilors to participate in a conversation about Metro's capacity for constituent services. President Peterson suggested Councilors discuss their values around funding these services during a Council retreat.

Councilor Rosenthal asked for details regarding new FTEs for funding strategies. COO explained the need for a person whose whole job is to track and streamline ballot measure work.

4:45 Chief Operating Officer Communication

No updates.

4:50 Councilor Communication

No updates.

5:00 Adjourn

There being no further business, Council President Peterson adjourned the work session at 1:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Anne Buzzini". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Anne" and last name "Buzzini" clearly distinguishable.

Anne Buzzini, Council Legislative Advisor