

# Meeting Minutes

## Meeting details:

Meeting: Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission Meeting  
Date: April 1, 2026  
Time: 12:30pm - 2:30 pm  
Place: Zoom - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81464909852>

### Commissioners present:

Chair Karis Stoudamire-Phillips, Damien Hall, Deidra-Krys-Rusoff, Dañel Malán-González, Chris Oxley, David Penilton and Dave Parulo

### Commissioners excused:

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### Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Stoudamire-Phillips called the meeting to order at 12:32pm

### Public Communication

- Chair Stoudamire-Phillips opened the meeting to members of the public wanting to testify on agenda and non-agenda items
- One written public comment was submitted and distributed to commissioners

### Commission / Council Liaison Communication

- No updates were provided

### Financial Update

Ashley Sloan, MERC Finance Manager, presented an update on venues financial performance for February 2026.

- February was the strongest revenue month to date in FY26 across all three venues
- Major drivers included:
  - OCC: Snowflake Conference, Oregon International Auto Show
  - Expo: Pacific Northwest Sportsman's Show
  - Portland'5: The Wiz and Sleeping Beauty
- TLT collections were down 1% year over year; forecast remains 2% below FY25 and 5% below budget
- All venues reported expenses tracking at or below budget
- A general fund transfer will boost fund balance for facility condition assessments

Attachment: [Financial Report](#)

### Consent Agenda

- **Consideration of the March 4, 2026, MERC Meeting Minutes**  
This item was approved

Attachment: [Meeting Minutes](#)

## **FY26-27 Proposed Budget Presentation**

### Commissioner Kryz-Rusoff provided opening remarks

- Emphasized that FY27 continues to be financially challenging
- Stated clearly that pre-COVID funding conditions are unlikely to return
- Acknowledged strong leadership and staff performance
- Noted the need to reexamine MERC's funding mechanism as structurally unsustainable
- Indicated that work with Metro leadership on funding reform will continue

### Craig Stoud and Ashley Sloan provided budget context and financial trends

- Transient Lodging Tax and Visitor Facilities Trust Account revenues forecast near FY2017 levels, with recovery not projected until 2033.
- Since FY24, expenses have grown faster than revenues.
- Fund balances continue to decline due to operating losses and capital spending without pooled capital funding
- None of the venues meet reserve targets under the FY27 proposal

## **Oregon Convention Center (OCC) FY27 Budget**

Presented by: Cindy Wallace and Ashley Sloan

- FY27 is focused on stabilization, not growth
- \$57M in deferred capital needs identified across 33 projects
- Hotel demand and ADR are down; international travel reduced
- One major convention postponed from FY27 to FY28 due to safety concerns.
- FY27 includes:
  - 5% increase in operating revenue
  - 2% increase in expenses
  - \$1.2M operating deficit
  - \$2M one-time general fund transfer
- Facility condition assessments are underway but not yet reflected in capital plans

## **Portland's 5 Centers for the Arts (P5) FY27 Budget**

Presented by: Rachel Lembo and Ashley Sloan

- Budget developed amid management transition uncertainty with the City of Portland
- Declines projected in:
  - Broadway weeks (11 planned → 9 confirmed)
  - Attendance (11%)
- FY27 includes:
  - 3% revenue decrease
  - 1% expense decrease
  - \$33,000 operating surplus
- No staff reductions proposed
- Youth Arts Program paused due to lack of funding
- \$7M in five-year capital needs identified, with major focus on a new chiller

## Portland Expo Center FY27 Budget

Presented by: Cindy Wallace and Ashley Sloan

- Expo revenue highly dependent on earned income (91%)
- Two FoodieLand events in FY27 will significantly boost revenue
- Shift from net to gross accounting for electrical vendor increases both revenue and expenses
- FY27 includes:
  - 3% revenue growth
  - 16% expense increase (mostly accounting changes and maintenance)
  - \$74,000 operating surplus
- Fund balance projected to stabilize at \$791,000
- \$22M in deferred capital identified; only highest-priority projects funded
  - Commissioner Malán-González highlighted some of the figures that have been pushed to future years and wanted to ensure we are not passing on costs with the anticipated shifts with P5 and Expo
  - Wallace clarified that the figures indicate we don't necessarily have the funds currently. The capital 5 year plan identifies what is priority, but it doesn't align with the current fund balance
  - Commissioner Parulo noted a possible typo in Expo revenue figures for FY25
  - Sloan confirmed it is likely a typo and will be corrected
  - Commissioner Parulo asked if parking at OCC a revenue opportunity
  - Wallace responded yes, focus is on improving technology, guest experience, and reducing maintenance costs to enhance net revenue
  - Commissioner Parulo asked how negotiable are OCC rental rates for major conventions
  - Wallace shared rack rates are a starting point; convention business typically receives 40–50% discounts plus additional negotiated concessions
  - Commissioner Parulo asked if HVAC efficiency being reviewed given rising utility cost
  - Wallace responded that the facility condition assessments will guide HVAC and energy efficiency improvements going forward
  - Commissioner Kryz-Rusoff reiterated regional economic importance of venues; emphasized long-term funding reform is necessary; thanked staff for maintaining service quality under constrained conditions

**Attachments:** [P5 Proposed Budget Overview](#)  
[OCC Proposed Budget Overview](#)  
[Expo Proposed Budget Overview](#)

## Action Agenda

- **Resolution No. 26-01:** For the purpose of approving the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission ("MERC") Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27 Proposed Budget  
Ashley Sloan, MERC Finance Manager presented

Chair Stoudamire-Phillips called for a vote on Resolution No. 26-01

A motion was made by Commissioner Kryz-Rusoff, seconded by Commissioner Malán-González, that Resolution 26-01 be adopted. The motion passed by the following vote:

Aye: 7 Stoudamire-Phillips, Hall, Kryz-Rusoff, Malán-González, Oxley, Parulo and Penilton

Attachments: [Resolution 26-01](#)  
[Attachment A to Resolution 26-01](#)

- **Resolution No. 26-02:** For the purpose of approving rental rates at Portland's Centers for the Arts (Portland's) for Fiscal Year 2027-2028  
Rachael Lembo, Executive Director, P's Centers for the Arts presented

Chair Stoudamire-Phillips called for a vote on Resolution No. 26-02

A motion was made by Commissioner Kryz-Rusoff, seconded by Commissioner Parulo, that Resolution 26-02 be adopted. The motion passed by the following vote:

Aye: 7 Stoudamire-Phillips, Hall, Kryz-Rusoff, Malán-González, Oxley, Parulo and Penilton

Attachments: [Resolution 26-02](#)  
[Staff Report for Resolution 26-02](#)  
[Attachment A to Resolution 26-02](#)

- **Resolution No. 26-03:** For the purpose of approving rental rates for the Portland Expo Center in fiscal years, 2027-2028, 2028-29, and 2029-30.  
Cindy Wallace, Executive Director, Portland Expo Center presented
  - Commissioner Oxley asked if the 4% annual rate increase at Expo is consistent with past practice, and which markets were used for sports pricing comparisons
  - Wallace responded yes, and outlined Spokane, Medford, Eugene, Hillsboro, Fort Worth, among others were used for sports pricing comparisons
  - Commissioner Parulo asked if Expo has hall rental waivers for those meeting food and beverage minimums like OCC does
  - Wallace responded no, as they do not provide many catered events at the site

Chair Stoudamire-Phillips called for a vote on Resolution No. 26-03 with the stated year correction to reflect fiscal years, 2027-2028, 2028-29, and 2029-30

A motion was made by Commissioner Oxley, seconded by Commissioner Kryz-Rusoff, that Resolution 26-03 be adopted. The motion passed by the following vote:

Aye: 7 Stoudamire-Phillips, Hall, Kryz-Rusoff, Malán-González, Oxley, Parulo and Penilton

Attachments: [Resolution 26-03](#)  
[Staff report for Resolution 26-03](#)  
[Attachment A to Resolution 26-03](#)

- **Resolution No. 26-04:** For the purpose of approving rental rates for the Oregon Convention Center in fiscal years, years 2029- 30, 2030-31, and 2031-32.  
Cindy Wallace, Executive Director, Oregon Convention Center presented

Chair Stoudamire-Phillips called for a vote on Resolution No. 26-04

A motion was made by Commissioner Hall, seconded by Commissioner Malán-González, that Resolution 26-04 be adopted. The motion passed by the following vote:

Aye: 7 Stoudamire-Phillips, Hall, Krysov-Rusoff, Malán-González, Oxley, Parulo and Penilton

Attachments: [Resolution 26-04](#)  
[Staff Report for Resolution 26-04](#)  
[Attachment A to Resolution 26-04](#)

### **Adjourn**

There being no further business, Chair Stoudamire Phillips adjourned the meeting at 1:53 p.m.

- *Minutes submitted by Amy Nelson*