

WASHINGTON METRORAIL SAFETY COMMISSION

Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Location: This meeting was conducted as a publicly streamed video conference. The video recording of the meeting is available at [. WMSC Public Meeting of the Commissioners March 17, 2026](#) Commissioner questions and comments are captured in the video recording.

MINUTES

Order of Events	Items
Attendance	Commissioners present: Chair Christopher Hart, Vice Chair Robert Lauby, Secretary-Treasurer Christopher Conklin, and Commissioners Robert Bobb, Devin Rouse, Donald Drummer, and Alternate Members Kitty Higgins and Brad Belzak.
1.	<p>Call to Order. Chair Hart.</p> <p>Hart called the meeting to order at 12:34 p.m. WMSC General Counsel Silbaugh called the roll, and a quorum was achieved throughout the meeting.</p>
2.	<p>Safety Message. Darrell Braxton, Program Specialist, Operations.</p> <p>Braxton spoke about safety considerations as the seasons transition through the remainder of March. Changing conditions—like increased rain, wind, or lingering cold—can create unexpected hazards. Stay alert for slippery surfaces, shifting ground conditions, and reduced visibility during early morning hours. Review proper lifting techniques, keep walkways clear, and ensure all equipment is inspected before use. Spring is the beginning of tornado season in parts of the United States; refresh your knowledge of emergency procedures and verify that communication devices are fully charged and accessible.</p>
3.	<p>Approval of the minutes of the January 20, 2026 Public Meeting. Sec.-Treas. Conklin.</p> <p>Conklin sought comments on the proposed minutes. Hearing none, he moved for approval of the minutes of the January 20, 2026 Public Meeting. The voting Members approved the minutes of the January 20, 2026 Public Meeting unanimously.</p> <p>Additionally, Conklin reported that the commissioners held a closed meeting on March 10, 2026. The commissioners discussed only a matter related to the internal personnel rules and practices of the agency, in accordance with the requirements of United States Code Title 5, Section 552b, Subsection (c)(2). At the conclusion of the session, the commissioners gave direction for action to staff.</p>

<p>4.</p>	<p>Public Comments. Hart.</p> <p>Hart invited comments from members of the public who joined the webinar audience and who identified themselves as speakers. No members of the public offered comments. Chair Hart also reminded viewers that comments may be provided to the WMSC website, through social media, or by email.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Chair’s Remarks. Hart.</p> <p>Hart began with recognition of one of his fellow commissioners. He shared his appreciation for the service of Vice Chair Bob Lauby. Lauby was appointed in 2020 as an alternate from Virginia, then became a Member in the summer of 2023. He also has served as the Vice Chair since 2023. Lauby generously shared his knowledge and experience with rail equipment, operations, and rules. He asked thoughtful questions and provided practical awareness of the issues or solutions to motivate us all to be better, to be safer. His insights during work sessions and public meetings were invaluable. The Commission will miss his service and expertise. Hart offered the floor to Lauby, and he shared his thanks and appreciation for the WMSC and the impact it is having on Metrorail. Hart also recognized Metrorail’s milestone anniversary. On behalf of the WMSC, he extended his congratulations to Metrorail on its 50th Anniversary. On March 27, 1976, the first railcars entered revenue service, and the Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia community was changed forever. Last, he reminded the commissioners that they will review and vote on the adoption of the Annual Report on WMSC Operations and the Safety of the WMATA Rail System in 2025. He noted that, partly in recognition of Metrorail’s 50th Anniversary milestone, the annual report has a timeline of key events in WMATA’s and the WMSC’s history.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Election of Officers. Hart.</p> <p>WMSC officers are elected for 2-year terms, and the current terms expire on March 27, 2026. Therefore, elections were held for the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary-Treasurer. Hart informed all commissioners that the election of officers would be held at this meeting and invited commissioners who are eligible and interested in the positions to contact him about the roles and to express their interest.</p> <p>Chair – Chair Hart stated that Commissioner Conklin indicated his interest in the position of Chair and inquired if any other Commissioners also wished to be considered for the position. Hearing no other expressions of interest, he moved to the nomination and vote. Commissioner Conklin received a majority vote and was recognized as the Chair for the upcoming two-year term. He thanked his fellow Commissioners for their support.</p> <p>Vice Chair – Chair Hart stated that Commissioner Rouse indicated his interest in the position of Vice Chair and inquired if any other Commissioners also wished to be considered for the position. Hearing no other expressions of interest, he moved to the nomination and vote. Commissioner Rouse received a majority vote and was recognized as the Vice Chair for the upcoming two-year term. He thanked his fellow Commissioners and committed to continue to serve the interests of the WMSC.</p>

	<p>Secretary- Treasurer - Chair Hart stated that Commissioner Drummer indicated his interest in the position of Secretary-Treasurer and inquired if any other Commissioners also wished to be considered for the position. Hearing no other expressions of interest, he moved to the nomination and vote. Commissioner Drummer received a majority vote and was recognized as the Secretary-Treasurer for the upcoming two-year term. He thanked his fellow Commissioners and is pleased to serve in this significant role.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>CEO’s Remarks. David Mayer, Chief Executive Officer.</p> <p>Mayer also extended his thanks and congratulations to the new officers, and he especially recognized Chair Hart for his service as a commissioner and Chair since the inception of the WMSC. He added his words of appreciation to Vice Chair Lauby for his contributions the WMSC and to the rail industry in general. He reported that the WMSC, like all state safety oversight agencies, reports its oversight activities in an annual data upload to the Federal Transit Administration. That reporting was due to the FTA by March 16, and the WMSC transmitted it in a timely manner. Next, in February, Mayer had in-person meetings with WMATA General Manager Randy Clarke and with Mariia Zimmerman, the newly appointed Director of Virginia’s Department of Rail and Public Transportation. His conversation with the WMATA GM included updates on key projects, for instance Metrorail’s intent to move towards Communications-based Train Control when replacing its signaling system. Director Zimmerman has many responsibilities related to transportation in the Commonwealth, so Mayer greatly appreciated her making the time to meet and for the follow-up since our meeting. The WMSC looks forward to continuing to share updates of our work with the DRPT and with all three jurisdictions. Mayer highlighted a workshop that WMATA hosted on Wednesday, March 11, that included the 8000-series railcar project and safety certification teams. Everyone benefited from the collective conversation and review of the project’s design timeline. More meetings will follow, focusing on specific elements of the 8000-series railcar project. Finally, Mayer reported that the WMSC continues its inspection program. This quarter, inspections included roadway worker protection practices in anticipation of Metrorail’s move to its new roadway worker protection program on April 1, rail control center activities, safety features in train car wash facilities, and track and wayside infrastructure. All inspection reports are available on the WMSC’s public website. These inspections provide the WMSC with an up-to-date and direct awareness of Metrorail operations, maintenance, and training practices, as well as the condition of infrastructure. After each inspection, the WMSC sends Metrorail our inspection reports so it can take the necessary actions to resolve any defects found.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Audits. Davis Rajtik, Deputy Chief Operating Officer and Ashley Rhodes, Program Manager, Audits and Corrective Action Plans.</p> <p>On February 26, the WMSC issued an audit report on Metrorail’s Track, Structures and Roadway Worker Protection Program. This audit focused on Metrorail’s Track and Structures programs but also included our annual audit of Metrorail’s Roadway Worker Protection program, in compliance with the Federal Transit Administration requirement under 49 CFR part 671. On our website, you will see this audit as two reports that reflect the distinct topic areas and differing audit</p>

	<p>requirements. The audit’s scope included the assessment of both track and structures inspections, maintenance, engineering practices, procedures, and training. This includes maintenance and records for running rails, fasteners, ballast, ties, floating slabs, grout pads, yard switches, insulators, and the third rail. In addition to the track and tunnels, Metrorail also owns and maintains bridges, culverts, ancillary rooms, and other structures with various capital projects in progress to maintain these assets in a state of good repair. Metrorail’s practices to inspect, and maintain these structures were also part of the audit’s scope. Proper track maintenance and maintaining structures in a state of good repair are essential for safe rail operations. This audit also reviewed Metrorail’s Roadway Worker Protection program, evaluating all elements and its effectiveness at keeping personnel safe while operating on the roadway. The audit identified several positive practices in track and structures: Track and Structures training personnel are using improved curriculum materials; all bridge structural inspections are being completed within the required 2-year period; and Track and Structures department now has adequate personnel addressing rail lubrication, which continues the progress implemented by WMSC CAP C-229. The audit also identified six findings, four related to track and structures and two related to roadway worker protection. Finding #1 states that Metrorail Track and Structures personnel reported performing welding tasks without proper respiratory protection. Finding 2 identified that Metrorail personnel are not checking fire extinguishers for inspection dates prior to entering the roadway. Finding 3 identified that Metrorail is conducting heat rides at speeds that make it difficult to identify potential heat-related defects and does not have a defined speed threshold for conducting these rides. Finding 4 identified that Metrorail is not verifying its track measuring equipment for accuracy and does not follow manufacturer calibration recommendations for track measuring equipment. From the audit of the Roadway Worker Protection program, 1 identified that Metrorail is not following its own written process to ensure and document that its roadway workers in charge have demonstrated the knowledge and skills required to do their job safely. This finding was issued as an urgent hazard to Metrorail on September 4, 2025 but also included within the report as that was the source of the finding. Finding 2 identified that Metrorail personnel operating its Track Geometry Vehicle do not use any of the Metrorail allowable forms of roadway worker protection. Next, we are in the process of completing our Revenue Vehicles and Roadway Maintenance Machines audit. Our next audit will cover Automatic Train Control, Signals and Communication Systems. This audit will also include our annual Roadway Worker Protection audit for 2026 as required by 49 CFR 671.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Corrective Action Plans (CAPs). Davis Rajtik, Deputy Chief Operating Officer and Ashley Rhodes, Program Manager, Audits and Corrective Action Plans.</p> <p>Rhodes’ presentation on corrective action plans focused on successes resulting from the collaborative CAP process. First, she discussed railcar camera and audio recording. Historically, the legacy railcars did not possess camera or audio recording capabilities. This includes the 3000 series that still roam the system. The 7000 series changed that and features limited outward and in-cab video capability but no audio capability. Now, for the first time, because of the WMSC’s CAP C-146, all 182 6000 series railcars have both video and audio capabilities. This includes video and audio in the operator cap, outward video, and video in the passenger areas. This offers tremendous benefits when investigating safety events. Next, in 2021, the WMSC identified that the 7000 series rehabilitation work was progressing without involvement from Metrorail’s safety department. To address this issue, Metrorail created a</p>

	<p>Certified Items List or “CIL” which defined in extremely detailed specificity the items involved in the required rehabilitation work for the 7000 Series fleet. 10% of the 7000-series railcars have undergone this scheduled maintenance program and received Metrorail Safety Department sign-off. Moving to the 2021 Fitness for Duty audit, the WMSC identified an opportunity for Metrorail to provide more robust medical oversight by including contractual requirements that contractors meet WMATA medical and fitness for duty standards. These requirements are things that personnel working in safety critical positions like train operation, track maintenance, power, or signal mechanics, among other roles, must ensure to do or to disclose to ensure they are able to safely perform their duties. For example, limits on the defined number of continuous working hours, the requirement to declare to a supervisor if you are fatigued or otherwise unable to perform your duties safely, and the need to disclose both prescription and over-the-counter medication to ensure nothing could interfere with the person’s ability to safely do their job. However, there are a few corrective actions that WMATA has not engaged in that collaborative corrective action process. Since our January 2026 meeting, we issued four notices of noncompliance to WMATA regarding their inaction on four separate corrective action plans. Each of these was sent to WMATA on February 5, 2026 and may be viewed at WMSC.gov under “official actions.” One of these notices pertains to our 2025 Control Center Audit, and the other three relate to the 2025 Elevators and Escalators Audit. First, The control center uses Teams calls and chats routinely, but when a safety event occurs, the Teams chats are a potential way to learn about the event because it is another record that can supply facts about the event. CCTV, interviews, and other types of evidence also perform this function, but Teams chats are a new opportunity for Metrorail to fully understand what happened during an event and why. Conversations at every level of Metrorail have been unsuccessful at convincing Metrorail to provide a corrective action plan to address this finding. This is unfortunate, and therefore the WMSC was compelled to issue a notice of noncompliance. The other three notices of non-compliance all relate to findings from our recent Elevator/Escalator Audit. For two of these, Metrorail refused to provide CAPs to address due to their claim that these issues pertain to WMATA’s ongoing legal challenge of the WMSC’s authority to oversee occupational safety related issues. These are findings related to personnel entering elevator pits with standing water and active electrical currents, and a lack of adequate fall protection requirements training. The final notice of non-compliance is for a finding that WMATA is not properly displaying elevator/escalator certificate documentation onsite as required. Regular safety inspections of elevators and escalators are required by the laws of the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. Once completed, and if the elevator or escalator passes the inspection, the certificate is displayed to provide assurance to the public that the elevator or escalator is safe to use as evidenced by the posting of a current certificate. The District of Columbia Building Code and Virginia Maintenance Code allow for certificates to either be posted near the equipment or available for review in an office on the premises. Maryland’s Code for Public Safety requires that the certificate be posted in or on the elevator unit. WMATA is refusing to address this finding as they claim this should be overseen by the local jurisdictions whose requirements are at issue. Not creating a corrective action plan in response to a WMSC issued finding is in direct violation of the WMSC program standard, and leaves these serious safety concerns unaddressed, putting both workers and the traveling public at risk of these identified issues impacting the safety of their interaction with the WMATA system.</p>
10.	<p>Safety Certification Status Report. Paul Smith, Director, System Engineering.</p>

Smith updated on a loss of shunt event, Automatic Train Operations, and the design of the 8000-series railcars. During a recent potential loss of shunt event, the WMSC identified an operational gap, which led Metrorail to detect and mitigate a safety hazard. A loss of shunt is an indication that a train may not be properly detected by the track circuit system, meaning a train could be on the roadway but the rail traffic control is not aware of its location. This is a critical safety function. When such Loss of shunt alarms activate in the rail control center, Metrorail follows steps to assess whether it is in fact a verifiable loss of shunt condition. If it is confirmed, then Metrorail is required to report a verified Loss of Shunt to the WMSC. On February 20, 2026, the WMSC was notified of a red signal overrun near West Falls Church Station. Metrorail followed the necessary steps to notify us of this incident, and our Investigations team started their investigative activities. During the initial investigation, our investigations team became aware of a possible loss of shunt event that Metrorail was also addressing. The loss of shunt alarm was denoting an area between Vienna Metrorail Station and Dunn Loring Metrorail Station. To answer the WMSC's inquiries, Metrorail communications and signals team investigated. The investigation determined that there was no actual loss of shunt and that train detection remained intact throughout the event. Instead, the alarms were traced to a temporary configuration installed on a Remote Terminal Unit. This work was done the previous night and was in preparation for work expected to be completed later. The investigation confirmed that signaling system protection remained operational, Metrorail's review identified a procedural gap related to verifying configuration changes with the Metrorail Control Center before personnel leave the train control room in the field. WMATA is implementing procedural controls requiring personnel who perform configuration changes to remain on site into revenue service and formally verify system status with the Metrorail Control Center before leaving. Moving to Automatic Train Operations, the WMSC continues to work closely overseeing Metrorail's work. When the WMSC concurred that Metrorail may use Automatic Train Operation systemwide in 2025, both Metrorail and the WMSC recognized that ongoing monitoring would be necessary to evaluate how the system performs in revenue operations. Train stopping accuracy and station-overrun trends have been areas of attention. Since systemwide ATO activation, both Metrorail and the WMSC have observed an increase in station overruns compared to historical experience, and the issue has remained an active technical engagement area involving WMATA engineering, operations, and vehicle personnel and WMSC staff. Metrorail has been evaluating each station overrun by reviewing vehicle data, wayside information, and operational conditions. Through this work, several contributing factors have been identified, including railcar braking characteristics, software performance, track conditions, and operational factors. To address these issues, Metrorail has implemented a structured mitigation strategy focusing on four areas: analysis of individual events, operational and training improvements, temporary mitigation measures and engineering verification, and longer-term engineering and system modifications. These efforts remain ongoing, and both Metrorail and the WMSC continue evaluating whether the mitigations are producing measurable improvement. The WMSC continues to view station overruns as a significant safety concern requiring sustained oversight. Metrorail is learning that correcting station overruns is more complex than a single operational action or software update, particularly for the 7000-series railcars. Because the 7000-series fleet did not accumulate extensive ATO operating experience prior to systemwide rollout, both Metrorail and the WMSC had to learn more about the 7000 series fleet's behavior in ATO through real-world operation, trend analysis, and repeated technical review. Last, for the 8000-series railcar design, the focus of this oversight is not on evaluating individual design choices, but on validating whether WMATA's safety certification process is being carried out as required by its own requirements to identify safety hazards early and iteratively as a project moves from preliminary engineering, to

	<p>final design to construction, to testing to system integration. In addition to this ongoing oversight work, WMSC staff participated in a technical workshop with WMATA on March 11 focused on elements of the 8000-series safety certification effort. The purpose of the workshop was to provide WMSC staff with a detailed contemporaneous walkthrough of WMATA’s verification approach. The WMSC provided a perspective into how we conduct our oversight of safety certification. The WMSC Staff emphasized the need for timely access to supporting materials necessary to complete this review efficiently. Documentation tied to safety certification oversight must be provided promptly, so WMSC staff can evaluate whether decisions are being made by the appropriate technical personnel and in accordance with WMATA’s established safety certification framework. The WMSC will continue pressing for complete traceability and the level of technical support required to complete this oversight work.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Safety Event Investigations. Adam Quigley, Manager, Safety Investigations and Natalie Quiroz, Investigations Analyst.</p> <p>The reports referenced below may be found at the following link: https://wmsc.gov/oversight/reports/.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. W-0414 Improper Rail Vehicle Movement at Shady Grove Yard – March 26, 2025 2. W-0415 Improper Rail Vehicle Movement at NoMa-Gallaudet Station – March 28, 2025 3. W-0416 Collision at Shady Grove Station – March 26, 2025 4. W-0417 Collision at West Hyattsville Station-March 12, 2025 5. W-0418 Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons at Potomac Avenue Station-March 20, 2025 <p>Commissioners moved to adopt the five reports. The motion passed unanimously.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Resolutions and Other Business. Hart and David Mayer, Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>Commissioners reviewed the draft Annual Report on WMSC Operations and the Safety of WMATA Rail System in 2025. We continued our oversight work in 2025 to help Metrorail achieve substantial safety improvements. The WMSC continues to oversee WMATA’s automation efforts, by routinely providing our safety concerns and feedback, and attending testing, demonstrations, workshops, and meetings. The WMSC issued four audit reports and conducted work on three additional safety audits in 2025, issued or to be issued in 2026. These audits identify positive practices and opportunities for safety improvement that the WMSC requires Metrorail to address to ensure that Metrorail is following its safety management system commitments specified in its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan.</p> <p>The WMSC approved 44 corrective action plans for closure in 2025. These corrective action plans were designed to address safety concerns identified during WMSC oversight activities. Each Metrorail actionable item completed during implementation of a CAP improves the system’s safety. The WMSC continues to monitor the effectiveness of these safety mitigations even after a CAP is closed. Finally, the report covers our approval of Metrorail’s new Roadway Worker Protection program following our oversight of Metrorail’s nearly year-long development activity. This annual report is required by the WMSC Compact, and upon adoption, will be transmitted by staff as required by the Compact.</p>

	Rouse moved for the approval of the Annual Report on WMSC Operations and the Safety of the WMATA Rail System in 2025. The motion passed unanimously.
13.	Adjournment. Hart adjourned the public meeting at 2:28 p.m.