

**WASHINGTON METRORAIL SAFETY COMMISSION**

**Date:** Tuesday, May 12, 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 May 12, 2026](#). Commissioner questions and comments are captured in the video recording.

**MINUTES**

<b>Order of Events</b>	<b>Items</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	Commissioners present: Chair Chris Conklin, Vice Chair Devin Rouse, Secretary-Treasurer Don Drummer, and Alternate Members Kitty Higgins and Brad Belzak. Commissioner Belzak was a voting Member.
1.	<b>Call to Order.</b> Chair Conklin.  Conklin called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. WMSC General Counsel Silbaugh called the roll, and a quorum was achieved throughout the meeting.
2.	<b>Safety Message.</b> Darrell Braxton, Program Specialist, Operations.  Braxton spoke about May’s warmth spurring greater activity at work and home. Stay alert for increased pedestrian traffic, cyclists, and road construction. Inspect tools, ladders, and equipment before use, especially after winter storage. Keep work areas clean to prevent slips, trips, and falls. Follow all procedures, wear required personal protective equipment, commonly known as PPE, and speak about hazards before starting a task. Plan tasks carefully, take regular breaks to avoid fatigue, and look out for coworkers. Small actions like clear communication and situational awareness can prevent serious incidents and ensure safety each day.
3.	<b>Approval of the Minutes of the April 14, 2026 Public Meeting.</b> Sec.-Treas. Drummer.  Drummer sought comments on the proposed minutes. Hearing none, he moved for approval of the minutes of the April 14, 2026 Public Meeting. The voting Members approved the minutes of the April 14, 2026 Public Meeting unanimously.  Drummer also reported on a closed session held on April 16, 2026. The Commissioners confirmed that during that session, the Commissioners discussed only issues 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 sessions, the Commissioners directed

	<p>the staff to initiate a contract with Krauthamer &amp; Associates LLC to assist with an executive search for the WMSC’s next Chief Executive Officer.</p>
4.	<p><b>Resolutions and Other Actions.</b> Sec.-Treas. Drummer and Kyle Ange, Chief Financial Officer.</p> <p>Sec.-Treas. Drummer and Chief Financial Officer Ange explained the Finance and Operations Committee’s actions in reviewing the final proposed FY 2027 Budget and Work Program, including the jurisdictional input and unanimous agreement on their contributions. The Committee recommended adoption of the Budget and Work Program. CFO Ange explained the budget total and largest expenses, and that the formulation process complied with the Master Funding Agreement.</p> <p>Commissioners moved to approve Resolution R-2026-04, adopting the FY 2027 Budget and Work Program. The motion passed unanimously.</p>
5.	<p><b>Public Comments.</b> Chair Conklin.</p> <p>Conklin invited comments from members of the public who joined the online seminar audience and who identified themselves as speakers. Two members of the public offered comments. Mr. Dave Statter shared his thanks to departing CEO David Mayer for building an impressive group at the WMSC and wished Dr. Mayer well in his future endeavors, and Mr. Rene T. spoke on two concerns at Metrorail stations: ensuring that the delayed release of exit gates near the station manager kiosks complies with District of Columbia fire rules and water intrusion at various stations is reviewed and addressed. Chair Conklin also reminded viewers that comments may be provided to the WMSC website, through social media, or by email.</p>
6.	<p><b>Chair’s Remarks.</b> Chair Conklin.</p> <p>Conklin began with an introduction to a new element of the public meetings called the Data Minute. These data snapshots will be an opportunity to share perspectives of the Metrorail system through data the WMSC routinely uses. He also shared an update on the commissioners, reporting that Brad Belzak received the District of Columbia Council’s approval to serve as a Member Commissioner. He also expressed his thanks to the Finance and Operations Committee for its review of the final Fiscal Year 2027 Budget and Work Program. The budget, effective July 1, demonstrates Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia’s support for the WMSC’s safety oversight work.</p>
7.	<p><b>CEO’s Remarks.</b> David Mayer, Chief Executive Officer.</p> <p>Mayer focused his remarks on the accident that occurred on April 22, 2026 at Metro Center Station. At approximately 12:15 A.M. a flat car being pushed by a Prime Mover collided with the rear of a 7000-series train, with passengers on board, which was stopped on the platform at the Metro Center Station. Within approximately 15 minutes of this accident, Metrorail called the</p>

	<p>WMSC’s 24-hour notifications line to notify us of the accident. Shortly thereafter, WMSC staff arrived at the accident scene and began conducting initial assessments and coordinating with the responding Metrorail personnel. As required, the National Transportation Safety Board also was notified, and it determined that it would launch an investigation. Later that day, the WMSC formally became a party to the NTSB investigation. The Federal Transit Administration, Union 689, and WMATA also are parties to the NTSB investigation. WMSC staff from track, rail vehicles, operating rules, signal and communications, and rail operations control have participated in NTSB investigative activities, including interviews with personnel, as well as documentation of rail equipment involved in the accident. The WMSC also provided technical assistance to the NTSB where needed. Soon the NTSB will publicly release a preliminary report, which provides the basic facts of the accident without an analysis of why it happened. Eventually, the NTSB will release a factual report and subsequent final report. The WMSC is also ready to take oversight action, if determined that such actions are necessary to prevent recurrence of the accident or to mitigate a safety risk, as more is learned during the investigation.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p><b>Data Minute.</b> Davis Rajtik, Deputy Chief Operating Officer.</p> <p>For the inaugural Data Minute, Mr. Rajtik focused on the safety event notifications for April 2026 as compared to the past 365 days. Safety event investigation reports are presented at WMSC public meetings, but those investigations begin with a triggering event and notification. The WMSC has 45 triggering events, defined by Federal Transit Administration regulation and the WMSC oversight obligations, and notification must occur within two hours. Specific preliminary information is shared at the time of notification: time, location, event type, vehicle information and possibly a sentence or two describing the event. Between April 30, 2025 and March 31, 2026, the WMSC received an average of 304 safety event notifications per month. In April 2026, the WMSC received 337 notifications. These April 2026 notifications can be divided into three categories: greater than 10 notifications, 1-6 notifications, and less than 1 notification. Station overruns are the highest and somewhat related are speed restrictions. These two events are related because both spiked after returning to automatic train operation systemwide. Fifteen categories of notifications are in the 1-6 category and about 21 categories had no notifications during April 2026. The commissioners appreciated the perspective the Date Minute provides.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p><b>Safety Event Investigations.</b> Adam Quigley, Manager, Safety Investigations and Natalie Quiroz, Investigations Analyst.</p> <p><b>The reports referenced below may be found at the following link:</b>  <a href="https://wmsc.gov/oversight/reports/">https://wmsc.gov/oversight/reports/</a>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. W-0424 Evacuation for life safety reasons at Cleveland Park Station – April 30, 2025</li> <li>2. W-0425 Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons at Foggy Bottom Station – July 31, 2025</li> <li>3. W-0426 Improper Roadway Worker Protection at Anacostia Station – August 28, 2025</li> <li>4. W-0427 Collision at Columbia Heights Station-August 10, 2025</li> </ol> <p>Commissioners moved to adopt the four reports. The motion passed unanimously.</p>

<p>10.</p>	<p><b>Audits.</b> Davis Rajtik, Deputy Chief Operating Officer and Ashley Rhodes, Program Manager, Audits and Corrective Action Plans.</p> <p>Rhodes reported on the status of the current audits in the third triennial audit cycle. Each audit examines Metrorail’s compliance with its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan and associated requirements. For the audit of Revenue Vehicles and Roadway Maintenance Machines, the WMSC presented preliminary findings and recommendations to Metrorail on April 7th at the exit conference at Greenbelt Yard. The WMSC requested initial feedback, questions or additional information be provided Friday, April 17, and Metrorail submitted additional documentation by that deadline. The documentation is being reviewed as we finalize the draft report. The WMSC anticipates providing the draft report to Metrorail in May to begin its 30-day review period. The next audit is Automatic Train Control, Signals, and Communication Systems. This audit will also include our annual Roadway Worker Protection audit for 2026. The annual RWP audit is required by the Federal Transit Administration as part of 49 Code of Federal Regulations part 671. To meet this requirement efficiently and effectively, we pair this audit with one of our triennial functional area audits each year. The notification and initial requests were sent to Metrorail on April 10 and were due May 11. Metrorail sent initial documents and the WMSC is in the process of sorting through the information provided thus far. In the next few weeks, we will arrange interviews and observations for this audit which will be conducted in June and July. These interviews will include personnel from multiple departments and different levels of the organization to gain a complete view of these functional areas ,as well as conducting on-site observations.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p><b>Corrective Action Plans (CAPs).</b> Ashley Rhodes, Program Manager, Audits and Corrective Action Plans and Bruce Walker, .Operations Specialist</p> <p>Rhodes focused on two specific milestones that are part of two ongoing corrective action plans. These milestones, or interim actions, contribute to addressing the hazard identified in the CAP. First, roadway worker protection training is the way that workers are trained on hazards that are specific to the roadway environment, those being train movement and third rail high voltage electricity. But those two primary hazards are just the core. There is an entire safety system created to mitigate those hazards and keep personnel and riders safe. There are numerous rules and layers of nuance that must be fully conveyed to roadway workers during this training, so this safety system serves as an effective hazard mitigation. However, training course completeness and consistency were both lacking at the time of the 2024 RWP audit. Specifically, during the 2024 Roadway Worker Protection Audit, we observed training personnel bypassing some training materials and slides, as well as exercises left incomplete in the defined required student material. Training provided to attendees was not consistent across classes of the same type and instructors were observed not using the defined, established instructor’s guide. The WMSC observed similar practices in a contractor RWP training class as well as the issues observed in RWP classes for internal Metrorail personnel. To address this, Metrorail first updated its RWP Instructor Guide and associated training materials. Training instructors were trained on these updates and instructed to specifically use the Instructor guides in the classes, an expectation that was not made express before. From there, the Training department updated its Instructor Feedback Form and conducted quarterly audits of training sessions to monitor compliance of its instructors</p>

	<p>using this feedback form. Instructors are provided with feedback to ensure they are meeting defined requirements, a process which was put into place by this CAP effort and did not exist prior to it. The WMSC attended RWP classes since the institution of these new procedures and has seen these benefits in action, verifying that the issues this CAP aimed to address have indeed been successfully resolved. Next, Rhodes addressed an interim action related to reporting smoke and fire incidents within required time frames. Fire and smoke events can result in severe outcomes, as demonstrated by the January 12, 2015 electrical arcing and smoke accident near L’Enfant Plaza Station in which 91 people were injured and one person died. That event resulted in an NTSB investigation that found that the control center did not call D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services “until 17 minutes and 40 seconds after the first smoke detector activation.” In our 2025 Audit of Emergency Management, a sampling of fire and smoke safety events found similar instances of delays in calls to jurisdictional emergency services. Six of 27 sampled events evidenced delays of 10 to 19 minutes, and another 12 events evidenced delays of 4 to 9 minutes before emergency response requests were made to jurisdictional first responders. These delays conflict with the requirements of the 2015 Metrorail Transit – Fire/Rescue Emergency Procedures Policy Agreement and would also conflict with the updated agreement: Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) Fire Chiefs Committee Emergency Policy Agreement (Version 5, November 21, 2024). Delays such as these risk another event like the 2015 L’Enfant Plaza Station accident. In April of this year, the WMSC received an analysis of 34 sampled events of smoke and fire reporting between December 2025 and January 2026 showing 94% compliance with Metrorail’s self-defined requirement to report these instances within 5 minutes. This is a significant improvement from the issues noted in the 2025 Audit which led to the creation of this CAP.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p><b>Safety Certification Status Report.</b> Paul Smith, Director, System Engineering.</p> <p>Smith provided an overview of select safety certification oversight opportunities. Concerning automatic train operations, Metrorail continues to operate in automatic train operations systemwide, and the WMSC continues to monitor ATO safety performance in revenue service as part of our ongoing oversight responsibilities. Station overruns continue to be elevated at certain stations, and the WMSC remains vigilant in its oversight. Metrorail has undertaken a range of operational, training, and infrastructure mitigation measures to address overruns, and these efforts are ongoing. A significant portion of the remaining overrun challenge is tied to fleet-level factors associated with the 7000-series railcars. Addressing these challenges requires a solution that Metrorail continues to pursue in coordination with its original equipment manufacturer, Hitachi. This effort is a long-term, and Metrorail said that a complete resolution will take time. As one step in that process, Metrorail is expanding the deployment of a version 6.2 software update from 32 to 64 railcars for further evaluation. The WMSC will continue to monitor the results of that deployment and Metrorail’s broader progress on the overrun issue. Next, concerning automate wayside Inspection system (AWIS), the WMSC selected AWIS for in-depth review in August 2022 based on a number of safety considerations surrounding the project. Metrorail initiated this project following the 7000-series rail car derailment and following the information that the NTSB investigation at the time presented about wheels moving on axles on the Metrorail 7000-series fleet. Metrorail planned to use the Automated Wayside Inspection System as a means of real time automated back-to-back measurements of the 7000-series rail cars through measurement stations that were to be installed at strategic locations throughout the</p>

	<p>Metrorail rail right of way. In early May, Metrorail indicated that it no longer intends to use AWIS for back-to-back wheel measurements. Metrorail has indicated it will continue to rely on the improved manual back-to-back process. Following the 7000-series train derailment, in 2021, WMSC issued an order requiring Metrorail to return the entire 7000-series rail car fleet to passenger service only once mitigations such as accurate quality controlled processes were in place to perform safety critical actions such as back to back measurement of wheels on the 7000-series rail cars. These improved processes included training car maintenance personnel to perform these measurements and use of a calibrated digital gauge to conduct back-to-back wheel measurements. Finally, Smith discussed the status of the design for the 8000-series railcars. The WMSC's focus is whether the certification process is working, not only whether the right steps are being followed, but whether safety risks are being accurately identified and addressed throughout the design and construction process. As noted in prior meetings, the WMSC sought documentation to allow us to trace selected hazards from identification through verification, confirm how mitigation decisions are reflected in the design, and evaluate whether subject matter expert comments have been appropriately resolved. While the WMSC received some of those documents, Metrorail has indicated that it will provide finalized documents from the preliminary design phase after the Metrorail project team has completed its review. When we receive the remaining documents, the WMSC will respond with its assessment whether the necessary safety considerations have been incorporated and has informed Metrorail that if the WMSC finds outstanding safety considerations, Metrorail may not assert that the time has passed for changes to be made to the design. Metrorail has scheduled an in-person workshop for May 21 and stated that it intends to walk the WMSC through its safety certification documentation checklists and evidence verification.</p>
13.	<p><b>Adjournment.</b> Conklin sought a motion and second to adjourn the public meeting. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.</p>