

WASHINGTON METRORAIL SAFETY COMMISSION

Date: Tuesday, June 9, 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 June 9, 2026](#). Commissioner questions and comments are captured in the video recording.

MINUTES

Order of Events	Items
Attendance	Commissioners present: Chair Chris Conklin, Vice Chair Devin Rouse, Secretary-Treasurer Don Drummer, Commissioners Robert Bobb and Brad Belzak, and Alternate Commissioner Kitty Higgins.
1.	Call to Order. 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.	Safety Message. Darrell Braxton, Program Specialist, Operations. Braxton highlighted that June is National Safety Month, providing a reminder to practice situational awareness at work and at home, follow established procedures, and always use proper protective equipment. Stay hydrated as temperatures rise, take breaks to prevent fatigue, and never rush tasks that require attention. Inspect tools and vehicles before use, report hazards immediately, and encourage open communication about safety concerns.
3.	Swearing-in of Brad Belzak. Chair Conklin. The DC Council approved Brad Belzak's appointment as a Member of the Commission in early May. In accordance with the WMSC Compact, Chair Conklin swore in Mr. Belzak using the oath included in the Compact.
4.	Approval of the Minutes of the May 12, 2026 Public Meeting. Sec.-Treas. Drummer. Drummer sought comments on the proposed minutes. Hearing none, he moved for approval of the minutes of the May 12, 2026 Public Meeting. The voting Members approved the minutes of the May 12, 2026 Public Meeting unanimously.

5.	Resolutions and Other Actions. Sec.-Treas. Drummer and Kyle Ange, Chief Financial Officer. Chief Financial Officer Ange introduced a procurement-related resolution. Under the WMSC procurement processes, the Commissioners must authorize the Acting CEO to award procurements when the procurement is expected to exceed \$50,000 in value. A procurement is in development for business operations insurance, including general liability coverage, which is expected to exceed the authorization threshold. Commissioners moved to approve Resolution R-2026-05, authorizing the Acting CEO to award a procurement for business operations insurance. The motion passed unanimously.
6.	Public Comments. Chair Conklin. Conklin invited comments from members of the public who joined the online seminar audience and who identified themselves as speakers. No members of the public chose to speak today. Chair Conklin also reminded viewers that comments may be provided to the WMSC website, through social media, or by email.
7.	Chair's Remarks. Chair Conklin. Conklin reviewed three main topics: collaboration with WMATA Board, summer activities in the Washington, DC area, and updates on recent safety event investigations. Concerning collaboration, several WMSC Commissioners joined the WMATA Board Chair and Board Members for lunch on June 10. These lunches are an opportunity for the Boards to share current matters of interest, and the Chair expresses the WMSC continual goal of providing value through its oversight work. Next, the Chair reminded that activities increase in summer; particularly this summer with 250th Anniversary celebrations. Metrorail is integral to many DC-area activities, and he encouraged using Metrorail especially for the popular events. Last, Conklin recognized the workers who were injured in an early June safety event and recognized their need for recovery. He said the WMSC will investigate the event to understand why it happened with the goal of ensuring it doesn't happen again.
8.	Acting CEO's Remarks. Sharmila Samarasinghe, Acting Chief Executive Officer. Samarasinghe addressed five topics: emergency management oversight, WMSC working group addressing the collection of data, WMSC recognition committee, upcoming TSI training, and an update on the April 22 safety event at Metro Center Station. Specific to emergency management, Samarasinghe reported that WMSC staff attended Metrorail's mock derailment and casualty exercise at West Falls Church yard. This exercise was the first at a rail yard, and included multiple teams from county fire, rescue and ambulance squads. She also highlighted two WMSC internal working groups, one that is focused on reviewing data sources relevant to their functional areas in support of inspections, and second a team that reviews nominations for peer recognition awards

	based on criteria developed by WMSC staff. Next, she forecasts the TSI-led security training that the WMSC is hosting at the end of June. Students include safety and security professionals from operators, contractors, the NTSB and WMATA. Last, Samarasinghe provided a factual update on the investigation into the April 22 safety event at Metro Center Station. The NTSB is leading the investigation, and it released its preliminary report at the end of May, which also is a factual description of the accident.
9.	Data Minute. Davis Rajtik, Deputy Chief Operating Officer. Rajtik focused on the safety event notifications for May 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 May 2025 and May 2026, the WMSC received an average of 321 safety event notifications per month. In May 2026, the WMSC received 253 notifications. The May notifications were less than April 2026 notifications in several events. Station overruns remain the highest, but were down compared to April, and customer injuries also were down. Smith, Director, System Engineering, provided an update on the software that WMATA is updating on the 7000-series railcars to address the station overruns. Although helping, the Commissioners commented that it does not appear to be a panacea for all overruns.
10.	Safety Event Investigations. Adam Quigley, Manager, Safety Investigations. The reports referenced below may be found at the following link: https://wmsc.gov/oversight/reports/. 1. W-0428 Collision at NoMa-Gallaudet Univ. Station – August 20, 2025 2. W-0429 Red Signal Overrun at Dulles Rail Yard – September 7, 2025 3. W-0430 Red Signal Overrun at Brentwood Rail Yard – September 15, 2025 Commissioners moved to adopt the three reports. The motion passed unanimously.
11.	Audits. Davis Rajtik, Deputy Chief Operating Officer and John O'Donnell, Program Specialist, Audits and Corrective Action Plans. O'Donnell 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, and Metrorail submitted additional documentation on April 17. Next, the WMSC requested additional records on May 22, which Metrorail will provide by June 10.

	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. On June 8, the WMSC held its entrance conference for this audit, and the WMSC will conduct interviews and observations for this audit for much of the summer.
12.	Corrective Action Plans (CAPs). Davis Rajtik, Deputy Chief Operating Officer and John O'Donnell, Program Specialist, Audits and Corrective Action Plans. O'Donnell focused on specific milestones that are part of corrective action plans that resulted in safety wins. First were updates to digital control boards in rail yards to better manage hazards to workers. At Alexandria Yard, WMATA implemented new digital control boards that did not permit a visual indication of worker locations on the control screen. The only documentation of worker movement and positioning on the yard tracks were handwritten notes in a binder, off screen; there were no visual indications or other redundant protections in place against routing a train into an area with workers. The previous control board, still in use in other yards, allowed redundant protections by manually affixing clips to the board. This prevented the interlocking operator from adjusting a switch or signal because it would first require the interlocking operator remove the clip and that physical action step was necessary to remove the protection. Interlocking operators raised this issue internally at WMATA in March 2021 shortly after the yard reopened with the new digital board, but a fix did not progress until the WMSC identified the issue in October 2021 and published it in the 2022 Rail Operations Audit. Seven yards and terminal locations have the digital control boards. All now have the redundant protection features available. That includes Alexandria Yard. Next, O'Donnell addressed the lack of tracking and mitigating RMM Maintenance-related hazards. At the time of the second Roadway Maintenance Machines Audit, in 2023, Metrorail did not maintain hazard logs or any other central tracking mechanism for RMM hazard management. If a work order was opened and that happened to include a hazard, that is the only tracking that was taking place. But after that work order was closed, there was no trending or labeling of that data for subsequent monitoring under Metrorail's own hazard tracking and management requirements. As a result of this WMSC finding, Metro now has a Hazard Report Dashboard, which is a unique tool providing a central tracking mechanism of hazards. The dashboard includes entries for individually tracked hazards including the Department owning the hazard, the individual hazard owner, a number for electronic tracking of the hazard, the hazard title, its status, its current and expected future risk rating following mitigation, the submission date for the hazard, and mitigations planned or in place for the hazard including information on the status of and progress made on the implementation of these mitigations. Last, O'Donnell Metrorail's lack of identification and resolution of deficiencies with Fire Life Safety Assets and Equipment. First, Metrorail defined life safety assets as "equipment designed to protect from dangers of fire or smoke." It also detailed who has responsibilities, inspections requirements, and reinspection timelines. Metrorail's next steps are to deploy these new or revised emergency egress maintenance plans and correct the identified deficiencies.

13.	Safety Certification Status Report. Paul Smith, Director, System Engineering. Smith reminded that the WMSC continues its safety oversight work on Automatic Train Operations and Automated Wayside Inspection Systems. For this meeting, he focused on the safety certification program for the 8000-series railcars. On May 21st, WMSC staff attended another workshop held by WMATA's 8000-series project and safety certification teams. Members of the 8000 series rail car project conducted a real time demonstration using various project documents showing how they verify that a given hazard is addressed through a system or component design on the 8000-series rail cars. The workshop provided an opportunity to see WMATA's safety certification documentation checklists and evidence verification process. The workshop also provided an opportunity to discuss the timing of Metrorail sharing design documents with WMSC. To provide context on the project milestones involved: Preliminary Design Review, or PDR, is an early-stage checkpoint where design concepts are evaluated and adjustments can be more readily incorporated. Final Design Review, or FDR, represents the fully completed design, at which point changes become more complex and costly to implement, and after which construction begins. WMATA has indicated that it will share the full design documents once the Final Design Review phase is near completion. This will be done on a subsystem-by-subsystem basis. During the May 21st meeting, WMSC staff advised WMATA that receiving design documents only after FDR means the WMSC will be conducting its review against a fully mature design. This is consequential: if the WMSC identifies a safety concern at that stage, the design, and potentially construction activities, will already be advanced, making any required changes more difficult and costly to implement. WMATA personnel present at the meeting acknowledged and understood this concern. The WMSC will continue to engage with WMATA on this matter to ensure that any safety issues identified during our review can be effectively addressed.
14.	Adjournment. Conklin sought a motion and second to adjourn the public meeting. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 2:11 p.m.