



**SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT (METRO)  
FINANCE & HR STANDING COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES\*  
MARCH 17, 2026 – 8:00 AM**

A regular meeting of the Finance & HR Standing Committee of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) was convened on Tuesday, March 17, 2026.

The Committee Meeting Agenda Packet can be found online at [www.scmetro.org](http://www.scmetro.org).

\*Minutes are “summary” minutes, not verbatim minutes. Audio recordings of Board meeting open sessions are available to the public upon request.

This document was created with accessibility in mind. With the exception of certain third party and other attachments, it passes the Adobe Acrobat XI Accessibility Full Check. If you have any questions about the accessibility of this document, please email your inquiry to [accessibility@scmttd.com](mailto:accessibility@scmttd.com)

**1 CALLED TO ORDER** by Director Orbach at 8:12 AM.

**2 SAFETY DEBRIEF**

Gregory Strecker, Safety, Security & Risk Management Director, provided a debriefing on safety, emphasizing METRO’s response to a fire, earthquake and/or medical emergency, and evacuation routes.

**3 ROLL CALL:**

The following Directors were **present**, representing a quorum:

**Director Manu Koenig** *AR 8:13 AM*

**Director Fabian Leonor**

**Director Donna Lind**

**Director Melinda Orbach** *AR 8:11 AM*

**County of Santa Cruz**

**County of Santa Cruz**

**City of Scotts Valley**

**City of Capitola**

Corey Aldridge

Julie Sherman

METRO CEO/General Manager

METRO General Counsel

**4 ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE FINANCE & HR STANDING COMMITTEE**

Hearing none, Director Koenig moved to the next agenda item.

**5 ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS FROM AGENDA/ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT EXISTING AGENDA ITEMS**

Having none, Director Koenig moved to the next agenda item.

**6 THE FINANCIAL UPDATE JANUARY 2026 RESULTS**

Chuck Farmer, CFO, spoke to the presentation. He reviewed the operating surplus/(deficit) - actual vs. budget figures, monthly and year-to-date operating revenues and expenses, and the YTD capital budget spends.

There were no public comments.

Hearing nothing further, Director Koenig moved to the next agenda item.

**7 REVIEW AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE:**  
**A. FY27 & FY28 PRELIMINARY OPERATING AND FY27 PRELIMINARY CAPITAL BUDGET/PORTFOLIO PRESENTATION**  
**B. FY27 & FY28 PRELIMINARY OPERATING BUDGET DETAIL**  
**C. FY27 PRELIMINARY CAPITAL BUDGET/PORTFOLIO DETAIL FOR REVIEW AND TDA/STA CLAIMS PURPOSES; AND**  
**D. FY27 & FY28 OPERATING BUDGET – FUNDED PERSONNEL**

Chuck Farmer, CFO, spoke to the presentation. He provided a preliminary FY27-FY28 budget summary and associated assumptions, reviewed the changes in the operating/non-operating revenues and expenses, and the full-time equivalents. He also reviewed the FY27 preliminary operating and capital budget/portfolio and their funding sources. He emphasized that this preliminary data is required by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) by April 1, 2026 for submittal of TDA/STA claims.

Discussion followed on:

- Fares held flat
- Importance of youth ride free program
- Contract negotiations and labor costs
- Fueling hydrogen buses when permanent fueler comes online
- Status update on Beach Street property and the Watsonville Transit Center
- LCTOP (Low Carbon Transit Operations Program) state funding
- Sustainability without 2026 sales tax measure passing
- Medical costs

Staff addressed all concerns.

There were no public comments.

*Director Lind left the meeting at 8:45 AM.*

Hearing nothing further, Director Koenig called for a voice vote.

**MOTION: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF SANTA CRUZ METRO'S FY27 & FY28 PRELIMINARY OPERATING AND FY27 PRELIMINARY CAPITAL BUDGET/PORTFOLIO TO THE FULL BOARD AS PRESENTED AND AMENDED TO DIRECT STAFF TO BRING MULTIPLE OPTIONS FOR REDUCING OPERATION COSTS IN SERVICE AND STAFFING TO THE MAY 8, 2026 FINANCE & HR STANDING COMMITTEE**

**MOTION: DIRECTOR KOENIG**

**SECOND: DIRECTOR ORBACH**

**MOTION PASSED WITH 3 AYES (Directors Koenig, Leonor, and Orbach). Director Lind was absent.**

**8 ADJOURNMENT**

Director Koenig adjourned the meeting at 8:52 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bauer  
Sr. Executive Assistant