

MINUTES OF THE MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

August 5, 2026

I. Call to Order

Chair Justin Towles called the Maryland Transportation Commission meeting to order on Wednesday, August 5, 2026, at 10:30 AM.

II. Roll Call

The following individuals were present:

Justin Towles, Chair
Diane Baker, Member
Debra Carter, Member
Rudy de Leon Dinglass, Member
Debra Farrar-Dyke, Member
George Littrell, Jr., Member
Barbara Richman-Kahn, Member
Lisa Liu, Member
Todd Nock, Member
Rizwan Siddiqui, Member
Gary Simpson, Member
Greg Snook, Member
Mario VillaSanta, Member
MTA Staff Holly Arnold
MTA Staff Tony Bridges
MTA Staff Minilla Malhotra
MTA Staff Tahreem Haq
MTA Staff Jalen Sanders
MDOT Staff Drew Morrison
MDOT Staff Nora Corasaniti
MDOT Staff Michelle Martin
MDOT Staff Geoff Anderson
MDOT Staff Matt Winkler
MDOT Staff Ryan Icaruso
MDOT Staff Brittany Brothers

III. Roll and Approval of Minutes

Chair Justin Towles asked for a motion to approve the July 2026 meeting minutes. Mr. Mario VillaSanta made a motion to approve the minutes, and Mr. Greg Snook seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. MTC's Role in New MTA Hiring Process

MDOT Staff Drew Morrison introduced the new statutory role of the commissions to the MTC members. Under HB 1081, the MTC shall determine the qualifications and appointments, in addition to compensation and leave packages, for 12 MTA positions, all of which are

management roles.

MTA Staff Minilla Malhotra presented two sample position packages, which were sent to MTC members in advance of the meeting. The packages included the proposed job duties and compensation packages for positions that are currently unfilled at MTA.

Mr. Greg Snook asked how the process of appointing individuals to senior management positions at MTA worked, previous to HB 1081. Drew Morrison responded that hiring processes such as this one are not usually among MDOT modes. Previously, these positions at MTA would have been internal hires, determined by the Administrator.

Minilla Malhotra noted that the 10 other positions, subject to MTC review and approval, have not gone through a similar process, as they predate the passage of HB 1081. The previous process required a competitive recruitment process, job posting, interviews and, based on those, selecting a candidate.

Administrator Holly Arnold informed the MTC that MTA has worked on a compensation study alongside the Baltimore Regional Transit Council. The study found that MTA salaries are below general market rate, making the process of finding and selecting candidates more difficult. HB 1081 recognized that MTA's ability to recruit top talent has historically been restricted by the disparity in wages. The ultimate goal is to instate more competitive salaries, which the legislature recognized as a need.

Ms. Debra Carter asked what makes the 12 positions, all of which subject to MTC review prior to posting, unique. Administrator Holly Arnold noted that MTA currently does not have Deputy Administrators, but HB 1081 requires they add two to the existing staff, with job duties associated with reform. MTA strives to hire two employees, one of which who will focus on core services, and another that will focus on commuter services throughout the State. These are both high-level positions, above the existing deputies on staff.

Mr. Rizwan Siddiqui asked if MTA believes the candidate search will be national in scope, and if a subcommittee (comprised of MTC members) will be formed moving forward. Chair Justin Towles responded that a subcommittee will be created from existing commission members. Minilla Malhotra responded that the candidate search will be national. MTA requires candidates with strong transit leadership backgrounds, and the agency plans to utilize resources such as APTA to find the right candidates.

Ms. Barbara Richman-Kahn asked if the other 10 positions would be up for re-hiring, or if they would be retained. Drew Morrison responded that 12 positions have been identified as part of the MTC review process, but only for future personnel changes. Individuals currently holding those positions will not be eligible for review.

Mr. Rudy de Leon Dinglas asked if MTC will be responsible for developing metrics to evaluate future job duties and compensation packages, or if MTA will develop these metrics for MTC to utilize. Chair Justin Towles responded that the responsibility will fall upon the MTC, but MTA will lend the commission their expertise and recommendations.

Drew Morrison noted that MTC's new role will be formalized on October 1, 2026, and that MTA will begin the recruitment process for the two new positions. He stated that MTA will return to the MTC in November for a more detailed discussion about the candidates for the positions.

Chair Justin Towles informed the commission that MTC is now taking a regulatory role, rather than an advisory role. MTC may now be subject to review and, in some cases, the recommendations the commission makes moving forward will result in personnel decisions. Considering this, the Chair will work with MDOT to ensure that all members are actively appointed, and in their designated roles. He reminded members of the 50% threshold for attendance (at monthly meetings). Chair Justin Towles also requested that MTA provide regular updates, perhaps twice a year, about the state of the agency.

Chair Justin Towles requested a motion in support of creating a subcommittee, comprised of five existing MTC members, that will work closely on MTA matters. Mr. Mario VillaSanta made a motion in support, and Mr. Greg Snook seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Justin Towles also requested a motion in support of MTA and MDOT's proposed system for brining future candidates, and positions to MTC. The motion of support directly referenced the two employment packages presented to the commission. Chair Justin Towles noted that the resolution is not a formal approval, but rather a motion in support. Mr. Todd Nock made a motion in support, and Ms. Debra Carter seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

V. Adjournment

Chair Justin Towles requested a motion to adjourn the meeting, and reconvene during the next scheduled MTC meeting, on September 2, 2026. Ms. Debra Carter made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Todd Nock.