

Faribault-Martin County Joint Transit Board – Executive Committee
Martin County Courthouse
201 Lake Avenue Fairmont, MN 56031
July 9, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m. by Board Chair Elliot Belgard.

Joint Transit Board Executive Committee members present were: Faribault County Commissioner Groskreutz, and Martin County Commissioners Belgard and Mahoney. Missing was Faribault County Commissioner Young. Also present was Jeremy Monahan, Faribault – Martin County Transit Director.

Board Chair started the meeting by asking for any additions to the agenda. There were none.

Motion made by Commissioner Mahoney, seconded by Commissioner Groskreutz to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Monahan produced an Unpaid Bills report totaling \$42,301.10 and as usual a number of the regular and recurring bills have not yet arrived and would need to be authorized for payment to avoid late fees. There was brief discussion about a couple of the bills and their details in particular a post-audit adjustment to the vehicle insurance premium from MCIT for 2018 and an expensive safety equipment piece that detects and mitigates Carbon Monoxide at the Transit Facility that had been malfunctioning and needed replacing.

Motion made by Commissioner Groskreutz, seconded by Commissioner Mahoney to approve payment of the Unpaid Bills as presented, and to approve giving the Transit Director authority to continue to pay other regular and recurring bills at the discretion of the Transit Director upon receipt. Motion passed unanimously.

Monahan produced Bank Statements for the Transit Board. It showed that as of June 28, 2019 the Transit Board had \$179,225.28 for a bank balance. Monahan noted that the 2018 Quarter 4 Federal share, which will be over \$118,000 still has yet to arrive but also the bill for the 2017 overpayment to the Transit Board from MnDOT has yet to arrive which could be upwards of \$190,000. Monahan noted he believed when the bill from the State for the overpayment arrives the bank account will have enough funds to pay it back, but that within months there may be another cash flow shortage that the Counties would have to assist with but that the Counties will not have to fund the repayment of the overpayment. A few other deposits and expenses were discussed briefly.

There was no Old Business to discuss at this meeting.

Discussion turned to New Business and the proposed 2020 – 2021 proposed Capital and New Service Expansion Applications which will be released by MnDOT on July 15th and will be due by the end of August. Monahan explained how MnDOT had made a few changes for vehicle purchases at the Multi-Year Program Committee Monahan had been involved with. First, for

2020 the replacement vehicle local share responsibility has been reduced from 20 percent to 10 percent of the costs. Essentially two replacement buses can be purchased and the local share will be the same as one replacement bus was formerly. In conjunction with that, MnDOT has reduced the thresholds for mileage and vehicle age before replacement is eligible. This means that buses can be replaced and rotated out into spare bus or disposed status quicker and the fleet will theoretically be newer on the whole.

Lastly, MnDOT has agreed to assist with purchase of smaller vehicles to be operated by transit systems, more specifically mini-vans, with the condition that they are ADA accessible with a wheelchair ramp and that they are not used to replace a bus. Rather they can only be purchased with MnDOT funds if they are part of a New Service Expansion plan and a need for them is shown.

Monahan went on to explain that the 5-Year Plans are nearing completion and one of the recommendations for expansion of service is to begin operations on Monday through Thursday evenings in Fairmont to go along with the current Friday evening service in Fairmont. Monahan believes this service would be good to apply for to implement in 2020 and state that there is a need for a mini-van to operate this service.

Discussion regarding use of mini-vans, staffing issues associated with evening service, other potential funding sources, and vehicle types ensued. Since the next Full Board meeting will be so close to the application deadline it was decided by the Executive Committee that Monahan should develop a plan to apply for beginning New Service Monday through Thursday evenings from 6 pm to 10 pm within the City of Fairmont and that there would be a need for a new ADA accessible mini-van to accomplish this service efficiently.

Discussion turned to the potential to modify the discount given on fares with the purchase of token packs or by having subscription rates ensued. Monahan produced an analysis showing the potential gains in revenue if the current discount amount for token packs and subscription rides were changed to a 10 percent discount from cash payment compared to the current 25 percent discount that is given. With a lot of assumptions about future sales, the analysis showed that there would be potentially an additional \$22,000 in annual revenue from reducing the discount if sales remained static. In 2018 there was a revenue shortfall of just over \$37,000 and with the 2020 operations local share returning to 15 percent, as opposed to the one year reduction to 5 percent local share in 2019, it is possible that revenue shortfall in 2020 could again approach \$35,000 - \$40,000 assuming static ridership and lower than expected revenue from ad sales.

Commissioner Groskreutz noted that with the current ridership on a decline in certain areas, it might not be prudent to raise rates. Commissioner Belgard noted that the increase in revenue from reducing the discount was not as high as he expected. It was noted that this reduction in a discount might not even be enough to eliminate a potential revenue shortfall. It was decided that discussion with some of the major subscription route customers should occur to determine their ability to absorb this cost increase before it is considered further. Monahan said he would set up meetings with some of the subscription customers and noted that any reduction in the discount would also include input from the public via public meetings and from the Transit Advisory Committee to determine their thoughts.

Personnel Actions were considered next. First, two employees, Transit Dispatcher Doug Richter and Ronnie Meyering who were hired in December, had completed their probationary employment successfully and it was requested that their probationary status be removed and their wages adjusted accordingly. Motion made by Commissioner Groskreutz, seconded by Commissioner Mahoney to approve ending probationary status for both Richter and Meyering. Motion passed unanimously.

Second, Monahan wished to designate Transit Driver Mark Hinz as being on a leave of indeterminate length of time. Motion made by Commissioner Groskreutz, seconded by Commissioner Mahoney to grant the leave of indeterminate length of time to Hinz. Motion passed unanimously.

Third, Monahan had hired a Probationary Transit Driver named Pamela Tandberg. Motion made by Commissioner Mahoney, seconded by Commissioner Groskreutz to accept the probationary hiring of Tandberg. Motion passed unanimously.

Lastly, longtime Transit Driver Ronald Fox had resigned his position. Motion made by Commissioner Groskreutz, seconded by Commissioner Mahoney to accept the resignation of Fox. Motion passed unanimously.

Monahan produced the tables for system ridership. June ridership for Faribault County continued to be high but showed the typical decline in ridership during the summer which is likely attributed to the end of the school year and no pre-school riders. Martin County routes were significantly down from historical numbers which brought the system wide numbers down as well. Monahan noted that the routes that are experiencing the largest declines are the ones specifically serving the City of Fairmont. Analysis is underway to determine if there are patterns or specific riders or origins and destinations that are decreasing from the historically high ridership numbers these routes were experiencing earlier in the year. He hopes some answers can be found and focused marketing can bring some of the riders back and the Fairmont routes can start being more productive and contributing ridership numbers to the system.


The next Full Transit Board meeting was scheduled to follow the Human Services meeting on August 21st in Blue Earth but it was noted that the Human Services meeting was moved to August 28th. It was decided that with the amount of decisions the Full Board need to make in regards to 2020 capital purchases and potential new service expansions in August meeting on the 28th is too close to the August 30th deadline for the applications. It was determined that having the Full Board meeting on August 16th in Truman following the Prairieland meeting would be planned. The August Executive Committee meeting was decided to be held Friday August 9th at 8:00 a.m. at the Martin County Courthouse.

With no further business to wit, the Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

JOINT TRANSIT BOARD
FARIBAULT-MARTIN COUNTIES



Elliot Belgard, Joint Transit Board Chair

ATTEST: 

Tom Mahoney, Board Secretary