

Faribault-Martin County Joint Transit Board
Martin County Courthouse
201 Lake Avenue
Fairmont, MN 56031
Tuesday May 26, 2020 9:30 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Board Chairman Bill Groskreutz. This meeting was held with teleconference attendance capabilities under Minnesota Statute 13D.021 which allows for teleconference meetings while in a state of emergency during a health pandemic.

Joint Transit Board members present in person were: Faribault County Commissioner and Board Chair Bill Groskreutz and Faribault County Commissioner Young. Participating Board Members via internet teleconference were Martin County Commissioners Belgard, Smith, and Flohrs and Faribault County Commissioners Roper, Loveall, and Warmka. Also present in person was Jeremy Monahan, Faribault – Martin County Transit Director. Also present via teleconference was Melinda Estey, MnDOT Office of Transit and Active Transportation.

Commissioner Groskreutz noted he wished to have a discussion a Transit Advisory Committee appointment added to the agenda. Motion made to approve the amended agenda. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Discussion regarding meeting minute approval ensued. There were a large number of meeting minutes to discuss for approval due to the length of time since the last Full Board meeting where minutes were considered. It was decided to take the three Full Board meeting minutes under consideration as one motion and the three Executive Committee meeting minutes under consideration as one motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Belgard, seconded by Commissioner Loveall to approve the Full Board meeting minutes for February 25, March 31, and April 28 2020. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Belgard to approve the Executive Committee meeting minutes for March 6, April 10, and May 8 2020. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Discussion regarding the CARES Act ensued. Monahan noted this legislation continues to be analyzed by MnDOT with new info coming regularly. There have been bi-weekly teleconferences with MnDOT on this topic. Essentially the federal share is covering 100 percent of all operation cost from January 20, 2020 forward. However any revenue will be reduced from the reimbursements. So if fare revenue were to go away completely all expenses would still be covered 100 percent until the funds run out. The end date of this funding is predicted to be somewhere between December 2020 and February 2021 at which time it is thought we will return to our normal 85 /15 percent share for operations.

As an update to the Board Monahan reported the Executive Committee voted to implement a Paid Administrative Leave policy effective until August 31, 2020 which will supplement any

employee's wage whose hours are reduced because of a reduction of our services or who are out due to their medical provider stating they are unable to work during the pandemic. This policy will pay any employee that works a minimum of two shifts in a week their regular weekly hour amounts which were calculated from early March for the FFCRA Paid Sick and Family Leave policy.

Discussion turned to the Facility RFP and Fuel Procurement projects update. Monahan reported the Office Construction RFP was resolicited and one proposal was received. The Executive Committee met on May 22nd to ensure the proposal meets all requirements and has made plans to begin negotiations with the firm in the coming days. It was noted that Commissioners Belgard and Young will assist Monahan with the negotiation process and meetings.

The Fuel Procurement project resulted in two quotes being received for fuel supply in Faribault County. The Executive Committee voted to pursue an agreement with Blue Earth Shell station based on the amount of discount offered per gallon. It is hoped that this agreement can be finalized and implemented in early June.

Discussion turned to the potential wage adjustments for the Transit Director and Operations Manager. Board Chair Groskreutz noted that the info regarding the work completed by Martin County and Faribault County Human Resources staff along with the DDA consultants was included in the packet. Also that the Executive Committee had discussed the topic in their meeting in early May and passed a motion to recommend that the Transit Director have a wage adjustment to match Martin County's 2020 wage scale of Grade 17 Step 2 which is \$34.67 per hour. The Executive Committee also passed a motion to recommend the Operations Manager have a wage adjustment to match Martin County's 2020 wage scale of Grade 10 Step 2 which is \$20.37 per hour. These adjustments were to be made retroactive to the start of 2020 with any back-pay due being paid in one lump sum.

Discussion ensued regarding the Martin County wage scale and if it should be at least in part adopted by the Transit Board for its two full time positions. There was clarification from Commissioner Smith that typically with a good annual performance review an employee is elevated a Step each year of employment. There was also discussion about the Cost of Living Adjustment and how that would be factored to any annual Step increases.

Motion made by Commissioner Belgard, seconded by Commissioner Flohrs to approve the Executive Committee recommended wage adjustments along with following the annual Step wage adjustment amounts recently adopted by Martin County. However the Cost of Living Adjustment percentage will be determined by an average of the two member counties annual percentage increase on top of the wage increase for a Step. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Discussion turned to the fare collection policy. Monahan noted that as reported earlier the CARES Act provides for 100 percent of all Operational Expenses for all public transit systems to stay operating during the pandemic despite the reduction in demand. This allows for elimination of fare collections if desired because any fare revenue will be deducted from the contribution to the transit system from the federal government. Many systems have temporarily eliminated fare

collection to help reduce contact between drivers and passengers. These policies are not intended to be a promotion to attempt to gain riders during the pandemic but are used as a safety measure. Furthermore, these policies do not have any negative financial effects on the transit system due to the CARES Act.

At the end of April the Executive Committee passed a resolution to suspend all fare collections for the month of May. It was discussed at that time to allow the Full Transit Board to weigh in on the matter to decide if this policy should be continued past the end of May. Monahan noted it is an effective measure to assist in protecting the Transit Drivers who are already in very close proximity to the public. There was discussion regarding how certain the CARES Act funding is and Estey noted it is a guarantee and will be available for 100 percent of operation costs likely through February 2021.

Monahan noted that the Board could consider extending the fare collection suspension through August 2020, similar to the Paid Administrative Leave policy, so that the Board can have an opportunity to reevaluate those two policies at their August meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner Roper, seconded by Commissioner Belgard to extend the fare collection suspension through August 31, 2020 at which time the policy will be reevaluated. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Discussion turned to the Transit Advisory Committee. Commissioner Roper's appointment had moved out of town and was no longer available for the TAC and he had found a replacement, Prairie Lakes Transit Driver Michelle Tubbs.

Motion made by Commissioner Roper, seconded by Commissioner Young, to approve the appointment of Michelle Tubbs to the Transit Advisory Committee. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

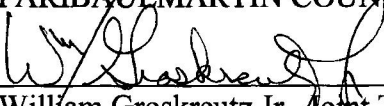
Discussion turned to the Ridership Report. Monahan noted the charts showed a dramatic reduction in demand across the entire system. April was the first full month effected by the pandemic and it showed approximately a 70 percent reduction in demand. It was noted that many other systems have had larger reductions even as much as 95 percent. Estey noted severe reductions are common everywhere and it has been thought by some that ridership on public transit systems will possibly not be back to numbers equal to before the pandemic for 18 months.

Discussion regarding the bill payment report ensued. Monahan presented the report and noted that the two vehicles received in March had been paid for in full. There was brief discussion regarding a few other bills including any adjustments to advertising expenditures. Monahan noted a change in the television ad program but that keep advertising going will help keep the transit system in the mind of the public and also ensure those that need it that it is still there for them. Many of the print ads were for the necessary Request for Proposal solicitations. Also discussed was the progress of purchasing a used bus from the Minneapolis American Indian Center. Monahan reported that a deal had been reached to purchase the bus for \$9,000 and plans to go retrieve it are planned.

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday June 5th at 8:00 a.m. at the Martin County Courthouse in Fairmont with the potential for teleconference attendance. Commissioner Groskreutz will plan to be at the meetings in person along with Monahan to ensure compliance with the Minnesota statute that allows for teleconference meetings during a health pandemic. The next Full Transit Board meeting date is now scheduled for Tuesday June 23rd following Human Services Board meeting. This meeting might also have teleconference capabilities available.

With no further business to wit, a motion was made by Commissioner Warmka, seconded by Commissioner Belgard to adjourn and the Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

JOINT TRANSIT BOARD
FARIBAUL MARTIN COUNTIES



William Groskreutz Jr., Joint Transit Board Chair

ATTEST: 

Greg Young, Board Secretary