

Faribault-Martin County Joint Transit Board – Executive Committee
Martin County Courthouse
201 Lake Avenue Fairmont, MN 56031
August 7, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Board Chairman Bill Groskreutz. This meeting was held with teleconference attendance capabilities under Minnesota Statute 13D.021 which allows for teleconference meeting while in a state of emergency during a health pandemic.

Joint Transit Board members present in person were: Faribault County Commissioners Groskreutz and Young and Martin County Commissioner Koons. Also present in person was Jeremy Monahan, Faribault – Martin County Transit Director. Present via teleconference was Martin County Commissioner Belgard.

Board Chair asked for any changes to the agenda. There were none. Motion made by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Belgard to approve the amended agenda. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Monahan produced an Unpaid Bills report totaling \$165,206.99 which still included the planned repayment of funds from each member county used to purchase two vehicles earlier in the year. The remaining bills totaled \$32,246.69 that was not for the repayment. There was brief discussion on a few of the bills.

Motion made by Commissioner Belgard, seconded by Commissioner Koons 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 by roll call vote.

Monahan produced Bank Statements for the Transit Board. It showed that as of July 31, 2020 the Transit Board had \$195,785.14 for a bank balance. Monahan noted there were no large deposits or payments in July. Mostly due to the processing of the CARES Act funding which is still being completed.

Discussion regarding the funding for the operations ensued with Monahan explaining the number of Request for Funds that he and Melinda Estey of MnDOT have been working on. Monahan explained that there are now two operations contracts with MnDOT through 2021 the first being the original operations contract, and now the second being the contract funded 100 percent by the CARES Act. Due to the timing of the contracts and the fiscal quarters there were recently Request for Funds submitted totaling \$383,311.94 which is comprised of the Federal shares for both contracts for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of the 2020 fiscal year. There was discussion regarding the funding and timing of payments. No action was needed this was just information for the Executive Committee. Monahan will continue to work with MnDOT and Estey to navigate through the funding for the operations.

Discussion regarding an update on the Office Building Construction project ensued. Monahan noted that ISG has come back with a draft construction cost proposal. He noted that the first draft has costs that are higher than the contract budget with MnDOT. Monahan and ISG are working on some detail clarifications and to see if there are any ways to reduce costs. It was noted that MnDOT would not guarantee but likely be able to amend the contract to cover any overages due to the timing of this project and the number of delays but that the contractors bid would likely need to be received first before an amendment could be considered. Any addition would still put 20 percent of the costs on the local share so any additional budget would need to explore how that could be funded either with additional member county funds or utilizing the transit board's fund reserve that was built up in 2019.

Discussion turned to fare collection policy. When implemented it was determined that the suspension of fare collections policy would be revisited at the end of August so the Full Board could decide whether to continue the policy or not. Monahan was hoping the Executive Committee would have a recommendation for the Full Board regarding the matter. Monahan noted that there is no advantage to resuming fare collections financially. All fares collected will just be subtracted from the contracted funding for the CARES Act. Since ridership has not spiked due to free rides and there has not been a problem of "joy-riding" which has happened with other systems without fares, Monahan recommended that the fare collection suspension continue. Discussion ensued regarding the length of the CARES funding, which currently is set to run through February 2021.

After more discussion a motion was made by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Koons to recommend to the Full Board that the fare collection suspension be extended through December 2020 when it can be considered again for continuation. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Discussion turned to the paid administrative leave policy. Similar to fare collections, this policy was implemented through August when the Full Board would be able to consider continuation. This policy was adopted to ensure that employees who have their hours reduced due to lower ridership demand. It was also put in place in case an employee has a medical condition that does not allow them to work to maintain their average hours per week until they recover. Monahan noted to date between the paid administrative leave policy and the federally mandated Families First Coronavirus Relief Act leave pay, just over \$21,000 in wages have been paid. To date there have been almost \$400,000 in wages paid in 2020 so not a large percentage is attributed to this leave. It is also anticipated that utilization of the leave will be reduced unless there are cases of the virus within the system causing people to have to stay home to recover or quarantine. Monahan noted it was a good policy to protect the employees' wages through the pandemic and he believed it showed the employees that they are valued. With the CARES Act funding the leave is allowed to be paid and covered 100 percent. Monahan again was hoping for a recommendation from the Executive Committee to the Full Board. He also explained he wished for the policy to be extended.

After discussion a motion was made by Commissioner Koons, seconded by Commissioner Belgard to recommend to the Full Board that the Paid Administrative Leave policy be extended through December 2020 when it can be considered again for continuation. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Discussion turned to the Transit Advisory Committee. Monahan noted that he had called for a TAC meeting via Zoom for the end of August. His invitation noted that Zoom might be a better medium for this group to meet since it has become more commonplace and accepted during the pandemic and there have been so many issues with attendance in the past. It was also noted that two of the current TAC members are no longer employed by the entity that they were representing, a member from Human Services and a member from MRCI. So there are at least five openings of ten on the committee. Commissioner Belgard, whose appointee was from Human Services, will reach out to them to see if another staff member may be interested. The other lost appointee was from the Commissioner Mahoney so it is likely they will not be replaced until the new commissioner is elected.

Discussion of New Business ensued with Monahan presenting a Draft Procurement Policy that MnDOT noticed had never been officially adopted. Discussion regarding the policy and some of its contents ensued. Monahan noted that MnDOT was fine with the draft so long as none of the policies contradicted either of the member county's policies. Monahan noted he believed this policy would be much stricter than either member county policy. Regardless it was suggested that each County Auditor / Treasurer have an opportunity to review the draft policy. If they have no issues, it can be brought to the Full Board for consideration of adoption.

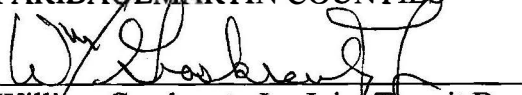
Discussion regarding the 2021 Capital purchase ensued. Monahan showed the Executive Committee a table showing that as many as seven of the system vehicles are eligible for replacement based on age or mileage. Regardless there is only so much statewide funding available for vehicle replacements and it was noted that in 2021 this system would only be eligible to purchase one vehicle. Monahan reported that is what he intends to do is apply for one vehicle to be purchased in 2021. He noted that two vehicles were purchased in 2019, there is yet to be another two vehicles purchased in 2020, which may not occur until early 2021 due to delays, the accessible mini-van for the system has yet to be purchased, and utilizing the reserve funds to buy the low mileage used bus was a very good deal. So the fleet is aging but the prospects for vehicle replacement are going as fast as possible. Since this is just an application it was discussed that no approval is needed at this time.

Discussion regarding the system ridership report ensued. Monahan presented the regular charts and noted that July showed another increase in passenger rides including Faribault County routes exceeding numbers from some prior years. Martin County is still lower than ever but continuing to increase. Monahan noted the evening route added in January for Fairmont Monday through Thursday has been very successful and that good comments and praise are being received regarding the route.

The next Executive Committee meeting was scheduled for Thursday September 10th at 8:00 a.m. at the Martin County Courthouse in Fairmont. The next Full Board meeting will be held on Tuesday August 25th following the Human Services Board meeting with an advertised start time of 9:30 am.

With no further business to wit, a motion was made by Commissioner Belgard, seconded by Commissioner Young to adjourn. The Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:20 a.m.

JOINT TRANSIT BOARD
FARIBAULMARTIN COUNTIES



William Groskreutz Jr., Joint Transit Board Chair

ATTEST: 

Greg Young, Board Secretary