

Faribault-Martin County Joint Transit Board – Executive Committee  
Martin County Courthouse  
201 Lake Avenue Fairmont, MN 56031  
February 5, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Board Chairman Elliot Belgard. 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 Commissioner Young and Martin County Commissioner Koons. Present via teleconference was Martin County Commissioner Belgard and Faribault County Commissioner Groskreutz. Also present via teleconference was Melinda Estey, MnDOT. Also present in person was Jeremy Monahan, Faribault – Martin County Transit Director.

Board Chair asked for any changes to the agenda. Monahan asked to add discussion regarding food delivery efforts and transportation for people to get to COVID-19 vaccine appointments. Motion made by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Koons to approve the amended agenda. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Monahan produced an Unpaid Bills report totaling \$28,483.43 and noted that more regular and recurring bills are expected to arrive in the coming weeks. There was a brief discussion on a few of the bills.

Motion made by Commissioner Young, 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 a Bank Statement for the Transit Board. It showed that as of January 31, 2021 the Transit Board had \$500,171.48 for a bank balance. Monahan noted that the large balance can be attributed mostly from the Quarter 1 2021 State CARES Act payment of \$214,271 received in January. It was also noted that the large MCIT Insurance Premium bill was paid by Monahan during January totaling \$34,747 which is larger than previous years likely due to the Transit Facility building insurance now being the Board's responsibility for the full year and an increase in Workers Compensation premiums. There was brief discussion regarding the MCIT bill. There was no action required this was for information purposes only.

Discussion turned to Old Business and the Facility Construction Project. Monahan reported that APX Construction had developed a construction schedule with the start date planned for February 15<sup>th</sup>. The pre-construction meeting is planned for this afternoon on February 5<sup>th</sup> at the Transit Facility with the General and Sub-Contractors along with MnDOT and Prairie Lakes' staff attending. It was noted this is a great progress step, that the schedule is aggressive but looks acceptable, and that Monahan hopes to have progress photos for the March Executive Committee meeting.

Discussion turned to the 2020 Vehicle Purchase contract. Monahan noted conversations he had with MnDOT staff recently stating that the purchase of the accessible mini-van was going to be a very complex process, especially compared to purchasing the replacement cut-away buses. This is due to the amount of procurement work already completed by the State for the cut-away buses which will not have been completed for the mini-van. There may be an option to change the contract to a Class 300 transit van which is in between the size of the cut-away buses and the mini-vans if the Board did not want to go through the more arduous process. Monahan stated he had considered the option but wished to continue the path to the mini-van stating that many systems across the state are looking for this type of vehicle to be available and we have an opportunity to show how to do it and how mini-vans would work for our type system. There was discussion with input from Estey on the process and options. The Executive Committee supported Monahan's desire to maintain the plan to purchase a mini-van. Since this is the original action plan there was no action needed.

Discussion turned to a Draft Rider Attendant Policy that Monahan wished to have considered by the Full Board for adoption. This policy would require specific riders who have shown they are not able to be transported independently to have an attendant with them or not be allowed to use the public transit system. Monahan said this has been brought up due to several instances of drivers having to go above and beyond a reasonable accommodation, sometimes endangering the safety of the driver or the passenger, for riders that would normally be provided by Special Transportation Services (STS). The STS providers have different training and licenses that public transit does not have. There was discussion regarding how if this policy is implemented enforcement would have to be consistent and uniform so as not to show any favoritism. The proposed policy reads as follows:

*Prairie Lakes Transit is a public transit provider. As such we are not trained, licensed, nor authorized to provide Special Transportation Service which include specialized medical transportation for those who are not able to be transported independently. If an incident or incidents occur with specific individuals that make it obvious we are being asked to provide a service above and beyond a "reasonable accommodation" we reserve the right to require an attendant ride along with said passenger. The attendant will be provided a ride without a fare charged. If an attendant is not available the rider may be referred to a Special Transportation Service provider for their transportation needs.*

After discussion a motion was made by Commissioner Koons, seconded by Commissioner Young, to recommend to the Full Board that the policy be adopted. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Discussion turned to the Paid Administrative Leave (PAL) policy. In December the Full Board extended the PAL through February. At that time it was not clear if after February and the Federal CARES funds are exhausted if a PAL policy would be allowed going forward. Monahan reported that MnDOT said that all policies that were allowed under the CARES Act will continue to be allowed through 2021 including PAL policies. Monahan wished to have the Full Board extend the policy further stating that it is a great benefit for the staff and shows how valued they are by protecting their wages during these times.

After discussion regarding the length of the extension a motion was made by Commissioner Groskreutz, seconded by Commissioner Young to recommend to the Full Board that the PAL

policy be extended through April 2021 and be reevaluated for possible extension at the April Full Board meeting. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Discussion turned to food delivery efforts and the potential to offer rides without fares for individuals going for a vaccine. Monahan learned after asking Estey that the Transit Board is allowed to still provide food delivery and vaccine appointment transportation without a fare and it will still be covered 100 percent under the operational contract despite the implementation of fare collections starting February 1, 2021. Monahan was hoping these benefits could be offered through the transit system moving forward still.

After discussion a motion was made by Commissioner Koons, seconded by Commissioner Groskreutz to approve allowed food delivery efforts and vaccine appointment transportation for passengers through April at which time the policies can be reevaluated for possible extensions. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Discussion turned to New Business and proposed Personnel Actions. Monahan asked that Probationary Transit Driver Jeffrey Huston be removed from probationary status effective January 17th which will also increase his wage to the regular Transit Driver wages for 2021. Motion made by Commissioner Groskreutz, seconded by Commissioner Young to approve the Personnel Actions as presented. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Discussion turned to hiring a Transit Dispatcher. Monahan noted that the system had been down one dispatcher since the summer but it was being handled sufficiently due to less need for dispatching at times and the Operations Manager stepping in when needed. The need for dispatching had grown recently and the Operations Manager has had to be scheduled to dispatch much too frequently and Monahan wished begin work on hiring a new Dispatcher. Since this is a replacement position not a new or additional position there was not any action needed without any objections.

Discussion regarding the system ridership report ensued. Monahan noted that there was an increase in January from December however the Martin County routes are still lower than desired. It was noted that Faribault County routes had recovered nicely since the pandemic and were near January 2020 levels which were pre-pandemic. It was noted that with fare collection beginning February 1<sup>st</sup> it will be interesting to see the effect the free rides had on ridership amounts. However Monahan noted that the first week of February has been very busy with a lot of token packs being purchased. The sentiment among many riders is that they were thankful for the free rides when they were available but they still need the bus and now that there is a fare again they will just need to pay the fare.

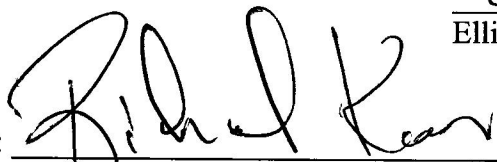
The next Executive Committee was scheduled for Friday March 5<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am. The April Executive Committee was scheduled for Friday April 9<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am. The next Full Board meeting will be held on Wednesday February 17<sup>th</sup> following the Human Services Board meeting with an advertised start time of 9:30 am. The April Full Board meeting was tentatively scheduled for Wednesday April 21<sup>st</sup> at 9:30 am following the Human Services Board meeting.

With no further business to wit, the Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

JOINT TRANSIT BOARD  
FARIBAULMARTIN COUNTIES

  
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Elliot Belgard, Joint Transit Board Chair

ATTEST:

  
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Richard Koons, Board Secretary