

Faribault-Martin County Joint Transit Board
Faribault County Human Services Center Conference Room
412 North Nicollet Street
Blue Earth, MN 56013
Wednesday August 18, 2021 10:30 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 10:55 a.m. by Board Chairman Elliot Belgard.

Joint Transit Board members present in person were: Faribault County Commissioners Groskreutz, Roper, Anderson, Loveall, and Young and Martin County Commissioners Belgard, Smith, Flohrs, Koons and Forshee. Also present in person was Jeremy Monahan, Faribault – Martin County Transit Director.

Commissioner Belgard asked if there were any additions to the agenda. There were none. Motion made by Commissioner Groskreutz, seconded by Commissioner Flohrs to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Groskreutz, seconded by Commissioner Forshee to approve the meeting minutes for the June 16, 2021 Full Board meeting, July 9 and August 5, 2021 Executive Committee meetings. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion turned to an update on the Facility Construction project. Monahan reported the facility construction project is nearing completion. Phase 2 which was remodeling the old existing spaces only has some items noted in the punch list walkthrough to address and it will be completed. There were a few outstanding issues from the Phase 1 punch list that will be worked on as well. In September cable internet and Voice Over Internet Phone system will be installed through Midco which will allow for faster internet speeds and a more functional phone system for multiple offices and staff. Commissioners Belgard and Young were present with the Transit Director at the Phase 2 walkthrough on August 12th and discussed a number of issues with the contractor and the architect.

After the completion of the phone system installation the Transit Director will be able to relocate from the Martin County Courthouse to the Transit Facility. This will create a number of issues by relocating the physical location and primary mailing address of the entire system. In particular the post office currently does not come to the Transit Facility any mail sent to that address is forwarded to the courthouse. So there are going to be a number of details that will be worked out after the move in the coming months.

Monahan also noted that once the building is fully complete and the meeting room has furniture installed it will be possible to have a Board meeting there if desired and we will likely have all Executive Committee meetings at the site as well.

There was brief discussion about the project and some of the items on the punch list. Also there was brief discussion about the change orders that were necessary during the course of the project.

Discussion turned to an update on the vehicle purchases for 2020 and 2021. Monahan reported that the two 2020 buses were ordered after the board meeting in June. Estimates for their arrival range from just before the end of this year to next spring. But they have been ordered and are in the process of being manufactured.

The accessible mini-van project is still on-going. There is a rather complex Request For Proposals that has to be written. A template from MnDOT to complete the RFP is being used but there are a lot of details and its completion is being fit in with other tasks.

Monahan reminded the board that the 2021 vehicle purchases will total 7 buses. One of the buses is 100 percent funded with State and Federal funds. The contract to purchase this one bus has been executed and we are waiting on authorization to proceed with the purchase. The contract for the remaining buses, which will require a 10 percent local share, is forthcoming and is expected within a few weeks. Shopping for those buses will ensue shortly thereafter.

There was brief discussion about when payment for the buses is due and how payment will be made. It was noted that if all seven 2021 buses arrive at the same time, it is likely that the Transit Board will need a short-term loan from the counties to fund the purchase as the 90 percent reimbursement is not provided until after payment is made in full. It was also noted that payment for any vehicle is not due until delivery so it will be some time before these details need to be worked out. However there was sentiment to ensure that each county Auditor / Treasurer offices know that there may be a significant cash advance in 2022 and that at least 90 percent of those funds will be returned within a month or two. Monahan noted he will connect with the offices.

Commissioner Smith left the meeting at this time for another commitment.

Discussion turned to New Business and consideration of an Employee Appreciation Lunch for Transit Board staff. Monahan noted that Executive Committee members have proposed an Appreciation Lunch for Transit Board staff thanking them for their hard work through the pandemic. It was pointed out that Governor Walz declared July 27th COVID appreciation day in Minnesota. Counties had been purchasing box lunches for staff that day to thank them however Joint Powers Boards staff were not included. The Executive Committee wished to have a discussion with the Full Transit Board which considered doing a lunch paid for voluntarily by the commissioners out of their own pocket. That way there would not be any questions regarding staying within the rules of spending taxpayer funds.

At their August meeting the Executive Committee passed a motion to recommend the Full Board considers approving an Appreciation Lunch for Transit Board staff that will be paid for by voluntary contribution from the elected officials of the Board.

Discussion ensued about not having the elected officials pay for the lunches but rather agency funds are used. Monahan was asked if that was allowed. He noted that it may not be an allowable expense with MnDOT funds but if not that the local share would likely be able to be used for this purpose. There was also discussion about what actions the Transit Board would have to take to accept a gift since no gifts have ever been received.

A motion was made by Commissioner Loveall, seconded by Commissioner Koons, to have an Employee Appreciation Lunch for Transit Board staff however it will be paid for with agency funds. More discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of the funding options. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed with 8 ayes and 1 nay.

Discussion turned to the Ridership Report. Monahan noted that ridership has leveled off in the past few months. The amounts are much lower than desired still. Most routes have been able to return to full service hours as the staffing shortage issue is being addressed as quickly as possible. However there are still times when all routes are not able to be run and still much less demand than there was before the pandemic or during the height of the pandemic when fares were not being collected. There was discussion about potential changes to service hours in the future if some of the routes where ridership is significantly down do not recover. However no changes will be made until 2023 at the earliest. A potential change mentioned would be offering trips to Mankato certain days of the week. Commissioner Loveall asked which routes might be modified to get the hours for such a service and Monahan noted it would likely be an underutilized Martin County rural route. Those routes lost significant ridership with the closing of MRCI in 2020 and the ridership amounts are not coming back to the desired level yet.

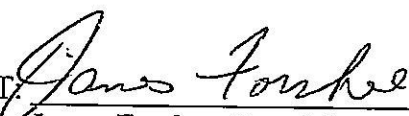
Discussion turned to the Bill Payment List. Monahan presented a report showing all bills paid since the June 18, 2021 Full Transit Board meeting. It was noted that \$41,990 of the outstanding loan balances to each county was paid back to Faribault County. There was brief discussion about whether the remaining \$30,000 now owed to each county could be repaid. Monahan said he would begin analysis again to see if and when the cash flow could tolerate another large repayment like that. There was also discussion regarding some of the bills that had been paid recently.

It was noted the next two Executive Committee meetings are scheduled for Friday September 10th and Tuesday October 12th at 8:00 a.m. at the Martin County Courthouse in Fairmont. There will be a Full Transit Board meeting held in October, likely on the 20th following Human Services Board meeting in Blue Earth.

With no further business to wit, a motion was made by Commissioner Koons, seconded by Commissioner Young to adjourn and after a unanimous vote the Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

JOINT TRANSIT BOARD
FARIBAULMARTIN COUNTIES


Elliot Belgard, Joint Transit Board Chair

ATTEST 
James Forshee, Board Secretary

Faribault – Martin County Transit Board
Full Transit Board Meeting Minutes
August 18, 2021