

Faribault-Martin County Joint Transit Board
Faribault County Human Services Center Conference Room
412 North Nicollet Street
Blue Earth, MN 56013
Wednesday October 19, 2022 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 10:40 a.m. by Board Chair Greg Young.

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

The Board Chair asked if there were any other additions to the agenda. There were none. Motion made by Commissioner Belgard, seconded by Commissioner Loveall to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Belgard, seconded by Commissioner Koons to approve the meeting minutes for the August 23, 2022 Full Board meeting and the September 9 and October 7, 2022 Executive Committee meetings. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion turned to Old Business and an update on the 2023 Operations Grant application. Monahan reported that the 2023 Operation Application awards have been released. The Transit Board was awarded \$1,486,600 for 2023 which is just over \$5,000 less than requested. This is due to MnDOT needed to cap each transit system at a 10 percent increase in operation for 2023 expenses. The 2023 request was a 10.4 percent increase. To reconcile the awarded budget amount the Fuel line item was reduced by the needed amount to match the awarded amount since the fuel budget is one of the largest estimates and hardest to predict. Monahan noted that he is still confident that they will be able to stay within the budget as a whole. There was brief discussion regarding the 2023 budget.

Discussion turned to New Business and a proposal to adjust Part-time staff wages in November. Monahan noted that this was done in 2021 for two reasons; first as a thank you for all the hard work during the pandemic to the staff, and second to begin building up the wage amounts for the system for recruitment and retention. At that time the budget expenditures was showing that there was budget to spare to do these raises early. This is possible to do this again in 2022, primarily to increase the current wages for non-probationary drivers to increase retention, but also to be able to increase probationary driver starting wages to over \$16 per hour. Right now the starting wage is \$14.55 per hour. Monahan stated he believes at least a couple of potential driver candidates have been lost due to the lower starting wages. A matrix of the calculated increased cost to do the pay increase in November instead of January was presented. It showed additional costs of less than \$9,000 to do the increase for November and December payrolls in 2022. Monahan also noted there is a projected extra \$90,000 in the Operators Wages item at this time, meaning the increase is affordable within the current budget. Monahan also noted that the Executive Committee discussed this proposal at their October meeting and passed a motion

recommending the Full Board approve a 10 percent increase be given to the part-time staff for the payroll period beginning October 23rd rather than waiting until January.

Commissioner Belgard asked if anyone knew what school bus drivers were making and Commissioner Groskreutz noted it was in the \$13 per hour range for the USC district and that they were short staffed. Commissioner Smith noted that she believed the wage increase and amount is being done for the right reasons but has concern about setting precedent for the amount and the timing of doing this in November. Commissioner Loveall echoed that concern about how difficult it might be after two years of giving the staff their annual wage increase at the beginning of November, in particular before the holiday season, and then have to revert back to the typical timing of raises occurring in January in years to come. Monahan noted that in the announcement of the wage increase he would state that the 10 percent amount is not to be expected every year and that the November timing is not to be expected every year. Commissioner Flohrs asked if after two years of 10 percent increases are the wages at the amount desired to be competitive for employee recruitment and retention. Monahan stated that he would need more time to get a solid answer for that. He did say he does not expect MnDOT to have the funds that would allow for another 10 percent wage increase for all staff in 2024 but he will not know that until the summer. He also will have to see what the employment market is looking like when the 2024 budget is being developed.

A motion was made by Commission Koons, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to follow the Executive Committee's recommendation and give the part-time staff a 10 percent wage increase for the payroll period effective October 23rd. There will not be another wage increase in January for part-time staff but the full-time staff will be considered for wage adjustments at that time. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion regarding the Revised Facility Maintenance Manual ensued. Monahan reported that with the completion of the office renovation in 2021, MnDOT wished to have the Facility Maintenance Manual updated to reflect the new configuration and equipment. The revised manual used a good amount of the current manual that was adopted years ago but revised the necessary portions due to the renovations. The Full Board would need to adopt the manual. The Executive Committee was able to review and discuss the revisions at their October meeting and passed a motion recommending the Full Board adopt the revised manual as presented.

Motion made by Commissioner Koons, seconded by Commissioner Flohrs to approve adoption of the Revised Facility Maintenance Manual as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion turned to Ridership Reports. Monahan updated the Board on an accident involving one of the transit vehicles from October 14th also noting that the transit vehicle involved is a total loss. So the transit system is now down a vehicle. The driver and passengers in the accident are all okay. The ridership charts were reviewed and showed that Faribault County routes had the second highest ridership month ever in September. This is mostly due to the preschool rides being provided in Wells and Blue Earth. But it also was done with some days having a driver shortage. In Martin County the numbers went down slightly, likely due to less operating days in September and due to a number of days with inadequate number of drivers to serve total demand. This included losing a Saturday evening to a driver calling in sick and not being able to find a

last minute replacement. Driver recruitment efforts are continuing and new staff is being added but staff is being lost to retirement at a quicker pace so there is little progress being made on the driver shortage.

Discussion turned to the Financial Reports. Monahan presented the Bill Payment List since the August Full Board meeting which was pretty much business as usual except the large payment made for the mini-van purchase. The second report was the Year-to-Date expenditures by budget line item report which shows the budget remaining in each line item. It is showing that Fuel spending is outpacing the budget as expected but that Operators Wages is being underspent due to the staff shortage. Most other line items are on pace to be on budget or slightly under. Overall the spending will be under the \$1.351 million Operations Budget which is surprising since during the setting of the budget it was anticipated that entire budget would be utilized along with some of the reserve funds due to the high wage increase made for staff in 2022 however due to staff shortages that won't be the case. Lastly, the Cashflow Projection matrix was presented. This was projected through June of 2023 with estimated expenses and revenues on a monthly basis along with the quarterly funding payments from the State or the Federal shares. It shows that in April 2023 the cashflow is going to be tight due to the timing of the Federal 4th Quarter 2022 repayment timing. However it should be able to be managed. But the outstanding \$30,000 cashflow assistance loans from the counties likely will not be able to be repaid until at least the summer of 2023.

Discussion turned to Special Business. Per Minnesota Statue 13D.05 Sub, 3 this section of the meeting is closed to the public for the completion of the annual performance evaluation of the Transit Director. A motion was made by Commissioner Belgard, seconded by Commissioner Koons to move the meeting into closed session at 11:35 am. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Belgard, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to end the closed meeting at 12:09 pm. Motion passed.

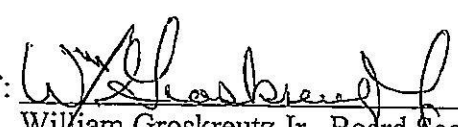
The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on November 4th. The next Full Board meeting will be held on December 27th in Fairmont likely at the Transit Facility.

With no further business to wit, the Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

JOINT TRANSIT BOARD
FARIBAULT MARTIN COUNTIES



Greg Young, Joint Transit Board Chair

ATTEST: 

William Groskreutz Jr., Board Secretary