

Faribault-Martin County Joint Transit Board – Executive Committee
FM Transit Facility
1023 North Dewey Street Fairmont, MN 56031
November 9, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Board Chair Elliot Belgard. Joint Transit Board Executive Committee members present in person were: Faribault County Commissioners Young and Groskreutz and Martin County Commissioners Belgard and Bless. Also present was Jeremy Monahan, Faribault – Martin County Transit Director.

Board Chair asked for any changes to the agenda. There were two additions from the tentative agenda sent out including a discussion on Full Board Attendance Policy and a discussion on the December Full Board meeting date. Motion made by Commissioner Groskreutz, seconded by Commissioner Bless to approve the agenda as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

Monahan produced an Unpaid Bills report totaling \$35,931.15 and noted there will still be regular and recurring bills arriving in the coming weeks that will be due before the next Executive Committee meeting. The bills were pretty standard business as usual. Monahan noted that there will also be in the next week another invoice for an estimated \$2,329 for an exhaust system repair on a bus that the vendor requires payment upon completion and they do not accept credit cards. There was discussion about some of the various bill details.

Motion made by Commissioner Groskreutz, seconded by Commissioner Bless to approve payment of the Unpaid Bills as presented including the upcoming exhaust system repair bill not 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.

Monahan produced a Bank Statement for the Transit Board. It showed that as of October 31, 2023 the Transit Board had \$388,971.37 for a bank balance. Monahan noted that the 4th Quarter State share of the 2023 Operations contract, which was reduced to \$100,000 from \$178,000 to reduce or eliminate an overpayment for the 2023 contract, was deposited in October. Also noteworthy was the repayment of one of the two Operation contract overpayments that will need to be repaid this fall. The 2020-2021 overpayment was \$58,469.07 for which payment was cleared by the State on October 31st. It is anticipated that the \$85,000 plus 2022 overpayment will be due within a month to 6 weeks. Also the 3rd Quarter Federal share of the Operations contract totaling \$164,005 was requested this past week and will be deposited in November which will also help with cashflow for these repayments.

For cashflow, Monahan had an update on the Cashflow Analysis presented at the October Full Board meeting. First, in the “Stressed Expenses” column he had the 2020-2021 overpayment at \$68,000 due to the calculations in the matrix instead of hard coding it. There is no need to have that amount be higher than expected it is a set amount so that reduced the amount of expenses in the Stressed Expenses column. For both columns, the 2024 Operations Contract is in the process of being executed and with that the State quarterly payments have been revealed. Before they

were anticipated to be \$185,000 per quarter but with a lower Federal obligation in 2024 the State contributions were increased to \$222,000 each quarter. Gaining almost \$40,000 each quarter helps immensely with cashflow analysis. There is still a need to be diligent with money management with this unprecedented money call-back from the State but it still seems to be manageable.

Discussion turned to Old Business and an update on the Labor Market Analysis study. Monahan reported there has been great progress with the Final Drafts now being reviewed by all parties and the Final Report anticipated to be presented to the Board in December. There were three aspects Monahan wanted to share now however, first it was learned that of the peer systems surveyed the Faribault – Martin County Transit Board is the only system without any Full-Time Drivers on staff. Second, the wage comparisons showed that the Board has reached its goal of being in the middle of the pack to the upper third of most systems when it comes to part-time wages. Lastly, with their Preliminary Recommendations one of them included considering creating Full Time Driver and / or Dispatcher positions in the future. This could lead to more attractive positions and getting a better pool of candidates to draw from when there are openings. It can also improve longevity of employment for younger generations as our incredibly valuable older generation staff decide to take advantage of their well-deserved second retirements. There was discussion about these three points from the study. Monahan was directed to begin the process of cost determinations for implementing potential Full Time staff in the future as the cost of benefits will definitely need to be considered and added.

Discussion turned to New Business. Commissioner Groskreutz explained how in the Human Services Joint Powers Board there is consideration of a policy that if a Board member has a certain number of absences a year their County Board will receive a notice letter. The County Board will then be able to decide if they would like to appoint a different individual to represent the County on the Joint Powers Board instead of the commissioner with excessive absences. There was discussion about this potential policy for the Transit Board. Monahan was asked to ensure it was acceptable by MnDOT and to have a proposed policy to consider for 2024 soon.

Discussion turned to the ridership report. Monahan reported that October was an incredible month in terms of ridership for the Prairie Lakes Transit system. Other than March of 2023 this was the best month in terms of ridership since the end of the pandemic. For Faribault County this was the second best ridership amount month of all time behind March of 2023. Martin County showed another steady increase over previous year's amounts. With strong Martin County ridership, and in particular City of Fairmont route ridership, the system will perform well for a month in terms of ridership. Historically November shows a decrease with holiday breaks and closures but in recent years it has remained fairly consistent from October to November and Monahan reported that the first week of November was been very busy.

Discussion turned to the scheduling of the next Full Transit Board meeting. For December the Transit Board will be meeting following the Human Services Board meeting on December 20th. The start time will be set for 10:30 a.m. or begin at the conclusion of Human Services. Monahan noted that if the Human Services meeting is completed before 10:30 we cannot start early. It was noted that at times a break in between the Board meetings would be appreciated.

With no further business to wit, a motion was made by Commissioner Bless and seconded by Commissioner Groskreutz, to adjourn and the Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

JOINT TRANSIT BOARD
FARIBAULMARTIN COUNTIES



Elliot Belgard, Joint Transit Board Chair

ATTEST: 
Jaime Bless, Board Secretary