

Faribault-Martin County Joint Transit Board
Faribault – Martin County Human Services Center Conference Room
115 W 1st Street
Fairmont, MN 56031
Wednesday November 19, 2025 10:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 10:25 a.m. by Board Chair Billeye Rabbe.

Joint Transit Board members present were: Faribault County Commissioners Groskreutz, Anderson, Loveall, Paschke, and Young and Martin County Commissioners Rabbe, Bless, Kristenson, Loughmiller, 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 Loughmiller, seconded by Commissioner Paschke to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion was made by Commissioner Groskreutz, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the meeting minutes for the August 26, 2025 Full Board meeting, and the September 5, October 3, and November 7, 2025 Executive Committee meetings. Motion passed unanimously.

There was no Old Business to discuss at this time.

Discussion turned to New Business and staff wage adjustments for 2026 for both full-time administration and full-time and part-time drivers and all other staff. Commissioner Young noted that he wished for the Board to consider the full-time increase and the part-time increase separately to which the rest of the group agreed. Monahan presented two tables, the first a table showing the proposed wage increase for full-time staff that are on the grade and step scale. For 2026, full-time administrative staff members (Transit Director and Operations Manager) are due step increases along with the proposed cost of living adjustment of 3 percent. Monahan explained that the 3 percent matches what was given for 2025 and he believes it is consistent with other county agencies in the area. The table shows the differences between 2025 wages and the proposed 2026 wages. There was discussion regarding the timing of the step awards and the consistency with Faribault County, Martin County and one of the two other Joint Powers Boards. There was also a question of why only administrative full-time staff were on the grade and step scale and Monahan noted that topic would be addressed later in the meeting. Monahan relayed that the Executive Committee discussed this topic and recommended the 3 percent increase and the step increases.

Motion made by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Bless to award the Full-Time administrative staff (Transit Director and Operations Manager) the proposed step increase to Step 8 for 2026 along with a 3 percent cost of living adjustment. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion turned to the part-time and full-time driver staff proposed increases. Monahan showed a table with two scenarios of 3 percent increases and 5.2 percent increases. He noted that the larger

proposed increase is an effort to get the Non-CDL / Starting wage for Transit Drivers over the \$19 per hour threshold. If 3 percent is awarded the starting wage is only \$18.61 per hour. There was discussion about the current level of staffing and Monahan stated that the roster had been fairly full but with the recent sudden loss of two drivers it showed how quickly the roster can have a problematic deficit and how recruitment needs to be easy. Monahan indicated that the Executive Committee discussed the topic and recommended the 3 percent increase to be consistent with full-time and other area increases but they did want the Full Board to discuss the proposed 5.2 percent increase.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bless, seconded by Commissioner Paschke to award the part-time staff and full-time drivers a 5.2 percent wage increase in 2026. After lengthy discussion the motion failed with 5 votes for and 5 votes against.

A motion was made by Commissioner Loughmiller, seconded by Commissioner Loveall to award the part-time staff and full-time drivers a 3 percent wage increase in 2026. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion turned to a proposed new position with the Transit Board. Monahan explained that with recent workload balances and planning for future needs it has been determined that a mid-level supervisor position should be explored. This position would be able to help with more of the vehicle and training issues that are ongoing, while also maintaining a route driving responsibility. Monahan asked around to other systems about the need and determined the most logical position to create is a "Lead Driver" which would handle a number of responsibilities including more details on vehicle inspections, more tasks when training and more importantly re-training drivers. He provided a job description that was more responsibilities added to the existing Transit Driver job description to maintain the same qualifications and requirements. Monahan noted that once the position is approved MnDOT would need to authorize it and then a wage amount can be set ideally between the current Transit Driver wage and the Safety Manager wage. There was discussion about how the increased wage would be funded, how much the job description needed more details, and even the outright necessity of this defined position. There was no action taken on the creation of the position at this time saying the job description more refinement and details and budgeting needs more planning.

Discussion turned to the proposed idea to add staff to the grade and step scale. Monahan noted that this topic was briefly touched on at the November Executive Committee meeting and he stated that with a desire to add any positions would require the assistance of an industry expert. He noted that MnDOT has consultants available to help with topics like this and they would be able to help assign positions to the existing grade and step scale based on existing or revised job descriptions. There was discussion to clarify that there would only be a desire to have full-time staff of any position be on the grade and step scale. No part-time staff would be added.

A motion was made by Commissioner Loughmiller, seconded by Commissioner Groskreutz to table the grade and step additions effort until the potential Lead Driver position is finalized. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion turned to the ridership report. Monahan reported that with the unfortunate closure of MN Para Transit this past summer, Prairie Lakes Transit has been working to fill gaps. Many Martin County routes have had an increase in ridership in the past couple months in large part due to the needs of people that were using that service before. September also brought the return of Faribault County routes providing service to a number of preschoolers traveling to school and daycare. Preschool ridership is not as high as previous years it is still a noticeable increase in the routes run out of Blue Earth and system wide come September.

There has been steady growth over the 2024 amounts for most months in 2025 and that is the consistent goal, to at least beat the number from last year. In October there was almost a 4 percent increase which the drivers and office staff were very proud of as they accomplished that while implementing the new dispatching software. Commissioner Groskreutz noted that eastern Faribault County may be better served in the future if another satellite garage was in Wells or another eastern county town. It would cut down long drive times and might widen the potential driver pool of people that would like to work for the transit system but don't want to drive to Blue Earth to get to work. There was discussion about systemwide service hours and potential shifts or additions, in particular what might be needed to start bringing residents to Albert Lea again.

Discussion turned to the Financial Reports. Monahan started by noting that the 2024 audit was completed with an unmodified opinion. There were a few administrative findings that were expected due to the size of our operation and have been addressed already with the auditors. In addition, a separate audit completed by MnDOT for the 2023 Operations Contract came back with zero findings. Monahan noted he was told this is rare and something all should be proud of for having good processes in terms of revenue and expenditures. All relevant staff were congratulated on the performance.

Monahan presented the Bill Payment List since the last Full Board meeting on August 26th and noted the repayment of \$57,653 which was the State and Federal share of the Bus 20 total loss settlement with MCIT. There was brief discussion about the settlement details. He noted the remaining bills were business as usual however there was discussion regarding some bills.

Next was a table presenting the expenditures through September 2025 for the Operations Contract. It showed some line items have money moved into them based on higher than anticipated expenses but overall, the budget has not exceeded the 75 percent expected at this point of the year. In addition, as of the end of September, the expected need for our local revenue for 2025, which was \$92,000 or 5 percent of our projected budget expenditures, has been earned. This means that any money earned in October, November, and December will be added to the Transit Reserve fund for future local share for capital purchases.

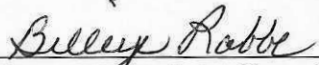
Per Minnesota Statute 13D.05 Sub, 3 the next part of the meeting is closed to the public to conduct the performance review of the Transit Director.

At 11:30 am a motion was made by Commissioner Koons, seconded by Commissioner Loughmiller to go into closed session.

At 11:55 am a motion was made by Commissioner Loughmiller, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to open the meeting back up to the public and with no further business to wit the Board chair adjourned the meeting.

The next Executive Committee meetings will be held on Friday December 12th in Truman at the Prairieland Facility. The next Full Board meeting will be held Tuesday December 23rd and is planned to be held in Fairmont as well.

JOINT TRANSIT BOARD
FARIBAULT - MARTIN COUNTIES



Billeye Rabbe Joint Transit Board Chair

ATTEST:



Joe Loughmiller, Board Secretary