

Faribault-Martin County Joint Transit Board – Executive Committee
Martin County Courthouse
201 Lake Avenue Fairmont, MN 56031
February 8, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Board Chair Elliot Belgard.

Joint Transit Board Executive Committee members present were: Faribault County Commissioner Young and Groskreutz and Martin County Commissioners Belgard and Mahoney. Also present was Jenna Schmidtke, Faribault County Veteran's Service Officer, and Jeremy Monahan, Faribault – Martin County Transit Director.

Board Chair started the meeting by asking for any additions to the agenda. There were none.

Motion made by Commissioner Mahoney, seconded by Commissioner Young to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Monahan asked that item 5.1 Discussion regarding a potential Disabled Veteran's Ridership Program be moved to the first item on the agenda to accommodate presence of the Faribault County VSO who had been able to attend the meeting to discuss the topic with the Executive Committee. The chair agreed and discussion ensued regarding the topic. Background of the topic was discussed with Schmidtke and Monahan noting some of the events that had led to this being brought before the board. Schmidtke had inquired with Monahan to see if Disabled Veterans are eligible for free rides on the Prairie Lakes Transit system as this is a policy that must be followed by larger city transit systems with fixed-route service. Monahan had looked into the matter with MnDOT and while the smaller rural systems (5311 funding) are not required to provide this type of service, according to Jean Meyer, MnDOT Project Manager, the systems are able to adopt a policy that would allow this benefit to be given to qualified veterans. To qualify a veteran must be certified by the Veteran's Administration as having a service related disability that must be indicated on their Veteran's Health Identification Card which must be presented to the driver upon boarding. A personal care attendant for the rider is still eligible to ride for free with this program. Commissioner Belgard noted that the Transit Board would be behind anything possible to assist with veterans so long as they are allowed to do it and that it appears this policy is allowed according to Meyer and MnDOT. Commissioner Groskreutz asked if other smaller rural systems had implemented a similar policy. Monahan said he had not found one yet but had not done considerable research. He noted he would reach out to colleagues at other systems and find out if there are similar policies and use their policy as a template. It was asked if any disabled veteran would be able to use this service or only disabled veterans from Martin and Faribault County to which Monahan replied he assumed all disabled veterans would be eligible similar to how if a disabled Martin or Faribault County veteran traveled to the Twin Cities, they would be eligible to ride their fixed route service for free when in the Twin Cities. When asked how many rides this might affect, Schmidtke said she could see 6-10 regular users from Faribault County that would benefit quite a bit from this type of service. This would also help reduce the transportation burden of the VSO Office in Faribault County. Schmidtke also noted that she had been in contact with Martin County VSO Doug Landsteiner

and he said he would definitely be interested in this program and to keep him updated as things progress.

After further discussion regarding potential costs and developing a written policy, a motion was made by Commissioner Groskreutz, seconded by Commissioner Mahoney, to have Monahan draft a policy that would allow disabled veterans to ride the Prairie Lakes Transit system without charge and recommend that this policy be presented to the Full Transit Board and approved. Motion passed unanimously.

Monahan produced an Unpaid Bills report totaling \$45,661.14 and as usual a number of the regular and recurring bills have not yet arrived and would need to be authorized for payment to avoid late fees. The D&R Repair bill for work completed in January was discussed at length. Monahan reported that while there were some costly repairs, many needed to pass the annual DOT inspection, the large amount was unacceptable and this had been conveyed to the Safety Manager and D&R Repair staff. Monahan explained a few steps that will be taken to have a better grasp on expenses so that a large bill this size will not happen again including weekly updates on the monthly expenditures to date and searching for other vendors that may be able to complete some of the work at a lower cost. It was noted that the service level in terms of how prompt D&R is for the transit system is unmatched.

Motion made by Commissioner Mahoney, seconded by Commissioner Young 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.

Monahan produced Bank Statements for the Transit Board. It showed that as of January 31, 2019 the Transit Board had \$265,254.30 for a bank balance. There was a large deposit on January 30th of \$189,622.50 which is the Quarter 1 funding from the State. The quarterly share increased over last year's quarterly shares despite the reduced annual budget because the Federal share, which is based on a percentage of the actual operating deficit per quarter, was reduced. In 2018 it was 40 percent of the deficit while in 2019 it is 25 percent.

Monahan produced for the Executive Committee a January Bill Payment list. This is not normally presented to the Executive Committee, only the Full Board, but with the authorization of paying regular and recurring bills given to the Transit Director, there was a bill paid in January that Monahan wanted to report as soon as possible. The MCIT bill, which is a regular bill annually, arrived after the January Executive Committee and was due by the end of January. This bill covers both auto insurance and workers compensation insurance and was for \$26,640 in total and payment was sent by Monahan the last week of the January to avoid any late penalty. Also of note, two vendors had lost checks that were cut and mailed to them and rather than printing new checks, Monahan stated that he paid the vendors with the credit card so that they had their payment in full. If the checks happen to be found they will be returned to Monahan to be destroyed.

Discussion turned to Old Business and an update on the Transit Facility Building construction project. The application that was due by January 15th was submitted on time and on January 22nd

a notice of award was sent to Monahan from MnDOT. The total project cost awarded was \$270,000 and MnDOT will contribute up to \$216,000 of that amount (80 percent). The contract has not been finalized but having an award letter was further in the progress that achieved before. Commissioner Young asked what would happen once the contract was signed. Monahan said there will be an RFQ for finalizing construction plans and then an RFP for construction and construction management.

Monahan provided an update stating the progress of the 2017 audit. The rescheduled exit interview was scheduled to take place after the Executive Committee meeting on February 8th but was postponed due to weather and poor traveling conditions. It was discussed that a possible date where Commissioners Belgard and Groskreutz, who were slated to attend the meeting with Monahan, would be together was next Friday the 15th after the Prairieland meeting. Monahan said he would check with Prairieland and OSA staff and see if rescheduling it then would work. Otherwise after the Full Board meeting on the 20th was another option.

Discussion turned to New Business. Monahan reported that the Transit Facility project was part of a statewide initiative to fund some extra capital projects that might be needed by the transit systems. MnDOT found that after the applications were received and awarded that more funds would be available. Because of that, MnDOT has elected to amend the 2019 Operation contracts to reflect that the local share be reduced from 15 percent to 5 percent with the hope that the extra 10 percent would be able to be used by the transit systems for local share on other initiatives. This news was welcomed by the entire Executive Committee.

Monahan then presented an exercise in creating a “wish-list” for non-constrained capital spending. The consultants that are working on the 5-year Plans asked this to be done without regard to concerns about cost or local approval. Monahan had created a list of some practical and some more outlandish ideas. This ranged from a new mower tractor/snow blower that can be used once Martin County has less of a presence at the Transit Facility, to another new bus, to a facility or building rehab to create a facility with heat and office space in Blue Earth. Monahan said that while a local share is not likely to be eliminated from any capital project because there is a desire for the system’s to have some “skin in the game” a reduction may be possible. This list was purely speculative at this point but Monahan wanted to make sure the Executive Committee had a chance to weigh in with any thoughts. Most discussion focused on the potential for another new bus to help reduce repair costs and an updated facility in Blue Earth in the future.

Discussion regarding Personnel Actions ensued. Monahan reported that Cindy Telkamp, Transit Dispatcher, had resigned. Motion made by Commissioner Groskreutz, seconded by Commissioner Mahoney to accept the resignation of Cindy Telkamp. Motion passed unanimously.

Monahan produced the tables for system ridership. January was struggle for the system. The pace of ridership was going pretty well but then the last week of the month had some dangerous temperatures and bad weather. These weather conditions caused the closing of the system for an entire day and reduced rural service on a number of days. Many regular riders cancelled their trips and MRCI and Step Inc. had reduced ridership even when they were open. So the weather

hurt the ridership for January. While it does not show up in any chart yet, Monahan reported that on Friday February 1st, he learned from the Operations Manager that over 300 rides were provided by the system. A normal busy day would approach 200 but to provide over 300 rides in one day was unprecedented. Also, Ops reported approximately 15 new riders have called and made reservations in the first week of February. So hopefully ridership numbers will start to increase.

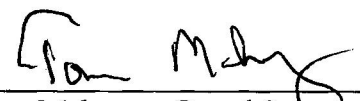
The next Executive Committee meeting will be held Friday March 8th at 8:00 a.m. at the Martin County Courthouse. The next Full Transit Board meeting is scheduled to follow the Human Services Board meeting on Wednesday February 20th in the Faribault County Courthouse in Blue Earth. T

With no further business to wit, a motion was made by Commissioner Groskreutz, seconded by Commissioner Young to adjourn and the Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

JOINT TRANSIT BOARD
FARIBAULT-MARTIN COUNTIES



Elliot Belgard, Joint Transit Board Chair

ATTEST: 

Tom Mahoney, Board Secretary