

Faribault-Martin County Joint Transit Board  
Fairmont Transit Facility  
1023 North Dewey Street  
Fairmont, MN 56031  
Tuesday June 25, 2024 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Board Chair Bill Groskreutz.

Joint Transit Board members present were: Faribault County Commissioners Groskreutz, Anderson, and Young and Martin County Commissioners Flohrs, Belgard, Bleess, Smith, and Koons. Missing was Faribault County Commissioners Roper and Loveall. 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 Flohrs to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion was made by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the meeting minutes for the April 23, 2024 Full Board meeting, the May 3 and June 7, 2024 Executive Committee meetings. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion turned to Old Business and a discussion regarding modifying the language of the Transit Board By-Laws in regards to Transit Advisory Committee appointments. Monahan noted that he along with some County Commissioners, are involved in an area group call Stronger Together with a subcommittee called Access to Healthcare. This group meets quarterly and consists of people from Human Services, area healthcare, schools, elderly care, and some others. MnDOT has stated that the Transit Advisory Committees could be imbedded with a group like the Access to Healthcare meetings as an agenda item for each meeting. Monahan even noted that at the recent MnDOT Spring Workshop a transit system near Mankato stated in a panel that their TAC is handled in just that type of manner. New language for the By-Laws that moves the organization responsibility to the Transit Director and removes the term lengths and location directives is being presented for approval. The new wording allows for more flexibility to utilize the Access to Health group or a similar group in the future. Monahan noted that this matter was discussed by the Executive Committee at their June meeting and a motion was passed recommending the Full Board approve the modifications to the By-Laws language. A current member list of the Access to Healthcare group to illustrate the different groups that are represented was presented. There was also discussion on ensuring that the protocols for modifying the By-Laws would be followed and Monahan said he checked and that By-Laws can be changed at any regular or special meeting by a simple majority vote.

Motion made by Commissioner Koons, seconded by Commissioner Bleess to approve the language changes to the By-Laws in regards to Transit Advisory Committee appointments allowing for the Transit Director to assemble the individuals rather than the commissioners appointing them and eliminating the term lengths and rotating meeting locations. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion turned to an update on Replacement Vehicles. Monahan noted that the six buses purchased in 2021 from North Central and discussed at length in April have not yet been delivered but progress has been made on their completions. No delivery date is predicted. However Monahan reminded the Board that in 2021 there was another bus that was purchased from a different vendor, United Bus Sales. This bus was purchased under a different funding source which allowed for no local share to be required. Recently the sales rep from United reached out and said that the bus had gone through the manufacturing delays found with all buses in the past few years but is almost complete and about to be delivered to their shop in Monticello for final inspections. Once that is complete delivery to Fairmont should follow sometime this summer. Monahan noted that the total cost for this vehicle was amended to be around \$134,000 which will have to be paid in full upon acceptance and then a Request for Funds will be submitted to MnDOT where 100 percent will be reimbursed. Commissioner Belgard asked how much time until funds are received back after a request is made and Monahan said they are still about 30 days. Belgard stated that we are not in a position right now to delay any deliveries simply because we cannot pay an invoice so we need to have a vendor deliver a vehicle as soon as possible. We can then utilize our ability to approach the member counties, which was authorized in April, to ask for cashflow assistance if needed. The rest of the Board and Monahan agreed.

Discussion turned to New Business and the 2025 Operations Grant Application. Monahan briefly recapped MnDOT's idea to have systems request less than the maximum 5 percent allowable increase for 2025 and have the savings be used for Replacement Vehicle funding statewide. He then stated that we would not be able to do that for 2025 in fact the plan proposed exceeds the \$1,607,800 allowed by upwards of \$150,000 due to the addition of Full Time drivers and the costs associated with staffing benefits. Monahan went on to explain how in prior years there have been plans that have exceeded the allowed budget award but that for the past five contracts going back to 2018 the Transit Board typically utilizes about 90 percent of the contract award funds by the end of the term.

There was discussion about the service hour reductions plans, which included some reductions to the Deviated Routes in Fairmont in Blue Earth by 1 hour per day, and reductions to Saturday service in Fairmont and Blue Earth to 10 hours in Fairmont in 6 hours in Blue Earth. There was also discussion about the addition of Full Time driver staff, their cost, the fact that Prairie Lakes Transit is the only system in the area without Full Time drivers, among other discussion points.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bleess, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to accept the Executive Committee recommended Budget and Service Design Plan along with addition of Full Time Driver staff. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion turned to the 2025 Replacement Vehicle Grant Application. Monahan stated that the 2025 Vehicle Replacement application is also due on June 28<sup>th</sup> and explained how MnDOT provides a spreadsheet each year showing which vehicles in the fleet are eligible to be replaced. He presented this year's spreadsheet which showed that for 2025 the Transit Board is eligible to replace up to three (3) vehicles which doesn't mean that three buses will be awarded only that three of our current vehicles are eligible and can be applied for replacement if desired. Monahan went on to say that for 2025 both accessible Minivans and Transit Vans are going to be available

on the State contract. This is new for the State as cutaway buses were only available previously. The accessible mini-van owned by the Transit Board that had State and Federal funds had to be procured purely by the Transit Board. Vans should have significant savings over the buses which now are estimated to cost up to \$234,000 for 2025 but Transit Vans might be half that cost. Monahan and the Executive Committee discussed this matter and proposed plan a plan to apply for all three but that one of the vehicles be replaced with a Transit Van instead of a cutaway bus to see how that style vehicle would work for the system. They passed a motion recommending the Full Board approve the proposed plan.

Motion made by Commissioner Bleess, seconded by Commissioner Young to approve the Executive Committee recommendation of applying for all three vehicles in 2025 and that one of the vehicles be changed to a Transit Van. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion turned to the annual financial agreement with MnDOT. Monahan stated that each year a resolution must be passed stating that the Transit Board is agreeing to receive funding from MnDOT along with agreeing to certain local share percentages. This year the resolution will again state that Operations local share can be 5 percent due to the legislative mandate. The resolution will continue to state that for Capital local share can be “up to” 20 percent per the advice of MnDOT, likely due to some potential federal funding matching requirements for capital purchases, but there will be a 10 percent local share requirement for vehicle purchases completed by the Transit Board. The language and result of the resolution are as follows:

**RESOLUTION IMPLEMENTING AGREEMENT WITH MNDOT AND  
FARIBAULT – MARTIN COUNTY TRANSIT BOARD dba PRAIRIE LAKES TRANSIT  
YEAR 2025 TRANSIT OPERATIONS GRANT**

BE IT RESOLVED, the **Faribault – Martin County Transit Board** has applied for 2025 Transit Operation Grants and enters into an Agreement with the State of Minnesota to provide public transit services to the people of Faribault County and Martin County under the common name Prairie Lakes Transit;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the **Faribault – Martin County Transit Board** agrees to provide a local share of 5 percent of the total operating cost and up to 20 percent of the total capital costs.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the **Faribault – Martin County Transit Board** agrees to provide 100 percent of the local share necessary for expenses that exceed funds available from the State.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the **Faribault – Martin County Transit Board** authorizes the **Transit Director** or **Board Chairperson** to execute the aforementioned Agreement and any amendments thereto.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, upon a motion by **Commissioner Koons**, and seconded by **Commissioner Bleess** and PASSED with **8 ayes** and **0 nays**. Said Resolution was adopted via roll call vote this 25<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2024.

Discussion turned to the Ridership Report. Monahan stated that he is very excited about the results of the current ridership report. In May the overall total was approaching numbers not seen since before the pandemic. Many systems measure themselves on how quickly they achieved “pre-pandemic” ridership levels and Monahan cautioned about claiming to be at that level yet, but to have a month where we approached the same amounts was exciting. Ridership gains from providing service to STEP in both Fairmont and Blue Earth from the hard work of the Operations Manager and Dispatch Staff and Office Manager have been instrumental in helping these numbers. Monahan said the drivers are motivated and are getting monthly summary reports on the ridership in regards to a goal of achieving a 10 percent increase over the previous year’s monthly amount. This has been accomplished each month this year so far.

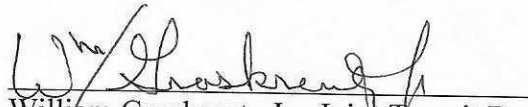
Discussion turned to the Financial Reports. Monahan produced the Bill Payment Report since the Full Board meeting on April 23, 2024. There was brief discussion on some of the bills.

Second he presented a report showing Year-to-Date revenue and expenditures on the 2024 Operations Contract. It showed that through May is 42 percent of the calendar year so any expense over 42 percent would need to be scrutinized as to why. However the annual insurance premium payments and the annual communications radio maintenance agreement payments both made in January are the only expenditures over 42 percent to date. There was discussion regarding the Revenue line item reporting and why it showed one line item "underperforming" at 37 percent to date and another line item at an unexpected 126 percent to date. Monahan explained that MnDOT changed how they categorized the reporting of fare collection revenues when it comes to fares paid by organizations such as Human Services, STEP, or perhaps one of the area hospitals versus the general public paying the fare. The overall revenue to date is 43 percent which is just above the expected pace.

The next Executive Committee meetings will be held on Thursday July 12<sup>th</sup> in Truman. The next Full Board meeting will be held on Tuesday August 27<sup>th</sup> in Blue Earth.

With no further business to wit, a motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Belgard to adjourn and the Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

JOINT TRANSIT BOARD  
FARIBAULMARTIN COUNTIES



William Groskreutz Jr., Joint Transit Board Chair

ATTEST:

  
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Greg Young, Board Secretary