

Faribault-Martin County Joint Transit Board  
Faribault County Human Services Center Conference Room  
412 North Nicollet Street  
Blue Earth, MN 56013  
Wednesday December 18, 2024 10:30 a.m.

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

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

Motion was made by Commissioner Flohrs, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the meeting minutes for the October 16, 2024 Full Board meeting, and the November 8 and December 6, 2024 Executive Committee meetings. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion turned to Old Business and an update on the Blue Earth Transit Facility application. Monahan updated the board that the application to MnDOT at the end of September was accepted and awarded for the 2026 budget calendar. Monahan summarized the project which includes acquisition of three portions of the existing Blue Earth City Hall and Fire House complex, planned demolitions, renovations, and all reconstructions that are needed. The final estimated project cost came just under \$375,000 and that is the project amount that was awarded. The local share for the project will be 20 percent. He noted that the Executive Committee discussed the matter at their December meeting and the progress of Faribault County's acquisition of the building which would be needed as a placeholder until the contract with MnDOT is awarded and funds are available for the Transit Board. Commissioner Groskreutz discussed the work he and Commissioner Young had been doing with the City of Blue Earth in terms of discussions for a potential acquisition. Faribault County would need to have a session regarding the potential acquisition and County staff will work to have that included in the Board meetings in early January. Commissioner Belgard noted that it will be good to have something of this caliber in Blue Earth, which is such an upgrade from the current situation. He noted the building is "marvelously adequate" for the Transit Boards' need in terms of vehicle storage and office space. There was no action needed at this time.

Discussion turned to New Business and the 2025 Wage Adjustments for all Transit Board staff. Monahan noted that all staff will be considered this year in December for a January increase. He explained that the Executive Committee had discussing the potential wage increase amounts a number of meetings this past fall. For Full-Time Staff it is recommended they are given a step increase and a cost-of-living adjustment added to the step of 3 percent, similar to last year.

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For part-time staff, Monahan explained that the wage adjustment goal is more in increasing staff recruitment and retention. A wave of retirements at the end of 2024 will create a great need for Transit Driver to become an attractive occupation for area residents. To do that, the Executive Committee researched what other similar sized and nearby rural transit systems were paying their drivers at the starting level. The survey found that Prairie Lakes Transit is solidly "average" with a few of the systems surveyed having higher and a few lower starting wages. With that, the proposed 6 percent increase, which provides a little more than \$1.00 per hour increase and is a match to last year's percentage increase, is being recommended for all part-time staff positions. He noted that the Executive Committee passed a motion at their October meeting recommending to the Full Board that the 6 percent wage increase be given to the Part-Time staff and that the Full-Time staff be given a 3 percent increase in addition to being granted a step on the Grade and Step scale.

There was discussion regarding a few of the numbers. A motion was made by Commissioner Bleess, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the Executive Committee's recommendation of a 6 percent increase for part-time staff positions and a step increase and 3 percent increase for full-time staff effective the payroll period beginning December 29, 2024. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion turned to the Ridership Report. Monahan noted how the system continues to perform at a 10 percent increase over 2023 amounts which is the overall month to month goal. Monahan noted similar to the last board meeting that having Martin County routes keep consistent numbers throughout the year is an ideal situation and it has been happening. Faribault County is consistent with patterns of past years. Monahan noted a few stats he gathered show that through November there has already been a 3.6 percent increase over the 2023 ridership amount. The system is on track to have an annual increase of 11.5 percent when over 51,000 riders are expected to have been served. He noted the last time the system was had over 50,000 riders was in 2019 before the reductions that came with the pandemic. All actual 2024 year-end totals will be shown in February's Board meeting.

Discussion turned to Special Business and the Election of the Transit Board Officers for 2025. Monahan noted that historically commissioners have moved up a position and the Chair has moved back to the Treasurer position. With the influx of new commissioners and retirement of Commissioner Belgard, there will have to be an adjustment to that practice for 2025s election. In addition, because of three new commissioners in Martin County, Commissioners Koons and Bleess have been working to strategize which of the many committees could have which commissioners. With that, the ascension of Commissioner Bleess to Chair in 2025 for the Transit Board was not necessarily the easiest or logistical favorite meaning that two new Martin County commissioners would be on the Executive Committee and that one of them would then be "in line" to be the Chair. There was discussion of how to address those concerns and it was decided, after discussion, that having a new Martin County commissioner as the Chair would work for the Transit Board.

A motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Young to nominate Martin County Commissioner-Elect Billeye Rabbe to be Chair. The Board Chair called three times for any other nominations. There were none. A unanimous vote approved the appointment of Commissioner-Elect Rabbe.

A motion was made by Commissioner Koons, seconded by Commissioner Belgard to nominate Faribault County Commissioner Greg Young to be Vice-Chair. The Board Chair called three times for any other nominations. There were none. A unanimous vote approved the appointment of Commissioner Young.

A motion was made by Commissioner Koons, seconded by Commissioner Bless to nominate Martin County Commissioner-Elect Joe Loughmiller to be Secretary. The Board Chair called three times for any other nominations. There were none. A unanimous vote approved the appointment of Commissioner-Elect Loughmiller.

A motion was made by Commissioner Koons, seconded by Commissioner Belgard to nominate Faribault County Commissioner Bill Groskreutz to be Treasurer. The Board Chair called three times for any other nominations. There were none. A unanimous vote approved the appointment of Commissioner Groskreutz.

The subject of the Transit Director's Annual Performance Review was next. Per Minnesota Statue 13D.05 Sub, 3 this section of the meeting is closed to the public. Motion was made by Commissioner Belgard, seconded by Commissioner Bless to go into closed session for the performance review. Motion passed unanimously at 11:05 until 11:30 when the session was opened back up to the public.


A motion was made by Commissioner Bless, seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the discussed performance review of the Transit Director and grant the increase in Step and 3 percent cost of living adjustment similar to full-time staff. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Belgard, in remarks closing his career on the Transit Board that he started in 2015, pointed out the partnership with Faribault Count being something he appreciated. The Transit Board wishes him along with retiring Commissioners Roper, Flohrs, and Smith well.

The next Executive Committee meetings will be held on Friday January 10<sup>th</sup> in Fairmont. The next Full Board meeting will be held in February.

With no further business to wit, a motion was made by Commissioner Koons, seconded by Commissioner Roper to adjourn and the Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

JOINT TRANSIT BOARD  
FARIBAULMARTIN COUNTIES

  
William Groskreutz Jr., Joint Transit Board Chair

ATTEST:   
Greg Young, Board Secretary

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