

**19th Meeting of the
MATBUS Coordination Committee
May 20, 2026 – 9:00 AM
Metro COG Conference Room/Zoom**

Members Present:

Deb White, Moorhead City Council, Chair
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Julie Bommelman, Fargo Transit Director
Susan Thompson, Fargo Finance Director
Sebastian McDougall, Moorhead City Council
Jenica Flanagan, Moorhead Finance Director
Mike Rietz, Moorhead Assistant City Manager
Dustin Scott, West Fargo City Administrator
Peyton Mastera, Dilworth City Administrator
Brit Stevens, NDSU Transportation Manager

Members Absent:

Denise Kolpack, Fargo City Commission
Ben Griffith, Metro COG Executive Director

Others Present:

Andrew Almer, MATBUS
Adam Altenburg, Metro COG
Jeff Anderson, The Arc of Cass County
Perry Baatz, City of Dilworth
Heidi Benke, MATBUS
Shaun Crowell, MATBUS
Brenda Derrig, City of Fargo
Mel Ell, Great Plains Food Bank
Josh Gordon, MATBUS
Luke Grittner, MATBUS
Jean Henning, City of Fargo
Eric Jorgenson, Signal Security
Aiden Jung, Metro COG
Wyatt Papenfuss, City of Fargo
Jordan Smith, MATBUS
Cole Swingen, MATBUS
Megan Zahradka, City of Moorhead
Linghao Zhang, Metro COG

1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. McDougall and seconded by Ms. Bommelman. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from April 15, 2026

A motion to approve the minutes for the April 2026 regular meeting was made by Mr. Rietz and seconded by Mr. Mastera. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

2. Public Comment Period

No members of the public addressed the committee.

3a. Resolution to Adopt Special Service Billing Methodology

Mr. Swingen presented an overview of special service billing. He explained that MATBUS had previously used Transdev's hourly billing rate to calculate charges for special services. However, because MATBUS no longer contracts with Transdev, he noted that a new methodology is needed. He stated that the proposed billing formula would calculate the charter service hourly rate by dividing budgeted total fixed-route expenses by budgeted total fixed-route revenue hours.

Mr. Strand asked why West Fargo's share was significantly lower in the proposed budget. Ms. Bommelman clarified that the table included in the packet reflects each entity's share of the 2026 budget.

Ms. Flannagan added that the City of Moorhead had reviewed the proposed methodology and did not identify any concerns.

A motion to approve the resolution to adopt a special service billing methodology was made by Mr. Rietz and seconded by Mr. McDougall. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

3b. 2027 Capital Project Cost Allocation Plan

Mr. Smith presented the proposed capital cost allocation plan. He explained that capital costs would be allocated using a revenue-hour-based methodology, with each entity's share of applicable capital costs proportionate to the revenue hours operated within each service category, including fixed route, paratransit, and systemwide services.

Mr. Smith noted that the methodology utilizes a three-year rolling average of service levels to account for annual fluctuations while minimizing abrupt shifts in costs among participating entities. He further explained that major capital projects, such as the Ground Transportation Center (GTC) deck overlay project, would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and may use a different cost allocation formula.

Ms. Flannagan asked whether the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) had been consulted regarding the proposed methodology. Mr. Smith replied that the FTA had been notified and had not identified any issues with the proposed approach.

Ms. Flannagan also requested additional information regarding revenue distribution and the allocation of proceeds from asset sales among the participating entities. In addition, she requested that the cost allocation methodology be incorporated into the Joint Powers Agreement and asked about the timeline for a complete draft of the agreement. Ms. Bommelman stated that she is currently preparing the document and anticipated having a full draft available in July.

Ms. Flannagan requested that this item be tabled to next month to allow more time to work out some of the finer details. Chair White asked whether this would throw off the budget timeline. Mr. Smith replied that it would not.

A motion to table the 2027 capital cost allocation plan was made by Ms. Flannagan and seconded by Ms. Bommelman. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

4a. April Budget to Actuals Review

Ms. Henning provided an overview of the April budget-to-actuals report. She noted that healthcare expenses remained below budget, while overtime costs continued to exceed budgeted levels. She stated that many of the trends observed in previous months have persisted and are expected to continue in the near term.

Ms. Henning emphasized the importance of operational data, noting that it serves as a key input to the cost allocation formula. Mr. Swingen then presented the operational data report, highlighting that West Fargo revenue hours increased by nearly 32 percent due to the resolution of a billing issue.

Chair White asked whether rising local gasoline prices were contributing to increased ridership. Mr. Swingen replied that MATBUS experienced a decline in ridership following the recent fare increase. While ridership increased slightly from the previous month, he noted that overall ridership remains below levels seen in prior years.

4b. Safety and Security Update

Mr. Swingen provided an update on ongoing efforts to improve safety throughout the MATBUS system. He reported that MATBUS had distributed a safety-focused memorandum to all bus operators to reinforce consistent procedures related to fare enforcement, transfer issuance, and responses to disruptive passengers. He also noted that MATBUS staff had been working with the City of Fargo to develop training on how to respond when a passenger claims to have a weapon onboard a bus.

Mr. Swingen further reported that staff had begun pursuing legislative changes to the North Dakota Century Code that would classify assaults against public transportation employees as a Class C felony. In addition, he stated that the proposed 2027 budget included an increase in security service hours, which would provide security coverage during all operating hours at the Ground Transportation Center (GTC).

Mr. Swingen provided an overview of several safety-related incidents that occurred during April and introduced Mr. Eric Jorgenson of Signal Security to discuss observations and trends being identified by security personnel in the field. Mr. Jorgenson presented an overview of Signal Security, the services it provides, and several initiatives currently being pursued in partnership with the City of Fargo.

Chair White asked about the proposed mobile response unit. Mr. Jorgenson explained that the unit would operate similarly to the security vehicles that patrol the Walmart parking lot on 13th Avenue in Fargo. He stated that the vehicle would patrol routes designated by MATBUS and would be available to respond to service calls as needed.

Chair White asked whether the number of incidents reported during the month appeared to be higher than in previous years. Mr. Swingen replied that April appeared to have experienced a higher-than-normal number of safety-related incidents.

Mr. Jorgenson added that future trend analysis will become more reliable as Signal Security continues to collect data and build a more comprehensive dataset, allowing for improved tracking and comparison of incidents over time.

4c. 2027 Operations and Capital Budget Proposal

Ms. Bommelman provided an overview of the proposed 2027 operating and capital budget. She began by reviewing several service changes identified in the Transit Development Plan. She noted that no service changes are proposed for Fargo, West Fargo, or North Dakota State University (NDSU). The primary changes would occur in Moorhead and include the elimination of Route 9, increased service frequency on Route 6, and the introduction of microtransit service.

Ms. Bommelman also explained that Route 4 would transition to hourly service. To maintain a direct connection between the Ground Transportation Center (GTC) and the Dilworth Walmart, a new express route, designated Route 4E, would be introduced. In addition, staff are proposing to eliminate Route 2C, which operates only during the academic year. She anticipated minimal impacts from this change, as Route 2 would continue to serve the area.

She stated that implementation of the proposed microtransit service would require the addition of seven drivers. The proposed budget also includes one additional road supervisor, one fixed-route driver, and one paratransit driver.

Ms. Bommelman further noted that the proposed budget includes additional funding to expand security service hours.

Ms. Flannagan asked whether the introduction of microtransit service would negatively affect fixed-route ridership. Mr. Smith replied that Via's platform is designed to recommend the quickest and most efficient travel option for passengers, whether fixed-route or microtransit, thereby minimizing potential competition between the services.

Chair White asked why the proposed microtransit service could not provide direct service to the Ground Transportation Center. Ms. Bommelman explained that challenges exist with providing service across the state line, as the GTC is located in North Dakota. However, she noted that direct service to the GTC could be explored further if it would improve overall system efficiency.

Mr. Strand expressed appreciation for the additional investment in Moorhead. He noted that if Moorhead continues to receive increased state funding, the city could potentially be considered as a future location for a MATBUS facility.

5. Other Business

Chair White recognized Mr. Mastera for his service to the committee and the community, noting that this was his final meeting as the City of Dilworth's representative on the MCC.

Mr. Mastera introduced Perry Baatz, who will serve as Dilworth's new representative while the City of Dilworth conducts its search for a new city administrator.

Chair White adjourned the meeting at 10:27 AM.