

**96th Meeting of the
Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board
October 4, 2023
Virtual Meeting**

Members Present:

Brad Olson, West Fargo City Commission
Kevin Hanson, Chair
Amber Borah, Dilworth City Council
Brit Stevens, NDSU
Sebastian McDougall, Moorhead City Council
Scott Ebsen, M|State
Jean Hollaar, MSUM

Members Absent:

Denise Kolpack, Fargo City Commission
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Ryan Nelson, Moorhead City Council
Cindy Girdner, Valley Senior Services
Brian Arett, Valley Senior Services
Paul Grindelnd, Valley Senior Services
Sarah Orr, Concordia College

Others Present:

Julie Bommelman, City of Fargo
Michael Maddox, FM Metro COG
Chelsea Levorsen, FM Metro COG
Ben Griffith, FM Metro COG
Matthew Pinotti, First Transit
Jordan Smith, City of Moorhead
Lori Van Beek, City of Moorhead
Luke Grittner, City of Fargo
Tarren Haak, City of Moorhead
Shawn Crowel, City of Fargo

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Hanson called the meeting to order. A quorum was present and the meeting officially began at 8:00 am. Introduction of new members; Sebastian McDougall – Moorhead City Council, Scott Ebsen – M|State, and Jean Hollaar - MSUM

2. Action Items

a. June 29, 2023, Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Olson and seconded by Nelson. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

b. Request from Clay County for Transit Service in North Moorhead

Van Beek stated that Clay County has requested transportation service to new DMV and Detox facilities at 34th Street North and 15th Ave. North. The area is not currently on an existing route and an in-house analysis was done by MATBUS. Van Beek noted that revising the route to include this area would affect transportation service to existing routes and it would be difficult to quantify demand warrant for a new service route. She mentioned a possible Clay County feeder service from the Walmart bus stop on 34th Street and 8th Ave. Van Beek asked the board if they would like to ask FM Metro COG to amend their 2024 work program for additional study analysis.

Maddox confirmed that FM Metro Cog does have allocated transit hours incorporated into their work program.

A motion for further study analysis by FM Metro COG was made by Nelson, and seconded, the motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

3. Informational Items

a. Annual Update to Safety Plan

Smith presented the updated safety plan. MATBUS Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan was adopted by the cities of Fargo and Moorhead in 2020 and has been updated annually thereafter. The safety committee reviewed and approved the plan on August 30th at their bi-monthly committee meeting.

Changes incorporated into the updated plan include:

- Updated safety targets for 2023
 1. Less safety events in 2022 than in 2021, but the 5-year rolling average removed a year with only one event in 2017
 2. Injuries on fixed route stayed the same (two), but the 5-year rolling average removed a year with only one injury in 2017
 3. One safety event and one injury in 2022 increased the Moorhead Targets
- Safety events and injury targets stayed the same on demand response

b. 2023 OPERATIONS Report, May – August, including 5-year trend – Luke Grittner & Lori Van Beek

Grittner presented the following route increase/decrease rates for Fargo

- Route 11 -22.3%
- Route 13 -1.91% - route running less frequently
- Route 14 -8.71% - route running less frequently
- Route 15 -.81% - route running less frequently
- Route 16 -1.16 %
- Route 17 +4.38%
- Route 18 +15.57%
- Route 20 +7.77%
- Route 24 +16.60%
- Route 31 +15.09%
- Route 32 – 7% - previously had an east and west route, west route discontinued
- Route 33 +15.26%
- Route 34 +107.34%
- Route 36 -3.36% -not currently running
- Link FM +67.75%
- Ind. Park on demand -40.52%
- Paratransit +2.16%

Van Beek presented the following route increase/decrease rates for Moorhead

- Route 1 +18.26%
- Route 2 -.01%
- Route 3 +6.71%
- Route 4 +7.06%
- Route 5 +8.74%
- Route 6 -2.33%
- Route 9 +57.96%

2022 to 2023 saw an increase of 8.16%, however, the rates are still below pre-Covid rates.

Van Beek Presented the following university/ College/ Senior Ride increase/decrease rates

- NDSU +11.25%
- MSUM - .36%
- Concordia +28.40%
- M|State +79.5%
- NDSCS +15.32%
- Senior Ride +8.65% (Fargo & Moorhead Combined)
 - o 72% of senior riders are those who require ambulatory services

Chair Hanson asked why number may be down. Van Beek stated that previously, majority of the passengers used MAT because of convenience. Stating a lot of riders returned to using their personal vehicles or are

currently working from home. She also noted that currently, there appears to be more men using MAT than women, potentially creating a perception of safety. Van Beek also commented that the reduced service is affecting ridership and that more drivers are needed. Julie commented that other transit municipalities are experiencing the same drop in ridership and staff shortages nationwide.

c. Route 18 Proposed Changes and Public Hearing Update

Van Beek presented proposed changes to route 18. The proposed change would remove a portion of the loop of route 18 that currently travels past the Sheyenne High School, businesses along 40th Avenue South, and through a portion of the Osgood Neighborhood. The route will travel its current path west on 40th Avenue south, turn south on to 47th Street south, and then turn east onto 44th Avenue south where it will return to its current route. This service change will allow for increased on-time performance of the route and will help ensure that riders who utilize route 18 can reliably make transfers to other MATBUS routes.

Six total comments were received in a comment box placed at the Ground Transportation Center- none of which related to the Route 18 changes. A public hearing was held on Monday, October 2, 2023 at 5:00pm during the Fargo City Commission Meeting

d. Presentation of Moorhead Transit 2024 Operating Budget – Lori Van Beek

Van Beek presented the preliminary 2024 budget. They are anticipating a 9.31% budget increase of \$408,060. The contract with TransDev for driver services is currently under negotiation. The 2024 budget reflects TransDev's current proposal. 2024 costs include the retirement of the Transit Manager and a four-month transition with the replacement employee. Both the 2023 and 2024 budgets are based on full approved service to 11:15pm; however, due to driver shortages, current services end at 10:15.

e. Update on Temporary Service Suspension and Related Staffing Shortage – Lori Van Beek & Julie Bommelman

Current temporary service suspensions include ending evening services at 10:15 pm and reduced frequency on routes 2, 3, and 15

- Route 2 is not operating 15-minute service from 2:30pm – 6:30 pm, Monday – Friday, during the academic year
- Route 13 is reduced to hourly service
- Route 15 does not have a fourth bus departing the GTC on the hour
- Route 15 has two busses departing the GTC at :15 and :45 after the hour, all day Monday – Saturday
- A third Route 15 bus departs the GTC at :30 after the hour from 10:30am – 5:30pm, Monday - Friday

Proposed additional temporary service suspensions include; end weekday service at 9:15pm, reduce Saturday service 7:15am-7:15pm, and reduce interlined Route 6 (Dilworth) and Route 9 (Southeast Moorhead) to 6:40am – 6:40pm.

MATBUS requires 89 drivers for full service, 75 drivers for the current temporary service, and 65 for the potential Temporary revised service. They currently have 63 drivers.

McDougall asked how Uber and other ride share services have affected MATBUS. Bommelman said that measuring the exact numbers is a challenge. Van Beek added that the night hours have been slightly affected, but ride share apps have been a nice supplement to MATBUS.

- f. Update on Negotiations with TransDev for 2024 Driver and Management Services – Julie Bommelman & Lori Van Beek

Negotiations with TransDev for drivers and management services in 2024 is ongoing and will address ways to attract and retain drivers. Other items to be negotiated include; potential pay differential for night and weekend drivers (shifts that suffer the most), potential wage increase, and cost of living increase.

4. Other Business

Hearing no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 AM.