

**22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the  
MATBUS Coordination Committee  
August 19, 2026 – 9:00 AM  
Metro COG Conference Room/Zoom**

**Members Present:**

Deb White, Moorhead City Council, Chair  
Nikkie Gullickson, Fargo City Commission  
John Strand, Fargo City Commission  
Cole Swingen, Assistant Transit Director (proxy)  
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  
Perry Baatz, Dilworth Finance Officer  
Brit Stevens, NDSU Transportation Manager  
Ben Griffith, Metro COG Executive Director

**Others Present:**

Adam Altenburg, Metro COG  
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  
Wyatt Papenfuss, City of Fargo  
Matt Pinotti, MATBUS  
Jordan Smith, 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 Mr. Strand. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

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

A motion to approve the minutes for the July 2026 regular meeting was made by Ms. Gullickson and seconded by Mr. McDougall. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

**2. Public Comment Period**

No members of the public addressed the committee.

**3a. Program of Projects – 5339 Suballocated Funds**

Mr. Smith presented the proposed FFY 2024 Section 5339 Program of Projects. NDDOT has made \$1 million in federal Section 5339 funding available to the City of Fargo. The proposed

program includes \$250,000 for bus passenger shelter rehabilitation and \$1 million for video surveillance improvements. Both projects were included in Fargo's 2026 capital budget.

Mr. Smith noted that MATBUS intends to bring future Programs of Projects to the committee prior to the applicable public hearing and grant application process. The proposed Program of Projects is scheduled for public notice on September 2 and 9, followed by a Fargo City Commission public hearing on September 14.

A motion to approve the proposed FFY 2024 Section 5339 Program of Projects and advancement of the projects through the required public hearing and grant application process was made by Ms. Gullickson and seconded by Mr. Strand. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

#### **4a. July Budget to Actuals Review**

Ms. Henning and Mr. Swingen provided the committee with an overview of the July budget-to-actuals review.

Ms. Henning noted that year-to-date revenues were approximately \$2.5 million below budget, primarily due to federal and state grant reimbursements that have not yet been drawn. Operating expenses were approximately \$580,000 under budget. Health insurance expenses were approximately \$400,000 below budget, offset in part by overtime expenses approximately \$415,000 over budget. She explained that staff anticipates drawing several outstanding grants before the end of the year, which should bring revenues more closely in line with budget projections.

Mr. Swingen noted that staff is refining operational budget-to-actual reporting to better account for monthly variations in ridership, revenue hours, and revenue miles rather than relying on annual estimates divided evenly across 12 months.

In response to a question by Chair White regarding driver vacancies and overtime, Mr. Pinotti reported that four fully licensed drivers were completing behind-the-wheel training, with two additional licensed drivers in classroom training. MATBUS anticipated being seven drivers short following two upcoming departures. He noted that driver shortages contribute to overtime expenses, including overtime among road supervisors.

#### **4b. Program of Projects – Section 5307 and 5339 Direct Funds**

Mr. Smith presented an overview of the City of Fargo's 2026 Program of Projects for FTA Section 5307 and Section 5339 funding. The Program of Projects includes approximately \$4.36 million in federal funding, including \$3.89 million in Section 5307 funding and \$471,470 in Section 5339 funding.

Mr. Smith explained that approximately \$2.17 million in Section 5307 funding is programmed for Fargo operating assistance, while approximately \$1.71 million will be suballocated to Moorhead. The Moorhead allocation reflects both its 2026 apportionment and an agreement between Fargo and Moorhead related to Section 5307 funds utilized by Fargo in 2025.

Section 5339 funding will support a pedestrian warning system, two microtransit expansion vehicles, and three road supervisor vehicles. Mr. Smith noted that future Programs of Projects will be brought before the committee to provide greater transparency regarding the use of federal transit funds prior to public hearings.

#### **4c. Joint Powers Agreement Update**

Mr. Smith reported that an initial draft of a revised Joint Powers Agreement has been developed and shared with Moorhead staff to begin discussions. He noted that it is MATBUS staff's goal to advance the agreement once a new MATBUS director is in place and, if possible, have a new agreement in effect by the beginning of 2027. Ms. Flanagan indicated the Moorhead staff would review the draft and continue discussions with Fargo.

#### **4d. Ground Transportation Center Relocation Update**

Mr. Swingen provided an update on the temporary relocation of MATBUS operations from the Ground Transportation Center (GTC). Following additional structural concerns at the GTC, Fargo administration directed MATBUS to vacate the facility. Operations were relocated to the former Fargo Police Station/Downtown Engagement Center at 222 4th Street North, with service beginning from the temporary location on August 17.

Mr. Swingen reported that the transition went smoothly and that MATBUS staff continues to make improvements to passenger amenities, signage, seating, and other features at the temporary facility. The new location provides space for dispatch, operations staff, drivers, offices, lockers, and an expanded driver break area.

In response to questions by Ms. Flanagan, Ms. Henning and Mr. Swingen indicated that costs associated with the relocation, including staff overtime, are being accounted for separately from the transit budget and will be borne by the City of Fargo rather than distributed among MATBUS partners. Ms. Derrig further explained that the decision to relocate was accelerated after an additional structural tendon failed at the GTC.

The committee expressed appreciation for MATBUS staff's quick response and emphasis on passenger and employee safety.

#### **4e. Safety and Security Update**

Mr. Swingen reviewed MATBUS safety and security incidents from July. Incidents included an interaction involving an individual experiencing mental health concerns and a separate confrontation between a passenger and driver. He emphasized the importance of de-escalation training and noted a slight overall decrease in reported incidents compared to recent months.

Chair White asked about incidents involving harassment or discriminatory comments toward passengers, particularly individuals wearing religious or traditional clothing, and whether additional driver training could be considered. Mr. Swingen indicated that MATBUS has not received many passenger reports of this nature but noted that similar incidents have occurred involving drivers. He indicated that additional training involving community organizations could be beneficial and could be explored.

#### **5. Other Business**

Mr. Strand noted that Mr. Smith and Mr. Swingen had advanced as finalists for the MATBUS director position following the interview and vetting process and thanked both for their service and interest in the position.

Chair White adjourned the meeting at 9:31 AM.