

97th Meeting of the Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board November 15, 2023 – 8:00 AM

Virtual Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

Denise Kolpack, Fargo City Commission
Brad Olson, West Fargo City Commission
Amber Borah, Dilworth City Council
Brit Stevens, NDSU
Sebastian McDougall, Moorhead City Council
Scott Ebsen, M | State
Jean Hollaar, MSUM
Ryan Nelson, Moorhead City Council
Sarah Orr, Concordia College

Members Absent:

Kevin Hanson, Chair
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Paul Grindeland, Valley Senior Services
Cindy Girdner, Valley Senior Services

Others Present:

Julie Bommelman, City of Fargo
Chelsea Levorsen, 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
Cole Swingen, City of Fargo
Jaron Capps, FM Metro GOC
Julie Sellner, Transdev
Brian Sellin, City of Fargo
Anonymous

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Hanson was not present. Commissioner Kolpack volunteered to chair the meeting. Kolpack called the meeting to order. A quorum was present and the meeting officially began at 8:01 am.

2. Action Items**2A. October 4th, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the minutes from the October 4th meeting was made and seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

2B. Amendment to Transdev Contract for 2024 – Julie Bommelman & Lori Van Beek

The current contract expires December 31st and Staff negotiations with Transdev are now completed. MATBUS is currently short 10-12 drivers. They have a 60% turnover rate for new hires during training and 53% turnover for drivers in service.

MATBUS' strategy to recruit and retain drivers includes:

1. Starting wage increase to be a preferred employer
2. Pay differential (additional \$2/hr.) for night and weekends
3. Hire full-time classroom trainer and survey existing drivers to determine retainage strategies
4. Reduce or eliminate split shifts

Current fixed-route service costs \$38.70/Hr. The proposed changes would increase to \$43.10/Hr. (Additional \$4.40 / 11%) Current paratransit service costs \$37.34/Hr. The proposed changes would increase to \$41.15/Hr. (Additional \$3.81 / 10%) The proposed cost increases include annual training wages, increase in starting pay scale, bonuses, and sign-on bonus. It also includes nine full-time management staff, New Classroom Trainer position, COLA increase, and technology (drive Cam system, Geotab performance data, and scheduling software). There is no change in Overhead and profit. Cost allocation is based on percentages of revenue hours.

Fargo \$5,715,853 (increase of \$697,001 / 14%)

Moorhead \$7,914,341 (increase of \$948,643 / 14%)

Kolpack asked if MATBUS had discussed the increase with Fargo's Finance Director. Julie said there has been discussion and that it is included in Fargo's budget and has been approved.

Nelson asked if there had been discussion with Moorhead. Van Beek said that she has had discussion with Moorhead, however, the amount she originally mentioned has increased and that she is planning to discuss the increase again. Olson also asked about discussions with West Fargo's Finance Director. Bommelman said that there has not been any discussion with West Fargo, but she will reach out for discussion.

A motion to approve the price proposal by Transdev for option year 2024, Contract Amendment #2 was made by Arett, seconded by Olson, and unanimously approved.

3A. Proposed change to replacement Card Fee – Jordan Smith & Lori Van Beek

Jordan Smith reported that the number of lost cards has increased substantially and the current card inventory has depleted faster than budgeted. The supply of the cards is low since covid, and lead time for a new shipment of cards is 12 weeks. Currently, the cost of a lost/stolen card is \$5, which covers the cost of card, printing on card, and administration costs to record replacement and discontinue previous card.

MATBUS customer care and marketing will encourage mobile tickets purchased on their smart phone at no additional fee.

A motion to approve the change in replacement card fee from \$5 to \$10 was made by McDougall, seconded by Nelson, and unanimously approved.

3. Informational Items

3A. Update on Transit Reorganizational Study

Bommelman provided an update on the Reorganizational Study conducted by KLJ.

1. Fargo has been approved as the designated recipient for Federal Grant Funds by Minnesota Governor Walz.
2. They are currently working on coordination of Fargo-Moorhead financial records and cost/revenue allocation between the jurisdictions.
3. Currently reviewing staffing needs related to new requirements as a large Urban UZA
4. They are considering merging transit staff into one organization.
 - a. Moorhead currently has 3 administration staff.
5. They are reviewing utilization of vehicles without consideration of ownership.
 - a. This would lower the expense for spare vehicles
 - b. Would allow for bus routes to cross state lines
6. With the goal of minimizing multiple approvals, KLJ is working on a proposed governance model
 - a. Option 1 : MAT Board with Technical Advisory Committee
 - b. Option 2 Hybrid : MAT Coordinating Board / Transit Technical Advisory Committee

Kolpack commented that she would prefer option 2. McDougall asked how often Option 2 would meet. Van Beek responded that they would likely meet monthly.

3B. Update on Vehicle Purchases

Jordan Smith said the following vehicles are on order:

Fixed-Route

1. 9 New Flyers on order for Fargo – February/March delivery
2. 1 New Flyer on order for Moorhead – February Delivery
3. 4 replacements for Fargo are funded for 2024

Paratransit

1. 4 E450 Elkhart Cutaway buses received for Fargo
2. 3 Ford Transit Wheelchair Accessible vans on order for Fargo – April Delivery
3. 2 E450 Elkhart Cutaway buses on order for Moorhead – April Delivery
4. 2 Fargo Paratransit replacement buses funded for 2024
5. 1 Moorhead paratransit replacement funded for 2024
6. 1 Moorhead Expansion bus funded for 2024 (possible on-demand vehicle)

Smith also shared a vehicle option for future consideration - the New England Wheels Low Wheelchair Accessible Bus. It features a low floor design and allows for single step curb height entrance. It has a wide door opening for better accessibility

and a low ramp angle allowing for easier loading/unloading of wheelchairs, which is safer than raising on a lift. The vehicle has an unprecedented score of 91%, offers better fuel economy, and operating costs.

3C. Update on Software Selections for Paratransit and Fixed-Route

Jordan Smith said the software previously used was implemented in 2009 and is outdated. The State of North Dakota issued an RFP for Paratransit and/or Fixed Transit Scheduling and Dispatch software on 1/31/23. MATBUS, along with other ND Transit agencies assisted the state in developing the RFP. MATBUS/City of Fargo staff served on the evaluation committee to help determine suitable vendors. Notice of intent to award was issued 08/11/23, with contract negotiations following soon after. Multiple vendors were awarded the contract with the State, which allowed transit agencies to select a vendor that best suited their needs and the size of their agency. MATBUS staff viewed demonstrations from five vendors, three for paratransit and two for fixed-route software. After financial / technical review, VIA Mobility LLC was selected for a Paratransit replacement and GMV Syncromatics Corporation was selected for fixed-route software replacement. A request to award contracts to VIA and GMV was approved by the Fargo City Commission on 10/30/23 and finalized contracts will be brought to Fargo City Commission and Moorhead City Council for approval later this year. Both contracts have been fully funded and training/implementation is expected to begin early next year.

GMV – 5-year total: \$1,320,150

VIA – 5-year total - \$276,000

3D. January – October Ridership

Swingen reported ridership data for Fargo from January to October 2023 as follows:

- Route 11 - 15.79% (service cuts)
- Route 13 + 8.92%
- Route 14 – 7.69% (service cuts)
- Route 15 - 0.67% (service cuts)
- Route 16 – 4.81% (road construction in 2022 made people to use route 15, they may still be riding 15)
- Route 17 + 1.94%
- Route 18 + 9.08% (route has not been affected by driver shortages)
- Route 20 + 6.60% (route has not been affected by driver shortages)
- Route 24 + 18.48% (route has not been affected by driver shortages)
- Link FM + 67.75% * this number may not be correct.
- Industrial Park On-Demand – 43.29%
- Paratransit + 3.31%
- Route 31 + 12.26%
- Route 32 – 8.11%
- Route 33 + 22.49%
- Route 34 + 73.94% (there are new student housing units along this route)
- Route 36 - 42.59%
- NDSU on-Demand - 38.01% *note - number shown on PPP was not correct
- NDSU - 3.29%
- MSUM – 14.03%

- Concordia + 21.21%
- M | State + 65.79%
- NDSCS – 12.76%

Van Beek said Moorhead ridership overall is up. She presented ridership data for Moorhead from January to October 2023 as follows:

- Route 1 + 18.56%
- Route 2 – 1.87% (decrease in service hours)
- Route 3 + 9.95%
- Route 4 + 6.81%
- Route 5 + 12.02%
- Route 6 + 1.69%
- Route 9 + 50.79%
- Mhd. Senior Ride + 6.88%

4. Other Business

Hearing no other business, the meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Kolpack.