

Specialized Transportation Advisory Committee

January 28, 2022

MINUTES

Via Zoom

1. Roll call and introductions

- a. Jennifer Sweten, Mountain Line.
- b. Ron Knight, Fleet Manager, AWARE.
- c. Desiree Dean-Kaldor, State of Montana Transportation Coordinator.
- d. Mike McCollough, Missoula Development Services.
- e. Tom Thompson, Peer, Summit Independent Living.
- f. Jon Sand, Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- g. Travis Hoffman, Summit Independent Living.
- h. Lisa Chamberlain, Chapter President for Montana Association of the Blind.
- i. Marsha Hauk, Missoula Manor.
- j. Vickie Rectenwald, ASUM, University of Montana.
- k. Shanti Johnson, Mountain Line.

2. Public comment

- a. Travis and Lisa thanked Mountain Line for fixing issues with its mobile app to make it more accessible.

3. Approval of December 10th meeting minutes

- a. Jon Sand made a motion to approve. Travis Hoffman seconded. Passed unanimously.

4. Election of Officers

- a. **Jennifer Sweten** was nominated by Travis Hoffman to serve as the **Chair**, seconded by Marsha Hauk. Passed unanimously.
- b. **Travis Hoffman** was nominated by Jennifer Sweten to serve as **Vice Chair**. Desiree Dean-Kaldor seconded. Passed unanimously.
- c. **Jon Sand** was nominated by Jennifer Sweten to serve as **Secretary**. Mike McCollough seconded. Passed unanimously.

5. FY 2023 Coordination Grant

- a. Jennifer Sweten provided context on the grant application. MUTD received three requests for vehicles through this process. The committee was informed that there will be changes to the costs of vehicles, corresponding to current market prices. There were no other amendments to the grant brought forth by the committee.
- b. Jennifer Sweten proposed the following rankings. Jon Sand seconded. Passed unanimously.
 - i. Missoula Development Services requested a six-passenger, two-wheel drive, ramp-equipped van. Currently, this vehicle is available with a rear-lift, versus a ramp, for \$50,000. Jennifer estimated MSD will need to contribute 15% and the state will cover the remaining 85%. This will be replacing a 2006 Ford van with a lift.
 - ii. Mountain Line is asking for three vans to replace existing fleet vehicles. The request is for funding to go directly to MUTD to

purchase the vehicles. This would allow the agency the option to install a lift on the side door of a van and take advantage of new technology. These vehicles run between \$80,000-\$90,000.

iii. Lyn Hellegaard requested replacement vehicles for three, non-accessible minivans at \$37,990 each for MRTMA.

- c. Jennifer believes all requests will be granted, but is awaiting final confirmation. Next steps, Jennifer will submit the plan to the MUTD Board of Directors for approval. All committee members will have a chance to conduct a final review before the grant is submitted for board approval.
- d. It was noted that no vehicles have been received from last year's grant submission due to supply chain issues.

6. Mountain Line update

- a. The agency is working to update its existing rider app; however, there are other technological changes and impacts from COVID-19 that resulted in deciding to table this discussion at this meeting. Jennifer proposed a working group to discuss this topic in February.
- b. Mountain Line is under contract with a new Paratransit software provider, working toward an April implementation. The software is expected to rapidly improve communications and efficiency. Examples of improved communications: riders will receive an automatic reminder phone call or text message the night before; when the vehicle is five minutes away; and

when vehicles arrive. Users will set their preference as to how often they would like these reminder communications.

- c. Mountain Line expects to return to regular fixed-route service and to resume Shuttle Van service March 7. Future expansions, including 7-day and 7-night service, is predicted to be on the road in July. More communications to come.
- d. Mountain Line has 12 battery-electric buses, just over 40% of its fixed-route fleet.
- e. The agency is considering a pilot project to install on-bus screens to improve rider communications. The committee asked about accessibility for visually impaired / blind riders, requesting Mountain Line look into push notifications or options to connect on-screen content to the existing app. The committee advised looking into linking content across multiple channels, such as Twitter, to make it easier to update for the agency, while also increasing the accessibility by publishing to multiple platforms.

7. Update on city planning efforts & current projects

- a. Work continues on the Higgins Ave multimodal corridor plan.
- b. Eaton St sidewalk project update: curb cuts will be retrofitted along the corridor to accommodate ADA-ramps to make system fully accessible.
 - i. Travis asked about making an adjacent bus stop in the area accessible by adding a concrete landing pad. Jennifer said Mountain Line is collaborating with public works to accommodate this request.

c. Turner sidewalk project continues to move forward.

8. Other business & announcements

a. Lisa Chamberlain offered to be a beta tester for voiceovers / accessibility initiatives when Mountain Line transitions to its new app. Jennifer agreed to reach out when ready to conduct these tests.

9. Next meeting will be held at 10:30 AM, 2/25/2022.