



**Missoula Urban Transportation District
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2022**

Approved December 16, 2022

Members Present

Doug Odegaard, Chair
Don MacArthur, Secretary
Andrea Davis, Treasurer
Sebastian Strauss
Jesse Dodson
Anna-Margaret Goldman
Amy Cilimburg

Members Absent

None

Staff

Corey Aldridge, General Manager
Mary Hanson, Director of Finance
Jennifer Sweten, Director of Ops.
Shanti Devins, Commc'n Mgr.
Colin Woodrow, Project Mgr.
Dan Stone, Transit Planner
Heather Halter, HR Mgr.
Heidi Lutterman, Staff Accountant
Michele Erickson, Admin Assistant

Guests

None.

Call to Order and Roll Call

Odegaard called the meeting to order at 12:02 PM. Roll call was taken.

Changes or Additions to Agenda

None.

Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

None.

Don MacArthur arrived at 12:04 PM.

Discussion Items

General Manager's Report (12:05 PM)

Hanson reported on finance activities completed. Lutterman attended a weeklong training session in Arizona on the parts and inventory software utilized by the shop. Currently working on the annual National Transit Database (NTD) report and follow-up questions. Attended the Montana Transit Association (MTA) Conference in Billings and the APTA Transform Conference in Seattle. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region 8 office staff expected the announcement of MUTD's triennial audit around Thanksgiving. JCCS auditors have postponed the presentation of the FY2022 audit until the December board meeting due to staffing shortage issues.

Sweten reported training and recruitment currently at 57 operators and another 4 in training. The next class will be in January 2023. New Flyer buses are back in service and are experiencing minor issues, but nothing that would require them to be taken out of service. Sweten had a

meeting with ASUM regarding 3rd party testing. Attended the Montana Department of Transportation Annual meeting in Billings. She also attended APTA Transform in Seattle and the Missoula JEDI conference. Had the Poverello HOT Team come to the MOAB for a meeting to create a positive working bond between the Mountain Line team and the Poverello team. First snow event of the year, starting with six slide-ins on the first day, with a few service interruptions. Begin work on the FFY 2024 Coordination Plan.

Woodrow talked about the Electric Bus Fleet Analysis and Demand Evaluation being done by the Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE). Phase 1 will identify and evaluate key metrics for evaluating the performance of our electric bus fleet and planned runs for deployment to inform operations and procurement. Phase 2 will focus on charge management, projecting our expected load profile, and developing a deployment strategy. This work intersects with rate modeling and evaluating potential solutions with Northwestern Energy. The ongoing Bus Stop Improvement Project has been split into two phases. Phase 1 began with amenity installs handled internally, as well as other discrete projects such as Fairgrounds, Tolar Shelters at University, and Sha' Ron. The entire project should finish late summer-autumn 2023. Furniture procurement and installation will be done in December. The bus wash installation should be completed in January-February of 2023. Provided an update on the property acquisition project.

Devins reported tabling at the Safe Kids Fair hosted at the Community Medical Center campus. Also, work on two separate photo shoots at the Airport and Downtown Association. Kicking off a ridership survey focused on current riders, which will be completed in January. Outreach for Senior Van training focusing on educating seniors on how to ride. Continued work with Missoula Aging Services to strengthen connections with Mountain Line and empower seniors to utilize the bus transit system and app. Devins was asked to present at the APTA Conference in Seattle about Mountain Line's ability to recruit and retain employees. Hosted the Chamber of Commerce Leadership class for city tours. Attended the At-Risk Housing Coalition quarterly meeting and met with the HOT Team from the Poverello Center. Continuing to find ways Mountain Line can get the public the needed resources. Continued work with the Transit app support team to resolve issues with the current app. Stuff the Trolley food drive is upcoming. The trolley will collect donations outside WINCO. Mountain Line will not have a float in the upcoming Parade of Lights but will be decorating a bus in lights to promote ridership. Whitefish has requested to have Mountain Line meet with them on electrification in the winter months.

Halter reported four trainees scheduled to take the driving test this month. The next new hire class will be on January 23, 2023. Currently hiring for operators, service, and maintenance. Preparing policies for FTA triennial audit and end-of-year reports for OSHA and DOT Drug and Alcohol. Strauss asked what the annual turnover rate has been. Halter explained that it is currently at 42%, and although it may seem high, it has gone down from last year. Aldridge said the national average for transit systems had increased considerably.

Aldridge reports Mountain Line continues to have issues procuring paratransit vehicles. National transit organizations petitioned FTA to relax its rules on the 'Buy America' laws, but the changes did not help Mountain Line.

Ridership Update (12:33 PM)

Stone said fixed route ridership increased by 21% in the first three months following the July service expansion. The average weekday ridership increased by 9%, the average Saturday ridership increased by 59%, and averaged 1,319 trips per day on new Sunday service. Stone estimated that the total fixed route ridership in August and September increased by 35% from 2021. Stone reviewed the paratransit ridership and found it had increased by 10% after the service expansion. The average weekday ridership did not change, and Saturday ridership increased by

47%, averaging 54 trips on Sundays. Stone reported that the total ridership in August and September increased by 59% from August to September 2021.

New MOAB Questionnaire Results (12:38 PM)

Woodrow presented the answers to the questionnaire that FHWA had given him at the October 2022 Planning Committee meeting. Woodrow reviewed why they were asked to answer the questionnaire as a tool to align their goals and values. Woodrow gave an overview of the responses with specific details of which areas the Board and Staff agreed. Woodrow reviewed the timeline and discussed when certain obstacles needed to be addressed. MacArthur raised the issue of Mountain Line's inability to find land to begin the MOAB's CM/GC build project. Woodrow pointed to where on the timeline Mountain Line could make and develop plans for during the search and acquisition of land. Woodrow wants to have an RFQ done by the end of the month. MacArthur talked about the usefulness of having their goals aligned before the project begins because of the difficulty of the current market. MacArthur added that this would be beneficial when the budget for the project gets tight and decisions need to be made. They will be clear on what they are unwilling to sacrifice.

Action Items (1:29 PM)

Minutes of September 22, 2022

MacArthur made a motion to approve the minutes of September 22, 2022, seconded by Davis. The motion carried unanimously. Odegaard found a typo in the motion and requested that the minutes be updated to reflect 'motion was made to approve the minutes and eliminate the phrase 'motion was made to table the minutes'. The vote carried 5 to 1, with Strauss abstaining due to lack of attendance at the last board meeting. Davis and Cilimburg participated in the vote but were also absent from the last board meeting.

September 2022 Financial Statements (1:33 PM)

Davis summarized the September 2022 Financial Statements and what was discussed at their Finance Committee meeting. Davis stated that the net position of reserves for FY2023 is 30% higher than FY2022. Davis said the difference is due to additional funds received through the CARES Act and other federal stimulus dollars, as well as the acquisition of new buses which has increased the overall fixed assets amount. The Operations expenses were 7% less than the budget, maintenance expenses were 28% less than the budget, and general and administrative expenses were 38% less than the budget. Davis also discussed the expenses by category with a chart illustrating compensation at 10% less than the budget, maintenance is 13% less than budget, and general is 52% less than budget.

Strauss asked a question about the amount of depreciation on pp.17, line 39, being the same value as last year. Hanson responded that the audit done by JCCS would result in an updated depreciation amount done annually. Hanson also pointed out that the revenue was much higher than usual due to a significant increase in investment income which is always subject to change with the market. Hanson also pointed out that the increase in maintenance expenses was due to the fuel cost being well over the budgeted amount.

Odegaard asked if the New Flyer buses being back in service would lower fuel costs. Sweten said there would be some fuel savings; however, the savings may be small as Mountain Line enters the coldest months of the year.

Odegaard made a motion to approve the September 2022 financial statements. Dodson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Finance and Reserves Policy (1:43 PM)

Hanson stated that the Financial and Reserve Policies were last updated in 2019. With the upcoming FTA Triennial Review, staff reviewed and updated these policies. Hanson proposed that the Financial Policy be updated to reflect the change in purchase order threshold at the \$5000 level, enacted in December 2019. The Reserve Policy currently does not reflect any changes. Hanson also added that as fleet and facility pricing are clarified in the future, this policy may need amending.

MacArthur asked about the wording on pp.27, which says interest earned on the reserves will be used for operating expenses. MacArthur suggested using the interest to reinvest into the reserve account and not be used for operating expenses. Hanson explained how the investment income is received and journaled so the interest is reflected separately. Dodson proposed changing the policy's wording to read, 'interest earned will be used for operating expenses, reserves, or other purposes, as directed by the Board.'

MacArthur motioned to approve the financial and reserve policies with changes to the reserve policy wording. Davis seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:11 PM.

Submitted by Michele Erickson