



**Missoula Urban Transportation District  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
June 22, 2023**

**DRAFT**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Jesse Dodson  
Sebastian Strauss  
Amy Cilimburg  
Andrea Davis  
Josephine Hazelton-Boyle

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Don MacArthur  
Jason Wiener

**STAFF**

Corey Aldridge, Gen. Mgr.  
Mary Hanson, Finance Dir.  
Olga Kreimer, Comms. Spec.  
Dan Stone, Transit Planner  
Jen Sweten, Dir. Operations  
Darlene Craven, Exec. Asst.  
Heather Halter, HR Mgr.  
Colin Woodrow, P & P Mgr.  
Spencer Starke, Assoc. Planner

**Guests**

None

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

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

**Changes or Additions to the Agenda**

Aldridge asked for a change to May 25, 2023, agenda item stating the meeting was held on May 25, not May 18 as the agenda currently shows.

**Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda**

None

**Action Items**

**Item 4.1 – General Manager Report (12:04 p.m.)**

Aldridge said that Senator Tester’s office had called to inform him that Mountain Line had been awarded \$39 million from the Bus & Bus Facilities / LoNo Grant program to build the new facility. It was totally unexpected in that Woodrow noted that this amount was as much as New York and Los Angeles had received. Aldridge termed the award “remarkable” and gave high praise to Woodrow for the work it took to create and submit the grant application. Aldridge then asked the executive team to update the board as follows:

**Marketing**

Kreimer thanked Davis and Strauss for their participation in the previous weekend’s Pride events. Kreimer also mentioned survey results and public messaging about detours.

Strauss asked about the mission and vision statements deadline. Aldridge responded the agency is working on it with an anticipated finish in October or November 2023.

### Human Resources

Halter stated that Mountain Line currently has 109 employees, and five new hires are getting their licensing in place. The next training class is on August 7 and two positions – chief safety officer and finance manager – are currently posted internally. Upcoming items include creating a diversity and inclusion training for new hires and updating the handbooks and the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) program. In response to Davis’s question about the company conducting the diversity training, Halter responded that the training would be created with input from other transit agencies.

### Operations

Sweten thanked the Operations team for completing and submitting the triennial audit items. Sweten also reported that while the bus lift project continues, the charging reel project is stalled due to a disconnect between vendors. Strauss asked how this was affecting charging. Sweten replied it is manageable for now but could lead to issues if other chargers go down. Aldridge added that workarounds to use the chargers have been implemented.

One of the new paratransit vans is now in revenue service and the other is waiting for a radio install. An operator, Emma Lyon-Delsordo, was promoted to Dispatch Supervisor, and a Dispatch Supervisor, Diane Trebesch, was promoted to Road Supervisor. The Operators approved the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and the plan is to return to regular service on August 20 at which time changes dictated by the CBA will be implemented.

### Finance

Hanson updated the board on staff activities in the finance department, including closing out grants and preparing the FY2024 budget. Hanson then announced to the board that her last day would be August 3, 2023. Aldridge stated that Hanson has done an awesome job during her tenure, especially during the pandemic. Cilimburg appreciated that Hanson provided ample notice. The board thanked Hanson for her dedicated service to Mountain Line.

### Projects & Planning

The bus stop master plan is approaching eighty percent completion with a late summer closeout. Strauss asked how the feedback was split between positive and negative. Stone responded that the negative feedback was minimal because MUTD got the word out early. The bus stop at the Veteran’s Administration building has hit some internal (within the VA) hurdles. Woodrow told the board about recent developments with the MOAB project – expected appraisal for the unimproved land; looking to get FTA approval within two weeks; engineer’s estimate for improvements aligns with budget, and possible TIFIA loan for gap funding. The RFQ is out for architecture and engineering services. A selection committee to review the proposals is being assembled.

**5.1 Minutes of May 25, 2023, Meeting** (12:35 p.m.) – Cilimburg motioned to approve the minutes of May 25, 2023, Davis seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

**5.2 May 2023 Financial Statements** (12:37 p.m.) – Strauss stated that the agency is ending the 2023 fiscal year in good financial position with a surplus, citing operating revenue at 15.9 percent greater than budgeted and total expenses are 12 percent lower than budgeted. Strauss moved to approve May financial statement as presented. Davis seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

**5.3 FY2024 Budget Proposal** (12:38 p.m.) – Aldridge showed the board a slide presentation summarizing FY2023's accomplishments, future challenges, and the FY2024 projected revenues and expenses. Accomplishments include 30 percent service increase (7/7 days/nights); bus stop master plan implementation, including the new Sha-Ron stop; \$39 million low-no grant award for a new MOAB; zero emissions transition plan; new bus wash and bus lift; and staffing increases.

Challenges include space constraints; land acquisition; MOAB funding; labor market given changing landscape of employee pool; ERP software acquisition and implementation; transition to paratransit zero-emissions fleet; Brooks Street RAISE BRT project; future of transfer center; and taxing district management.

Hanson presented the FY2024 proposed budget, pointing out some large increases such as commercial liability insurance costs increased by twenty-five percent and tire prices were anticipated to increase forty percent. Strauss asked how the award fits in with the projected 5-year facilities budget. Aldridge answered that based on the last figures, there would be a roughly \$6 million funding gap, but that figure will change as numbers become more defined. The takeaway is that the agency has been building up reserves for a few years and now it's time to draw down those reserves. Strauss asked how likely it would be to reach that financial cliff that seems to always be five years in the future. Aldridge pointed out that the agency has seen an annual increase in property tax revenues that exceed what was budgeted.

For documenting in the minutes, Dodson clarified that the \$8 million listed in the budget for the land acquisition is a guess and includes improvements. However, the board had no consensus that it was willing to pay \$8 million for the land.

Davis motioned to pass the FY2024 budget as presented. Strauss seconded the motion, requesting that the board be given more time to review the budget in future years. Strauss and Dodson both emphasized that more time was needed to review the budget to set priorities and align it with strategic planning.

The motion to approve the FY2024 budget passed unanimously. (1:46 p.m.)

Dodson asked for a motion to move up to Item 5.6 allowing the external advertising contract to expire in October 2023 and pause before issuing a new external advertising RFP. Cilimburg motioned, Strauss seconded, and it was passed unanimously. (1:48 p.m.)

Dodson asked for a motion to table Item 5.5 regarding the records request form. Cilimburg made the motion that was seconded by Davis and approved unanimously. (1:49 p.m.)

**Item 5.4 – Collective Bargaining Agreement** (1:50 p.m.) – Sweten briefed the board on highlights from the CBA for Operators that has been approved by the union. The CBA provides for a wage increase of nine percent the first year; four percent the second year; 3.21 percent the third year; and 3.17 percent the fourth year. Operators can also receive an additional one percent after the first year if ridership increases by three percent the previous fiscal year. In response to Strauss’ question about how ridership was defined, Sweten answered that it was the number of passenger trips per year as calculated by the APCs (Automated Passenger Counters). Other changes include shortening the time for Operators to reach the top wage from eighteen months to one year. Hazelton-Boyle asked if attendance was a point of contention. Sweten answered that it’s never come up as a point of contention at MUTD.

Dodson motioned to approve the CBA as voted on by the union. Hazelton-Boyle seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. (1:58 p.m.)

Recording was stopped at 1:59 p.m. and the board went into a closed session.

The meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Submitted by Darlene Craven