



**Missoula Urban Transportation District  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
October 26, 2023**

**APPROVED**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Don MacArthur  
Jesse Dodson  
Dr. Josephine Hazelton-Boyle  
Jason Wiener  
Sebastian Strauss  
Amy Cilimborg

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Andrea Davis

**STAFF PRESENT**

Corey Aldridge  
Jen Sweten  
Colin Woodrow  
Allison Segal  
Heather Halter  
Olga Kreimer  
Vince Caristo  
Darlene Craven

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

12:03 p.m. – MacArthur called the meeting to order and asked for a roll call.

**Changes or Additions to the Agenda**

None

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

None.

**4.1 General Manager's Report**

**Marketing/Communication**

Kreimer announced upcoming events where MUTD would be present at the Can the Cats drive to collect food for the local food bank. She confirmed that the new tagline and campaign would appear on buses by the end of the year.

The recently released weapons policy garnered substantial feedback, but it appears the public does understand that MUTD is complying with state law.

Advertising will be removed from buses in November because the contract with Missoula Broadcasting expired on October 31, 2023. Creative ways to use the buses for a new campaign are being explored. The first public meetings for the Transform Brooks-Connect Midtown project are scheduled. Hazelton-Boyle commended Kreimer for the weapons policy messaging, noting that it could have been worse.

**Administrative Services**

Halter said the employee count is 107, and a training class has been scheduled for November 27, 2023. Positions posted are for a contracts specialist, a maintenance technician, and operators. The human resources (HR) team met with the HR team from LINK Transit (Wenatchee,

Washington), where they gathered valuable information for overhauling recruitment, onboarding, and retention processes. Halter related that by 2030, fifty-one percent of the workforce will be immigrants.

### Finance

Segal continues to learn departmental processes while coordinating with the auditors regarding additional documentation and verification. The department is also working on amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) report, the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) report, and federal financing reporting, all due at the end of October. Cross-training within the finance department will be implemented to provide better coverage across all functions.

### Operations

Sweten announced that Thomas Williams has been promoted to Maintenance and Facilities Manager. Nine shelters are left in the amenity installation project. The bus lift is slated for completion in the second week of November. Supply chain issues and staffing shortages continue to be the main challenges. Cilimburg asked about the operators' reaction to the new weapons policy. Sweten responded they understood the issue had been forced on MUTD. Hazelton-Boyle asked about the long-term plan for the weapons policy. Sweten replied that the legislature needs to codify a weapons policy that allows public entities to keep the public safe.

Sweten and Aldridge met with representatives from the Billings, Bozeman, and Great Falls transit systems to discuss forming a coalition for addressing the weapons policy and state transportation funding with the legislature. Sweten met with the Flagstaff (Arizona) transit system to discuss electrification. Cilimburg thanked Sweten for her willingness to help peer agencies. The APTA conference was an excellent opportunity for networking and learning about technology developments in the electric vehicle industry. Elizabeth Wehling was promoted to Lead Operations Supervisor.

### Projects/Planning/Procurement

Woodrow advised that Gillig met Verdek's price for chargers (approved at the September board meeting). The next round of charging infrastructure was priced at \$10.9 million and will require adjustment due to higher bus prices, but CMAQ funds will help. The main takeaway from the ZEBCON and APTA conferences was charge management. Despite numerous negotiations and mediation, MUTD has been unable to get any price break from Northwestern Energy on peak demand charges. Charge demand management equipment from Chargepoint is being installed that will yield a return on investment in the first year.

The landowners have until November 4, 2023, to respond to the offer to purchase MUTD's chosen property for building the MOAB. Final contract negotiations continue with Wendel, the A&E firm, who will be in Missoula in early January 2024 to start the design process. Ten percent design completion is projected for March 2024, with a thirty percent goal by May. A construction manager/general contractor will also be hired in the coming months. HDR, the engineering firm hired to design the relocation of Grant Creek, is behind schedule because the landowners have not signed the agreement. Construction cannot start until the flood plain is mitigated.

The automatic passenger count hit some technical snags. Phase I of the bus stop improvement plan is almost complete, and striping is scheduled but still needs to be completed. The memorandum of understanding with United Way for the Narcan vending machine in the Transfer Center that United Way will manage has been signed, and the machine will be installed in early 2024. Cilimburg asked if the operators would be trained. Sweten replied that the operators cannot be required to help but are allowed to do so if they are comfortable.

Strauss asked if the bus stop at Russ's Body & Paint had been installed. Aldridge said the stop was complete, and Russ's was appealing to the state supreme court, though the hope is that Russ's will concede.

Woodrow reported that Jason Blodgett is researching cost-effective fiber internet service, and the Teams telephone upgrade project is underway. A public meeting for the RAISE project is scheduled for November 16. A strategic planning consultant will be chosen by October 26, 2023. MUTD will participate in the upcoming Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails (PROST) planning.

Via will present its final on-demand study report, and Panorama will present the final ERP findings at the November planning committee meeting.

Woodrow advised that MUTD would be receiving \$500,000 out of the city's transportation impact fees that could be used to make up the deficit for the new buses.

Aldridge reported that the management team is working to resolve the minor deficiencies in the recent triennial audit, including the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, Title VI requirements, the EEO program, and the ADA complaint process.

**4.2 Mission/Vision/Values** – Kreimer advised that the focus would be on sharing the BBER survey results and presenting a draft mission and vision statement for review and feedback. She reviewed legacy mission statements, noting key phrases and words that represented recurring themes: community, mobility, environmental impact, frequency, expanded service hours, flexibility, and innovation. The takeaway concepts from the 2022 board workshop are safe, affordable public transit, zero-fare, vital for a sustainable future, shaping the city's character, and safe and necessary service.

Highlights from the various surveys are as follows:

Staff Survey – Sustainable and progressive service operated by mostly content staff that want improved communication and team cohesion.

Stakeholder Survey – Bus service plays a critical role in Missoula's transportation landscape because it offers an alternative to car ownership, reduces pollution, and addresses diverse transportation needs.

Community Survey – Commuting, errands and recreation are the primary reasons for riding. Sustainability, avoiding traffic, and not owning a vehicle are also reasons for taking the bus. Suggestions for improving ridership include increased service in underserved areas and more frequent weekend service.

Rider Survey – Increasing service frequency would play a role in motivating people to ride on weekdays and weekends. Environmental impact, affordability and lack of a car were frequent responses as reasons to ride. Almost half the riders surveyed use the bus for errands and recreation, followed by commuting to work. Most riders feel safe waiting for and riding the bus. Kreimer noted that responses about feeling unsafe while riding fell along gender lines.

Wiener observed that pre-COVID riders are still riding post-COVID. Strauss asked whether the focus should be getting existing riders to ride more or converting non-riders. Kreimer said efforts should invite people to ride as a social experience. Synthesizing the research and getting the board's feedback are the main goals in developing a coherent mission/vision/values statement.

Kreimer noted the board's suggestions and impressions, stating that a final product would be presented at the November or December board meeting.

### **Action Items**

5.1 Minutes of September 28, 2023, Board Meeting – Cilimburg moved to approve the September board meeting minutes, Dodson seconded, and the motion was approved.

5.2 August 2023 Financial Statements – Wiener said that while there were no corrections to the financials, the committee wants to revise the statements to forecast where the financials situation will be. Wiener moved to approve the August financial statements, Dodson seconded, and the motion was approved.

5.3 Purchase of 2 ABB HVC150 150kW DC Fast Chargers – Caristo said that Gillig was offering better pricing for similar chargers than the original price from Verdek, which the board approved at the September meeting. Caristo stated those chargers have not been purchased, and this procurement would replace the Verdek procurement approved at the last board meeting. Strauss asked if there was a way to predict future fees and expenses. Caristo said the fees go to the manufacturer as a pass-through. MacArthur asked if MUTD could get another software vendor if the rates increased. Caristo said it depends on the software; the Gillig software commitment is two years.

Dodson moved to approve, Strauss seconded, and the motion passed.

1:55 p.m. – The regular meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Darlene Craven