



**Missoula Urban Transportation District  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
January 24, 2024**

**APPROVED**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Don MacArthur  
Jason Wiener  
Sebastian Strauss  
Dr. Josephine Hazelton-Boyle

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Amy Cilimburg  
Jesse Dodson

**STAFF PRESENT**

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

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

12:05 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**

**Administrative Services**

Halter said MUTD is currently advertising internally and externally for a road supervisor and a dispatcher. Second interviews for the contracts specialist have been scheduled, so that position should close by the end of the month. The new accountant will start on February fifth. Because MUTD currently has seventy-one operators, recruiting efforts will transition to a quarterly schedule. The next class is scheduled for April 1. Maintenance contract negotiations continue, and compulsory reporting will be filed timely. A file audit for moving to paperless personnel files will be conducted.

The unified planning work program report (UPWP) has been submitted, and all tax filings are current. Nineteen operators earned perfect attendance checks, and the vacation leap balances have been audited. The National Transit Database (NTD) report has been resubmitted. Changing the retirement plan vendor has been challenging, but the process continues. The FY2024 CMAQ funds have been requested. Strauss asked why the NTD report needed to be resubmitted. Aldridge explained that the consultants who administer the reporting commonly return the reports when there are questions, sometimes more than once.

### Operations

Sweten stated that the maintenance department is now fully staffed as two new technicians have started training in the shop and will be getting their CDLs. Supply chain issues continue to be a hurdle. No major service disruptions or accidents occurred during the recent cold snap and snowfall. Sweten attended the National Transit Advanced Technology Advisory Panel meeting in Chicago. The FTA has contracted with CTE to form a coalition of transit agencies, bus manufacturers, and testing laboratories to discuss reducing wait times for buses caused by agencies wanting to redesign the buses. The FTA is working to ensure no more bus manufacturers go out of business.

After a two-year hiatus, the Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is taking the lead in reconvening the Missoula Transportation Safety Advisory Committee. Sweten met with Missoula Aging Services, which is releasing its new strategic plan, which will include supplementing paratransit services and a shuttle van to fill service gaps. Because the operator workforce has stabilized, the focus is now on supervisory workforce development.

Strauss asked how the buses operated during the cold snap. Sweten responded that the Proterra performed as expected, and the operations team mitigated any surprises by being prepared.

### Projects/Planning/Procurement

Woodrow stated that the MOAB land acquisition negotiations hinged on improvement/development costs and the Grant Creek realignment. The landowner commissioned a new appraisal that should be ready in mid-February. The City of Missoula is extending infrastructure service down Broadway to reduce development costs. Preliminary figures indicate that the project is staying within budget. The City will be hosting the landowner to facilitate a workable agreement. Wendel sent over a draft contract that is attached for review and discussion as an action item. Woodrow thanked MacArthur and Dodson for their input and counsel on the contract and negotiations.

Woodrow said the University of Montana does not have the financial resources to join MUTD in the MOAB. MUTD staff is drafting an RFP for the general manager/general contractor (GMGC) with a projected goal of contracting with the GMGC in May with a fifteen percent design.

MUTD negotiated an agreement for \$10 thousand with ChargePoint for the first year of charge management has been reached. Based on CTE modeling and the current schedule, MUTD will realize approximately \$90 thousand in savings.

A file structure reorganization project was launched in January. The Teams phones will be installed on February 8. The new copiers will be installed in early February. The RFP for the ERP vendor closed, and the staff is building a shortlist of providers who will demonstrate platforms in person during the week of March 11. Staff will present a vendor for approval at the April board meeting.

MUTD is developing a public participation plan with MPO, who is performing the lion's share of the work. The Brooks RAISE team is analyzing and refining specific plan details, and a stakeholder site visit to cities where bus rapid transit systems are in place has been planned.

### Marketing/Communication

Kreimer reported that the recent north/west side neighborhood meeting she attended had a full house, and it was exciting to hear about the upcoming Scott Street improvements. MUTD sponsored a cinema series at the Roxy in January. She would like to explore fun business partnerships that embrace social culture as a different way of enhancing MUTD's public image.

Kreimer said she is working with Windfall to develop a campaign that encompasses a whole side of the bus to replace the fading vinyl. The window clings with the scannable QR code are in place with some response. KPAX recently interviewed Kreimer about how electric buses function in cold weather, and PBS Impact interviewed her for an in-depth piece about MUTD's weapons policy. She noted the KPAX interview presented an excellent opportunity for reinforcing how well prepared MUTD is for winter weather. The printed map is being updated.

Aldridge reported that the Missoula County commissioners will schedule an interview with the prospective new board member. The goal is to onboard that new member in February. Aldridge is working with the state and the FTA to receive 5310 funding directly instead of applying through the state because the process is inefficient and lengthy.

Aldridge advised he attended The Bus Coalition (TBC) board of directors planning meeting to discuss additional federal bus funding. Because of the current dynamics in Congress, funding is a wait-and-see situation. He said TBC is a great networking opportunity, and MUTD has a voice, even as a small urban transit system.

### **Action Items**

5.1 On-Call A&E Contract and MOAB Design Task Order with Wendel Consulting Services, LLC – MacArthur asked if the ridership report (Item 4.2) could be delayed until after the Wendel contract review. He requested time to speak with staff before discussing the contract with the Wendel consultants, who would provide an overview of the draft contract documents. He was concerned that the draft American Institute of Architects (AIA) contract Wendel sent didn't fully reflect the scope and breakdown. There are not enough specifics on deliverables, and the contract should only focus on the MOAB, not additional services. He also suggested incorporating the RFP and the supplements into the contract. Strauss agreed with the request and stressed legal protection was important. Caristo pointed out that the point of the draft is to provide a basis for approving the request to enter into the contract. MacArthur noted some creep in the totals reflected in the contract as opposed to the RFP. Caristo said the prices for the base services had not changed. MacArthur said the contract Wendel sent was right, but he wanted it reframed to reflect MUTD's needs. Aldridge suggested tabling the matter to allow time for Wendel to redo the contract and hold a special board meeting to approve it.

1:19 p.m. – Strauss moved to table the Wendel contract approval until the special board meeting, Wiener seconded it and it passed unanimously.

4.2 Ridership Report – Stone stated ridership continues on a slow and steady growth path, showing the highest numbers since the pandemic. Strauss wanted to know how that growth compared to Missoula's population growth. Stone replied that the year-to-date numbers are up twelve percent from last year. Stone said the numbers include the service expansion. The gap from pre-pandemic levels is slowly closing because people are returning to transit. Wiener asked if a route-by-route analysis had been conducted. Stone replied that the analysis didn't include route-by-route breakdowns. Nationally, ridership has stagnated, and most agencies are still around sixty-six percent of pre-COVID levels.

Paratransit growth is leveling off from its FY23 explosion. Aldridge said the staff is attempting to establish more stringent qualifying criteria without being discriminatory. Wiener asked what percentage of applications get approved. Sweten replied that ninety-five percent of the applications were approved, which is on par with the national standard. However, an eligibility committee interviewing candidates would reduce approvals by about thirty percent. MacArthur

observed that it was important to maintain financial viability while providing optimal services. Additional discussion about shifting paratransit riders to fixed routes is warranted.

5.2 Minutes of December 21, 2023, Board Meeting – Strauss moved to approve the minutes, Hazelton-Boyle seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

5.3 – October 2023 Financials & 5.4 November 2023 Financials – Strauss said the reserves were fully funded, and the net position is in good shape. Operating revenue was higher, and expenses were lower than budgeted. MacArthur asked if the October and November financials could be approved together. Strauss noted they were essentially the same and moved to approve both financial statements. Wiener seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Wiener stated the first proforma draft would be brought before the board in April.

5.5 Election of 2024 Board Officers and Committees – Wiener pointed out that the vice chair position is on deck to serve as future chair. MacArthur added that the vice chair serves on the executive committee. Strauss said he is vested in the financial side and has been participating in planning committee meetings. Hazelton-Boyle asked if only three board members were allowed on the planning committee because she is interested in joining. Aldridge explained that the entire board is invited, and MacArthur added that only the three designated board members can vote. He suggested that Dodson be removed from the planning committee and replace Davis on the finance committee. Hazelton-Boyle will take Dodson's place on the planning committee. Aldridge mentioned that no MUTD board members attend the Specialized Transportation Advisory Council (STAC) meetings. Hazelton-Boyle said she would represent the board. Wiener said he would be willing to serve as an alternate on the TPCC and noted that the bylaws section on committees needs to be amended as it was overly prescriptive. He motioned to pass the slate as submitted, Strauss seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The MUTD 2024 committees and officers will be as follows:

Board Officers: Chair – MacArthur; Vice Chair – Dodson; Treasurer – Strauss; Secretary – Cilimburg

Executive Committee: Chair – MacArthur; Vice Chair – Dodson; Past Chair – Cilimburg

Planning Committee: Chair – MacArthur; Hazelton-Boyle replacing Dodson, Cilimburg

Finance Committee: Chair – Strauss; Wiener, Dodson replacing Davis

Transportation Policy Coordinating Committee Representative – MacArthur

Specialized Transportation Advisory Committee Representative – Hazelton-Boyle replacing Davis

5.6 Request to expand MUTD to include the West End Homes subdivision & 5.7 Request to expand MUTD to include the 44 Ranch, Phase 15 subdivision – Stone said both subdivisions were within the planning area boundary. Wiener moved to approve both resolutions, Strauss seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2:01 p.m. – The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Darlene Craven