



**Missoula Urban Transportation District
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
March 28, 2024**

APPROVED

MEMBERS PRESENT

Don MacArthur
Jason Wiener
Sebastian Strauss
Amy Cilimburg
Jesse Dodson
Dr. Josephine Hazelton-Boyle
Sam Oliver

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

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

Guest

Freya Gooday

Call to Order and Roll Call

12:02 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.

MacArthur clarified that the revised agenda would include a closed session for discussing the land purchase and the interim general manager appointment.

4.1 General Manager's Report

Projects/Planning/Procurement/Technology – Woodrow said an agreement on terms with the property owners for the land and improvements had been reached in concept, contingent on board and FTA approval. A final packet for the Grant Creek redesign is being assembled by the City of Missoula for signature as well. MUTD continues to search for property elsewhere and is working with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) on a property it owns on Broadway that was not previously available. A meeting with MDT is scheduled for Friday, March 29. Strauss asked if this property was a potential alternative to the Prolos' original tract. Woodrow confirmed because of the roadblocks and concerns about working with the landowners, the MOAB subcommittee advised looking at other properties.

Woodrow said Wendel (the architecture and engineering firm) continues to stay on schedule. The RFP for the construction manager at risk (CMAR) will be open for six weeks, with a pre-bid

meeting scheduled at the three-week mark. The goal is to bring on the CMAR at the fifteen-percent design point scheduled for the end of June. With the push for thirty percent design scheduled for August. A visioning workshop with Wendel has been scheduled for May 7, 2024, and the pre-bid meeting will be scheduled during that week as well.

MUTD is partnering with the Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE) on the FY2025 low-no emissions grant application that is due on April 25. Other partnerships on the grant application are with Gillig and Fenton. The charging infrastructure for the requested vehicles will require intentional placement.

MUTD is working with the city and county to scope a radio communication system currently scheduled for replacement in the FY2025 budget. The digital signage at the Transfer Center is also scheduled to be upgraded. A test run to bring that service in-house representing a \$100 thousand cost savings has been scheduled.

The ERP demonstrations went well, and Panorama is analyzing the reviews. MUTD's current software provider, Abila, also scheduled a demonstration for the first week of April. Strategic planning continues with developing public participation plans and Woodrow will provide an update at the April 10 planning committee meeting. MUTD continues to collaborate with other organizations on various city and county planning efforts.

The Brooks RAISE committee members took a field trip to Fort Collins, Colorado, Vancouver, Washington, and Eugene, Oregon, to investigate how bus rapid transit (BRT) runs in those transit systems. Three primary goals for the project are pedestrian safety permeability, mixed modality movement, and economic development and housing. Strauss said he'd read that center running on Brooks may not be feasible because of right-of-way constraints. Woodrow said the termini at either end of the route have not been finalized but there is an opportunity for high-speed BRT service with the correct rightsizing. Aldridge said the goal has been 15-minute service on Brooks Street but in lane is less intrusive than center-running. MDT needs to support the project for it to become a reality. MacArthur said center running is optimal but acquiring right-of-way is unlikely. Aldridge said figuring out how to get people on and off the bus safely is key to the project's success.

Marketing & Communications

Because March is Transit Employee Appreciation Month, much of the messaging has focused on that. MUTD partnered with the Missoula County library on a children's coloring project. Work on an RFP for the marketing vendor because Windfall's contract expires at the end of June continues. Kreimer said she is working on engagement efforts in collaboration with local businesses and MUTD is sponsoring a movie screening at the Roxy in April. Social media platforms are reporting increased impressions and engagement based on posts featuring individual employees emphasizing the human aspect of transit.

A reporter from the Wall Street Journal contacted Kreimer regarding a story about electric buses. MUTD will be sponsoring Missoula Pride in June and Roots Fest in August. New printed route maps have been distributed. MUTD is applying for the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) system of the year award. Updating paratransit materials continues and Kreimer is auditing the existing promotional materials with a consultant prior to the Windfall contract expiration. A co-branded bus wrap program is also in development. She will give an update on the rider survey at the April planning committee meeting.

Administrative Services – Halter said there are 67 operators and a new class is starting on April 1 with four new employees, bringing the total to 115. Recruiting is moving to quarterly given the

low turnover. A new transit analyst is starting on April 23 and Dan Stone is leaving in late May. There is an open service position due to two employees being promoted to new roles. Compulsory reporting is complete. Halter thanked Kreimer and Melissa Dowdy for their work on the transit employee appreciation efforts.

Missoula County advised MUTD to expect a ten percent increase in benefits costs, but it could be as low as five to seven percent though the actual figures won't be available until May. Transferring retirement benefits from Delaware to Mutual of America has been a difficult and challenging process. Halter requested that MUTD's attorney send a letter to expedite funding the new plan by July. Mierze continues to learn payroll and AP procedures. Michele Erickson is no longer with Mountain Line and her position will not be backfilled. Blumenbach completed the FY25 compensation budget. Segal completed the FY24 funding request that has been deposited.

MacArthur asked if there was a timeline for the ERP decision. Woodrow replied it would be brought to the April board meeting for approval.

Operations & Maintenance – Sweten said several buses are parked awaiting parts. MUTD partnered with UDASH staff (the University of Montana's bus system) for battery electric bus training in February. A Proterra trainer came in for four days of intensive training with the maintenance staff that also included several UDASH employees. There's been a rash of bus stop vandalism resulting in broken panes in the shelters. The maintenance team found a low-cost vinyl sheeting replacement.

Elizabeth Wehling, the lead operations supervisor, attended a leadership seminar in Washington, D.C. and spent a day on Capitol Hill visiting members of U.S. Senate. Sweten gave a workforce development presentation at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Zero Emission Bus Committee meeting and mentioned she has been asked to speak at other transit events this year.

MacArthur presented Aldridge with an engraved statue and thanked him for his excellent service as MUTD's general manager for the last nine years. Aldridge is leaving to take on the lead role at the Santa Cruz Metro Transit District in Santa Cruz, California.

Action Items

5.2 Minutes of February 14, 2024, Special Board Meeting – Wiener confirmed that the requested correction had been made and motioned for approval. Strauss seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

5.3 Minutes of February 22, 2024, Board Meeting – Wiener read Dodson's requested language change to the board and motioned for approval. Cilimburg seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

5.4 January 2024, Financial Statement – Strauss stated that expenses are below budget and the forecast indicated closing the fiscal year at or below budget. Some adjustments will have to be made based on MUTD being fully staffed and the federal operating funds have been received. An update on the budget process and proforma will be discussed at the April finance committee and board meetings. Strauss moved to approve the January financial statements, Oliver seconded, and the motion carried.

MacArthur suggested that Oliver join the finance committee as a starting point to learn board operations and Oliver agreed.

12:51 p.m. – The meeting went into closed session.

2:05 p.m. – The meeting reconvened.

2:07 p.m. – The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Darlene Craven