



**Missoula Urban Transportation District
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
March 27, 2025**

APPROVED

MEMBERS PRESENT

Don MacArthur
Eva Rocke
Sam Oliver
Jason Wiener
Amy Cilimburg
Lisa Sheppard
Sebastian Strauss

MEMBERS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT

Jordan Hess
Colin Woodrow
Allison Segal
Heather Halter
Jen Sweten
Frank Kuhl
Olga Kreimer
Garin Wally
Darlene Craven

GUESTS

Derek Hitt, Teamsters Local No. 2 Business Agent
Don Groves, Teamsters Local No. 2 Shop Steward

1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call

12:01 p.m. – MacArthur called the meeting to order and asked for a roll call.

12:02 p.m. – Cilimburg joined the meeting.

2.0 Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

None.

3.0 Approval of Minutes & Financial Statements

3.1 February 27, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes – Strauss moved to approve the minutes, Oliver seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

3.2 March 14, 2025, Special Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – Strauss moved to approve the minutes, MacArthur seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

3.3 January 2025 Financial Statements – Wiener moved to approve the January financials but first reported that the ongoing gap in the compensation due to the agency not being fully staffed will impact cash on hand going forward. The property tax revenue is posting 3% below the budget. The motion passed unanimously.

4.1 Agency Activity Report – Woodrow reported that the bid package for the transfer center renovation will go out in the fall. The project will be budgeted in FY2026. The Golden Yoke lessor

requested a lease extension through the end of October, with an extension provision up to the end of December.

Kreimer said the “Ask Me Anything” Reddit social media event garnered a good online turnout and positive feedback.

Hess advised that he and Segal met with a firm specializing in municipal finance advising that is drafting a work scope for presenting a procurement at the April board meeting. He emphasized that the bond counsel is vital to the debt issuing process. Staff will work on procuring these services in the coming months.

Hess invited the board to consider attending a transit board member seminar scheduled for Kansas City in late July.

4.2 Ridership Report – Wally said the data covered October through December 2024 and highlighted the 4.5% ridership increase compared to the previous year. Weekend ridership continues to increase and overall, is up to about 80% of pre-COVID number. Strauss asked for confirmation that the paratransit rider increase mostly stemmed from existing users riding more often. Wally affirmed, there was often a lag time between when new accounts were set up and the first ride. Strauss wanted to know what the attrition rates were. Wally said he would have to work with the paratransit team to determine how accounts were deleted or disabled. Almost all of the ten most frequented destinations are on a fixed route so the next step is to analyze how many trips could have been a fixed-route trip as opposed to a paratransit trip. Strauss requested adding in comparisons by season as well.

MacArthur asked if there was a way to increase paratransit funding. Hess said funding could increase if the legislature approves the spending authority. The current amount is about 4% of the agency’s total revenue. Strauss suggested asking the zero fare partners to supplement the paratransit costs. Paratransit costs represent 25% of the service delivery budget. Strauss asked if the operators were cross trained. Halter stated that operators are cross trained, though most prefer either fixed route or paratransit.

Wally said fixed routes rides are running almost 100,000 a month for January and February 2025. Wiener would like to see route numbers during specific periods of time throughout the day. Sheppard asked to see a graph reflecting the overall impact of ridership that includes increased paratransit ridership.

5. 1 Federal Funding Update – Hess related that the 2022 Low-No vehicle grant awards and the 2023 new facility awards have cleared review and the funds should be obligated by early April. The agency can continue proceeding with planning for the new buses and facility, putting it in a solid position for the remainder of the fiscal year.

5.2 Legislative Update – Hess said that the transmittal deadline was March 6, and the revenue transmittal deadline is April 5. The governor will sign the mill levies bill that subjects future levies to a property tax cap. House Bills 155 and 231 are concerning because they could reduce revenue by providing for property tax exemptions that shift the tax liability from residential to other tax classes. Cilimburg remarked that the bills dial back the tax rate for class four residential.

Hess advised that House Bill 764 allows county commissioners to refer expansion or creation of urban transportation districts to the ballot. Senate Bill 117 repeals the current property tax cap

and replaces it with an inflationary cap with a 4% growth cap. This could have a negative impact on small, fast-growing communities.

5.3 MOU – Missoula County of Emergency Management – Ashbrook reported that the Missoula County Office of Emergency Management cited the agency as an essential emergency safety function in its response plans as a Tier 1 plan participant for initiating service during emergencies. The agreement updates the existing arrangement and clarifies what services the agency will provide. The OEM now understands that the agency's first priority is maintaining operations and will only respond to requests for assistance if resources are available. This transit services agreement provides guidelines and a rate plan for services that utilize the agency as a tool for restoring critical infrastructure. Strauss ask if alternate communications methods and a designated point of contact are in place if the electricity goes out. Ashbrook replied that the agency has handheld radios and line of sight radios in vehicles. Strauss moved to authorize the general manager to sign the transit services agreement with OEM and the motion passed unanimously.

5.4 Transfer Center Roof Contract Revision – Kuhl stated that the revised transfer center roof raising project contract was necessary to incorporate a subcontractor estimate that had not included Montana prevailing wage amounts. Strauss moved to approve the revised contract, and the motion passed unanimously.

5.5 Marketing Contract Duration Update – Kreimer explained that the marketing department has been under budget based on the work the marketing agency has undertaken since coming on board. The staff is proposing to shorten the contract from fourteen months for the first term to eight months the first year and twelve months in the second. The revision does not affect the contract's total amount. The first part of the contract spend has been particularly labor-intensive but the balance should even out over the next year and not go over budget. Approximately \$48,000 is left of the original \$90,000 for the rest of the fiscal year. Strauss moved to authorize the general manager to sign a contract amendment with the marketing contractor to adjust the end date as presented. Cilimburg seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

5.6 Strategic Plan Revisions Review and Adoption – Starke explained that the staff suggested renaming the document to a service plan instead of strategic plan. The recommendation is to adopt the plan pending the naming and minor reporting changes. Hess added that the document represents a long-range, fixed-route service plan more than it does a broader strategic vision for the organization. He suggested a brief strategic plan could be created in-house at a later time. MacArthur said he wanted the document to connect the agency to the community, starting with setting an identity that fits in with the community's identity and growth. Starke said the staff has discussed messaging through implementation and the new document would connect the technical service plan to the vision. MacArthur said the document should address paratransit more thoroughly. Strauss said the public perceives that the agency is cutting service so it is vital to be proactive in clarifying the service changes. Wiener moved to adopt the 2025 transit service plan as amended, Cilimburg seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

6.0 Adjournment – Strauss adjourned the meeting at 1:32 p.m.