

**78th Meeting of the
Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board
May 15, 2019
Fargo Commission Chambers**

Members Present:

Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council
Brian Arett, Valley Senior Services
Kevin Hanson, Chair
Brad Olson, West Fargo City Commission
Brit Stevens, NDSU
Teresa Stolfus, M|State
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Sara Watson Curry, Moorhead City Council
Deb White, Moorhead City Council
Annie Wood, MSUM

Members Absent:

Tony Grindberg, Fargo City Commission
Paul Grindeland, Metro Senior Ride
Jackie Maahs, Concordia College

Others Present:

Lori Van Beek, City of Moorhead
Julie Bommelman, City of Fargo
Shaun Crowell, City of Fargo
Taaren Haak, City of Moorhead
Michael Maddox, FM Metro COG
Matthew Peterson, City of Fargo
Julie Sellner, First Transit
Jordan Smith, MATBUS
Larry Weil, City of West Fargo

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Mr. Hanson called the meeting to order, introductions were made, and a quorum was present.

2. Action Items

a. March 20, 2019 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Aasness and seconded by Ms. White. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

b. Procurement of Fareboxes

Ms. Van Beek presented information about the current fareboxes, which are approaching ten years old. She explained that the fareboxes will be phased in as Fargo grants have not been approved yet, therefore implementation will occur as the funding becomes available. She explained the sole source procurement process. Mr. Peterson explained the reason why sole source procurement was necessary for this process.

Mr. Strand asked if bids would still be competitive with this approach. Mr. Peterson said yes, they are competitive bids.

Mr. Hanson asked about the useful life of fareboxes, and when the City of Fargo would be included in the farebox procurements. Mr. Peterson explained that the fareboxes must be updated as technologies change and the useful life will vary depending upon that change. He went on to explain that the City of Fargo will be applying for the grant in the next fiscal year at which point in time it can join the procurement process.

Ms. Stolfus asked if the college passes would work with the new fareboxes. Ms. Van Beek said yes they would.

A motion to approve a joint Fargo-Moorhead sole source procurement with the option to add Fargo Transit when funding becomes available was made by Mr. Arret and seconded by Ms. Wood. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

c. City of Fargo 2020 Budget and Grants

Ms. Bommelman presented the 2020 City of Fargo Budget and Grants.

A motion to approve the grant applications as outlined in the memo, and, upon successful receipt of funds, approve the grant execution was made by Mr. Arret and seconded by Mr. Aasness. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

i. Fargo 2020 Capital and Operating Budget Overview

Ms. Bommelman presented the Fargo 2020 Capital and Operating Budget and explained a couple of options that the City of Fargo is considering.

ii. Options

1. Fixed route dispatch in-house

She said the City was considering bringing the fixed route dispatchers on as City Staff, rather than contracted employees. She said it could help mesh together fixed route and paratransit dispatchers and create a better depth of employees for transit. Ms. Bommelman also explained that there is a cost savings to the change. Mr. Peterson added that the dispatchers would also see a pay increase by becoming City of Fargo Staff.

Ms. White asked about the employee shortage, and what the difference is between in-house vs. the contracted employees. Ms. Bommelman explained that overall, the employee shortage is vastly improved from two years prior, but having more employees in-house would be a benefit in retention.

Mr. Arett asked about the salary difference between the contracted employees and the in-house employees. Mr. Peterson said that every dispatcher would receive a slight increase in pay, and a yearly step increase for 11 years.

Mr. Hanson asked when the transition could take place. Ms. Bommelman said that it could happen anytime, as long as it is approved by the appropriate committees and Fargo/Moorhead City Commissions.

2. Sunday Service

Mr. Peterson spoke about Sunday service, and how it is the most common request from the public. He said it would be hourly service and probably shorter hours. The cost would be \$500,000 annually and six full time employees for the Fargo side, Moorhead would be a different figure. MATBUS would also be obligated to provide paratransit service on Sundays as well.

Mr. Hanson asked about the timing of Sunday service and if they would come back to the board before approving the change. Ms. Bommelman said yes, a lot of numbers would need to be crunched for accurate costs and then come back to the board.

Mr. Olson asked about the Operations Manager position. Mr. Peterson explained the pay increase and the expanded role to oversee all dispatchers within the City of Fargo.

A motion to bring the two options as outlined in the memo to budget discussions with City of Fargo Administration was made by Mr. Strand and seconded by Ms. Wood. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

d. City of Moorhead 2020 Budget and Grants

Ms. Van Beek presented the Moorhead 2020 Budget and Grants explained the grants being submitted for several items, some of which are cost shares with City of Fargo. She explained that she was hoping to add a couple projects including the Dilworth Walmart transfer hub facility.

Mr. Arret asked if the scheduling software would be put into here. Ms. Van Beek said that the software has been purchased already.

Mr. Strand asked about the type of buses MATBUS purchases and if there were any considerations of looking into green technologies. Ms. Van Beek said that they are keeping an eye on things, but do believe it is too early for our region and the cost difference has not yet been justified.

A motion to recommend the transit capital budget to the Moorhead City Manager for consideration in the 2020 budget was made by Mr. Aasness and seconded by Mr. Olson. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

Ms. Van Beek went on to explain the State of Minnesota's changes to transit funding and transit grant processes. She said that the proposed changes are good and will be a benefit to our system. She did explain that a lot of the Moorhead budget relates directly with the Fargo budget and increases will effect both sides. Ms. Van Beek said that they would also be doing the Transit Development Plan update in 2020, which is updated every five years.

Mr. Hanson asked about when an updated RFP for contractor services would occur. Ms. Van Beek said March 2020.

A motion to continue negotiations with First Transit for a one-year contract extension and changes in management services for 2020, and to move forward with operating budgets and grant applications for 2020-2021 based on the considerations listed, and bring back a final 2020

budget at the regularly scheduled July meeting was made by Ms. White and seconded by Ms. Wood. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

e. Route Changes

Ms. Van Beek explained some changes for route 4 and the impact of construction detours. Route 4 will no longer be able to turn left on 34th street, and therefore won't be able to stop at two stops near Target and Boulder Tap House. She said those stops are also served by route 3, which takes a right at 34th St.

Ms. White asked about the change in people's routines, Ms. Van Beek said that she has not yet received any negative feedback about the proposed change.

A motion to recommend to the Moorhead City Council for approval of the proposed changes to route 4 to become effective August 1, 2019 was made by Mr. Aasness and seconded by Ms. Wood. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

i. Service Expansion Request

Mr. Peterson explained a request for expanded service to the industrial park in Fargo. There are a couple of options including a tap-ride, or expansion of route 17. The tap-ride option is more of a short-term option, with the expanded route being the ultimate long-term goal.

Mr. Hanson asked about how many people work in the industrial park and what the usage would be. Mr. Peterson said that in the previous TDP, they estimated around 36 boardings a day, however they really won't know how much ridership they will get until service is provided.

Ms. Wood asked if the regular hours would work for businesses and shifts in the industrial park. Mr. Peterson responded that yes, it should work however they are flexible and MATBUS could extend the hours of operation in the industrial park if there is need. Ms. Wood went on to ask about the businesses financial support for operations, or if they were just sponsoring startup costs. Mr. Peterson responded that they were sponsoring startup costs only, and wouldn't be allowed to sponsor operational expenses.

Ms. White asked about the tap-ride service hours and Sunday service hours in the industrial park. Mr. Peterson said that the industrial park would like to see Sunday service, and the tap-ride service would only operate during regular operating hours. Ms. White also asked about why the service to the industrial park did not work 10-15 years ago. Ms. Bommelman said, there were a few reasons, and that MATBUS thinks it is an okay time to try again.

A motion to recommend to the Fargo City Council for approval of the proposed service expansion to the Fargo industrial park was made by Mr. Strand and seconded by Ms. Wood. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

3. Informational Items

a. Draft 2019-2020 Moorhead U-Pass Fees

Ms. Van Beek presented information about the Draft 2019-2020 Moorhead U-Pass Fees.

b. Ground Transportation Center (GTC) Renovation Update

Ms. Bommelman gave an update regarding the GTC. She said there were some very urgent structural issues with the deck and underground parking structure, which are being resolved.

Mr. Hanson asked about the new design and safety. Ms. Bommelman responded that safety is a big consideration, and will greatly improve line-of-sight, lighting, and cameras.

Mr. Strand asked about how the relocation of the Fargo Police Department would impact some of the security issues, and if there was discussion about having a precinct or office nearby or within the GTC to keep the PD presence downtown. Ms. Bommelman said yes there have been discussions and they have not ruled anything out yet.

c. First Transit Update

Ms. Sellner presented an update on First Transit including the hiring of a new general operations manager, recent challenges, and recent successes.

Ms. White asked about what has been done to see if First Transit is remaining competitive for finding employees. Ms. Sellner said that they have been discussing the wages of drivers because the wage attracts and retains employees. Ms. White said that retaining employees would provide a cost savings too because First Transit wouldn't have to train new people all of the time.

d. Mobility Matters Forum May 22, 2019

Mr. Peterson gave an announcement about the Mobility Matters Forum happening Wednesday, May 22nd, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

e. Update on Transit Authority

Mr. Maddox gave an update on the Transit Authority study.

Mr. Arett asked if Valley Senior Services was involved as part of the technical or policy action committees that were formed to guide the study. Mr. Maddox responded that Valley Senior Services is a stakeholder and that they would be involved in the process and kept up to date.

f. January through April 2019 Operations Report and College Ridership

Ms. Van Beek and Mr. Peterson gave the January through April 2019 operations report and college ridership. Ms. Van Beek explained that weather really played a large role in affecting some of the numbers in Moorhead. Mr. Peterson said that winter weather was impactful but Fargo was seeing on time performance improve.

Mr. Arett asked about why the disabled and elderly ridership percentage was so much higher in Moorhead than in Fargo. Ms. Van Beek responded that caregivers and social service agencies in Moorhead promote and increase transit ridership.

g. New Rider ID Cards

Mr. Peterson presented information about the new rider ID cards.

h. Amble (MAT Paratransit app)

Mr. Peterson presented information about the new mobile application to book rides for paratransit, and allow vehicle tracking within the 15 minute pickup window.

4. Other Business

Hearing no other business Mr. Hanson adjourned the meeting at 9:56 AM.