

Agenda Item 1b

**3rd Meeting of the
MATBUS Coordination Committee
January 15, 2025 – 9:00 AM
Metro COG Conference Room/Zoom**

Members Present:

Deb White, Moorhead City Council, Chair
Denise Kolpack, Fargo City Commission
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Julie Bommelman, Fargo Transit Director
Susan Thompson, Fargo Finance Director
Sebastian McDougall, Moorhead City Council
Jenica Flanagan, Moorhead Finance Director
Mike Rietz, Moorhead Assistant City Manager
Peyton Mastera, Dilworth City Administrator
Brit Stevens, NDSU Transportation Manager
Ben Griffith, Metro COG Executive Director

Members Absent:

Dustin Scott, West Fargo City Administrator

Others Present:

Adam Altenburg, Metro COG
Heidi Benke, MATBUS
Shaun Crowell, MATBUS
Cindy Girdner, Valley Senior Services
Luke Grittner, MATBUS
Taaren Haak, MATBUS
Aiden Jung, Metro COG
Ian McLean, City of Fargo
Matt Pinotti, Transdev
Jordan Smith, MATBUS
Cole Swingen, MATBUS

1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda

A motion to approve the order and contents of the overall agenda was made by Mr. Mastera and seconded by Mr. Griffith. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from December 3, 2024

A motion to approve the minutes for December 2024 was made by Mr. McDougall and seconded by Ms. Bommelman. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

2a. MATBUS Coordination Committee Bylaws

Chair White informed committee members of the final version of bylaws for the MATBUS Coordination Committee had been prepared. She noted that the bylaws had been reviewed by Fargo's legal department.

A motion to approve the MATBUS Coordination Committee Bylaws was made by Mr. Strand and seconded by Mr. Rietz. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

2b. MATBUS Representation on Metro COG's Transportation Technical Committee

Ms. Bommelman explained that Metro COG's Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) bylaws currently lists two members representing transit, one from the City of Fargo and one from the City of Moorhead. She stated that, with MATBUS becoming a large urban transit agency, it should transition to having two members representing transit rather than tie membership to each city. Mr. Griffith noted that he had spoken to Metro COG's legal counsel to advise him on the requested changes to Metro COG's bylaws.

A motion to approve the suggested change of having two MATBUS TTC representatives instead of one transit representative from Fargo and one transit representative from Moorhead was made by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Rietz. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

2c. Metropolitan Planning Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)(3-C)

Ms. Bommelman informed the committee that one of the transit's federal requirements is the adoption of a planning Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the State Departments of Transportation, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and public transportation providers. She explained that the agreement states that these entities agree to cooperatively undertake a continuing and comprehensive transportation planning and programming process (3-C) for the defined metropolitan planning area. She noted that NDDOT and MnDOT have signed a separate MOA designating NDDOT as the lead agency in the administration of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) planning funds and the overall management of the planning programs of the local MPO.

Ms. Bommelman explained that, with the retirement of the Moorhead Transit Manager, it is suggested the Fargo Transit Director be designated as the public transportation operator to sign the agreement, noting the obligation is to participate in planning efforts within the metropolitan planning area.

A motion to approve the Fargo Transit Director as the public transportation operator's designee to sign the Metropolitan Planning MOA, pending Fargo City Commission approval, was made by Mr. Strand and seconded by Mr. Mastera. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

2d. Budget Adjustment Request to Add Allocated Indirect Costs to New Revenue and Expense Financial Model

Ms. Thompson informed the committee that the City of Fargo had requested that indirect costs be included as a component of the new transit revenue and expense allocation model. She noted that, with the transition of MATBUS becoming a large urban transit agency, the City of Fargo bears more of the administration costs and that it would be fair for transit member entities including Moorhead and Dilworth, West Fargo, and NDSU be charged for some of the indirect services including Information Services, Human Resources, and nominal support expenses.

Ms. Thompson explained that City of Fargo and City of Moorhead transit and finance staff had developed and reviewed an allocation plan to allocate \$411,455 in indirect costs to member entities based on the administrative rate for each mode as approved in the overall MATBUS Reorganization Study. She stated that by applying the administrative rate to

indirect costs would result in a break down of \$248,322.94 for Fargo, \$115,343.61 for Moorhead and Dilworth, \$24,798.47 for West Fargo, and \$22,989.98 for NDSU.

A motion to approve the budget adjustment request to add allocated indirect costs to the new revenue and expense financial model was made by Ms. Flanagan and seconded by Ms. Bommelman. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

2e. 2025 Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program

Mr. Crowell explained that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is moving to a two-tiered system for Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program compliance for recipients that receive planning, capital, or operating assistance. He stated that City of Fargo Transit is a Tier 1 recipient and receives a cumulative total value of \$670,000 or more in FTA funds per federal fiscal year, excluding transit vehicle purchases. He noted that Tier 1 recipients must have a DBE program that meets all federal requirements and that recipients must upload their updated DBE Program into TrAMS by March 1, 2025, for FTA review.

A motion to authorize MATBUS staff to bring the DBE Program to the Fargo City Commission for approval was made by Mr. Rietz and seconded by Mr. McDougall. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

2f. Federal Funds Distribution between Fargo and Moorhead

Ms. Bommelman informed the committee that the City of Fargo and the City of Moorhead had come to an agreement on how to utilize FFY 2024 funds from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) including Section 5307 (Operating and Capital), Section 5310 (Elderly and Disabled), and Section 5339 (Bus and Bus Facilities). She noted that Moorhead had identified capital projects over the next five years that could swap FFY 2024 operating funds for capital funds. She explained that this draft agreement would be specific to FFY 2024 funds and that the agreement would be adjusted annually to ensure that the swapping of funds is fair and equitable for both cities. She also explained that future appropriations would be considered for programming under the agreement and that capital improvements would be identified annually by the MATBUS Coordination Committee.

A motion to approve the federal transit grant fund distribution agreement pending legal review and to submit it to the Fargo City Commission and Moorhead City Council was made by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Flanagan. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

3a. Vehicle Leasing and Insurance Update

Mr. Smith explained that MATBUS would like to implement a lease agreement with the City of Moorhead for its fixed route fleet. He noted that this would be similar to current MATBUS paratransit services, with vehicles leased to the City of Fargo by the City of Moorhead and the Fargo providing insurance for paratransit vehicles. He stated that MATBUS would gain operational efficiencies and cost savings by consolidating its fixed route bus fleet, just as it has with its paratransit fleet. He also stated that consolidating MATBUS's fixed route fleet would give flexibility to operate any vehicle in the service area instead of buses only being able to operate in Fargo or Moorhead. He concluded by noting that MATBUS had spoken to the North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund and that they have no concerns over insuring Moorhead fixed route vehicles, but that Fargo does carry a higher \$10,000 deductible compared to Moorhead's \$1,000 deductible.

3b. Ridership Update

Mr. Grittner provided ridership by route and system totals for 2024. He noted that the system total had seen a three percent increase in ridership, from 1,229,421 in 2023 to 1,266,913 in 2024. Among fixed routes, he stated that Route 13 had seen the biggest percentage increase while Route 16 had seen the largest percentage decrease. He also noted strong ridership increases at MSUM, Concordia, M State, and NDSCS.

3c. Safety and Security Update

Mr. Swingen informed the committee that MATBUS staff faced a variety of safety issues in 2024, ranging from public intoxication and disorderly conduct to assault and threats of harm. He noted that MATBUS is continually evaluating safety concerns through regular safety committee meetings and reviewing staff feedback, and that MATBUS would also be looking for input from MATBUS Coordination Committee members on how to better address safety and security needs.

3d. 2025 MATBUS Marketing Plan

Ms. Haak shared items from the 2025 MATBUS Marketing Plan. She noted several goals for 2025 including: focusing on education opportunities, developing a video content library, maintaining a digital marketing presence, engaging with local businesses, and planning for MATBUS' 50th anniversary celebration in 2026. She also noted several promotional opportunities and community partnership events.

4. Other Business

Chair White stated that the next MATBUS Coordination Committee meeting would be held Wednesday, February 19 at 9:00 AM.

Chair White adjourned the meeting at 10:20 AM.