83rd Meeting of the
Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board
September 9, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Members Present:
Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council
Kevin Hanson, Chair
Steve Lindaas, Moorhead City Council
Jackie Maahs, Concordia College
Brad Olson, West Fargo City Commission
Brit Stevens, NDSU
Teresa Stolfus, M|State
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Sara Watson Curry, Moorhead City Council
Annie Wood, MSUM

Members Absent:
Brian Arett, Valley Senior Services
Tony Grindberg, Fargo City Commission
Paul Grindeland, Valley Senior Services

Others Present:
Lisa Bode, City of Moorhead
Julie Bommelman, City of Fargo
Taaren Haak, City of Moorhead
Joseph Kapper, SRF Consulting
Michael Maddox, FM Metro COG
Matthew Peterson, City of Fargo
Jordan Smith, City of Moorhead
Cole Swingen, City of Fargo
Lori Van Beek, City of Moorhead
Deb White, City of Moorhead

1. **Call to Order and Introductions**
   Chair Hanson called the meeting to order and introductions were made. A quorum was present.

2. **Action Items**
   a. **January 20, 2019 Meeting Minutes**
   A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Aasness and seconded by Ms. Watson Curry. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

   b. **Mass Transit RFP**
   Ms. Bommelman spoke about the RFP for mass transit operational services. She explained that the RFP would only be for driver and management services and not for fixed route dispatchers. Proposal bids were accepted from August, with all proposals due by September 23. Ms. Bommelman thanked all those that have volunteered to be part of the RFP evaluation team. She then outlined some of the considerations they expect bidders to emphasize in their proposals

such as safety, employee benefits, organization structure, incentive proposals, technology advances, projected revenue, performance expectations, paratransit, facility operations as well as following any federal, state and local requirements. The current contractor, First Transit, is expected to put forward a bid. The RFP is for a two-year contract with three additional one-year options beyond that period which will give MATBUS greater flexibility. 9:40

Federal grants for 2020 and the projects being awarded through Federal 5339 funds. There will be five projects funded including (1) Green Light Priority Project (2) Facility Support Equipment (3) Bus Shelter at the Clay County courthouse (4)(5) Dilworth Transfer Hub Design & Construction.

A motion to recommend approval to the Moorhead City Council of FTA Section 5339 capital grant application for the above listed projects was made by Mr. Arett and seconded by Mr. Olson. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

Contracts with First Transit, the City of Moorhead and Fargo has a contract, for driver services and fixed route dispatch at this point
City of Fargo will be taking over the fixed route dispatchers, January 2021
RFP will not be bidding out any fixed route dispatchers
RFP will be for driver and manager services, proposal August, all due September 23
Emphasis on safety, minimum wages and benefits

c. GTC Renovation Update

Ms. Van Beek explained some terminology that would be used throughout the presentation. She then introduced potential alternatives for Route 4 because during the public hearing process for changes to the Link FM service, people commented about route changes to accommodate or supplement some of the stops removed as part of the changes to Link FM. She shared goals for route 4 including (1) inbound and outbound bus stops at Hjemkomst, Parkview Terrace (low income housing), Moorhead Center Mall, and downtown Moorhead housing (US Bank) (2) Keep route timing the same with 10 min. to spare for weather etc. (3) Add bus stop close to the shelter that was previously used by Link FM (4) Provide additional route 4 bus stops in downtown Fargo (5) Replace Link FM bus stop sign at Hjemkomst with a MATBUS bus stop sign (6) Brand route 4 as the “shopping connection” (7) Maintain or reduce railroad crossings. Ms. Van Beek shared a map of the existing route 4. She shared pros and cons of the existing route 4 in the downtown areas of Fargo and Moorhead. She explained four options with their pros and cons for route 4 to supplement the Link FM changes most efficiently. Ms. Van Beek shared a matrix of the four options, and indicated that the preferred option was option 3. She then shared more detailed maps of option 3 indicating where new bus stops would need to be located.

Ms. Watson Curry asked if the changes to route 4 would merit a public hearing. Ms. Van Beek said that the changes are not significant enough to merit a public hearing, but would have an informational meeting and ultimate decision from Moorhead City Council. A public hearing is required if there are changes to more than 25% of the route 4 operating hours or the physical route that the bus would take.

A motion to recommend approval to the Moorhead City Council of option 3 changes to Route 4 was made by Mr. Lindaas and seconded by Mr. Aasness. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

d. MATBUS Transit Authority Presentation

Ms. Van Beek explained the RFP for mass transit operational services. She said part of the process is to have an evaluation team that makes recommendations to City Council. The team reviews the RFPs and helps in the interview process as well. Ms. Van Beek said that in the past, board members have volunteered to be on the selection evaluation team, and reiterated that there is a time commitment to be a part of it. She asked if anyone was interested in serving on the evaluation team. Kevin Hanson said he would volunteer. Ms. Watson Curry asked about the time commitment. Ms. Van Beek said there is quite a bit of reading, otherwise meetings themselves may in total take about 8 hours, or one day. Ms. Watson Curry said she would tentatively volunteer. Mr. Stevens also volunteered. Ms. Van Beek said more information would be provided as MATBUS moves along in the process.

Mr. Hanson asked if the contract for operational services could be extended again. Ms. Van Beek said that the contract could be extended, and had been extended another year already.

Ms. Watson Curry asked for clarification about moving dispatch from contract services to City of Fargo employment. Mr. Peterson clarified that the transition for employees would be very seamless.

A motion to appoint Kevin Hanson, Sarah Watson Curry, and Brit Stevens to the Selection Evaluation Team for Fargo-Moorhead Mass Transit Operational Services Request for Proposals was made by Mr. Arett and seconded by Ms. Wood. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

3. Informational Items

a. Operations Reports

Ms. Haak introduced the 2020 marketing plan. She said MATBUS is in the middle of the process of completing the plan, and are refining the approach to marketing in 2020. She explained that ridership is low across the nation, but hopefully some new tactics can help boost ridership in the FM metro. Ms. Haak explained the existing promotions that are typically done annually for marketing MATBUS to the community. She said that the promotions won't necessarily be cancelled, but may be done differently based upon the following goals: (1) Education of the community including dynamic media such as short videos. Also enhancing the website to be more user-friendly, and engage younger riders through different forms of social media. (2) Connection with the community. A big marketing push will be informing the public about the changes to Link FM.

Ms. Wood asked if the marketing team would address the "why" to ride vs. "how" to ride. Ms. Haak explained that they have done this in the past and plan to continue with "why" people should ride including a winter riding campaign which focuses on the benefits of riding the bus in the winter. Ms. Wood also suggested that a "sustainability and eco-friendly" marketing approach would be helpful to reach the younger demographic of the community. Mr. Hanson agreed that this was a good idea and could even see MATBUS having a focus group with younger riders regarding this topic. Ms. Haak said they do have some events that stress the ecological

benefits of riding the bus, and added that the college ridership survey would also be going out soon to directly engage the younger demographic. She said there may be a good opportunity for a focus group as part of the development of the Transit Development Plan.

b. Transit COVID-19 Response

Mr. Smith explained that every 6 months, the City of Fargo goes out for bids for fuel for all departments including diesel and unleaded fuel used by MATBUS. He said they go out 6 months in advance. Mr. Smith said that last year's fuel cost was well within the $825,000 budget, and that for the first and second quarter of 2020, the prices have been the same as in 2019, so they are confident the budget will again be adequate. He also explained that it saves MATBUS over $170,000 if they were to pay at a regular pump, and not buy fuel in bulk.

Mr. Arett asked who was the successful bidder for quarters 1 and 2 of 2020. Mr. Smith said it was Hartland Fuel Products.

4. Other Business

Ms. Watson Curry suggested further discussion about the current MAT Coordinating Board meeting space, and wanted to assess if it was conducive for the discussions that the multi-jurisdictional board needs to have in order to move MATBUS forward. Mr. Hanson added that they should talk about options at a future meeting regarding the meeting space for the board.

Hearing no other business, Mr. Hanson adjourned the meeting at 9:10 AM.