

**91st Meeting of the
Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board
September 28, 2022
Virtual Meeting**

Members Present:

Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council
Denise Kolpack, Fargo City Commission
Paul Grindeland, Valley Senior Services
Brad Olson, West Fargo City Commission
Larry Seljevold, Moorhead City Council
Brit Stevens, NDSU
Teresa Stolfus, M|State
John Strand, Fargo City Commission (Acting Chair)
Annie Wood, MSUM

Members Absent:

Brian Arett, Valley Senior Services
Kevin Hanson, Chair
Steve Lindaas, Moorhead City Council
Jackie Maahs, Concordia College

Others Present:

Heidi Benke, City of Fargo
Lisa Bode, City of Moorhead
Julie Bommelman, City of Fargo
Ari Del Rosario, FM Metro COG
Taaren Haak, City of Moorhead
Jordan Smith, City of Moorhead
Cole Swingen, City of Fargo
Lori Van Beek, City of Moorhead

1. Call to Order and Introductions

a. Denise Kolpack, Fargo City Commissioner

Chair Hanson was absent. John Strand volunteered to be the acting chair for this meeting, which was confirmed by the board. A quorum was present.

Denise Kolpack introduced herself as the new Fargo City Commission representative on the MAT Coordinating Board, replacing Arlette Preston.

2. Action Items

a. July 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes

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

b. RFP for MATBUS Planning Study – Julie Bommelman & Lori Van Beek

Ms. Bommelman reminded members of the Transit Authority Study which was completed and made recommendations for the transition to a large urban system. This includes redefining the

organizational management structure, determining a governance arrangement, simplifying cost allocation and identifying federal funding distribution.

A motion to recommend distributing a request for proposals to implement the study's recommended actions in the transition to a large urban system to the Fargo City Commission and Moorhead City Council was made by Mr. Olson and seconded by Mr. Seljevold. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

3. Informational Items

a. Transit Asset Management Plans for 2022-2025 – Jordan Smith

Mr. Smith explained that the last Transit Asset Management Plans (TAM Plans) were updated in 2018 and the plans must be updated every four years. Changes incorporated into the update include removing shelters since they are not considered facilities, only including non-revenue vehicles over \$50,000, adjusting targets to reflect available funding sources, and prioritizing asset replacement based on a State of Good Repair scale. The State of Good Repair scale includes life years, life miles, life maintenance costs and condition rating.

Mr. Smith then presented some tables that they use to determine State of Good Repair. These tables included performance management benchmarks for all assets, as well as useful life benchmarks for transit vehicles and facilities.

b. Vehicle Replacement Procedure Update – Jordan Smith

Mr. Smith connected the vehicle replacement procurement update with the TAM Plans by explaining that MATBUS is currently not meeting their targets as outlined in the plans due to vehicle supply chain and workforce shortage issues. MATBUS has been taking part in the Duluth Transit Authority Consortium for the purchase of large buses. Bus manufacturers are demanding higher prices and they are still working out an agreement. MATBUS is looking at other transit agency procurements, such as the State of Washington, to potentially piggy-back off their contract. Doing so could make it easier to get vehicle orders in place.

The manufacturer of the paratransit vehicles has shut down their plant but plans to be back in operation in January, 2023. Fargo is waiting on four vehicles and Moorhead needs two. The four Fargo vehicles will be built when the plant opens back up, however the two paratransit vehicles for Moorhead may need to wait until the next cycle in 2024. MATBUS is also looking to purchase another minivan for Metro Senior Ride. Mr. Smith believes it should be easier to purchase one since they are more readily available at the moment.

c. Update on MnDOT 2023 Operating Grant Application Award – Lori Van Beek

Ms. Van Beek gave an update on the MnDOT 2023 Operating Grant Application Award. MnDOT recently notified grantees that due to higher than anticipated cost increases, all urban grantees were allocated a 10% increase in 2023 based on their 2022 approved grant budgets. Moorhead's request was for a 19% increase. The unfunded difference therefore came out of the fixed route and paratransit/senior ride budget.

Due to this, MATBUS is considering a mix of service cuts and alternate revenue sources to make up for the budget shortfall. Potential service cuts include making permanent the temporary suspension of night service ending at 9:45pm, reducing hours or frequency on routes that have low ridership, eliminating Route 2C during the MSUM academic year, or eliminating Sunday

paratransit service. Ms. Van Beek also outlined some of the revenue sources that could be used including additional federal 5307 funds, as well as federal CARES Act and ARPA funds.

Ms. Wood urged that MATBUS work with MSUM to collect student feedback, ensuring that students are informed of the tradeoffs and the reason behind any service cuts to Route 2C. Considering that students continue to fund their share of MATBUS service in their student fees, Ms. Wood wanted to make sure that students are made aware of what they will still receive in return for their contribution to transit. Ms. Van Beek noted that a public hearing would be required if there are any permanent service level cuts and she would be happy to meet with the students to discuss this further.

d. Update on Farebox Implementation of Account-based System – Lori Van Beek & Jordan Smith

Ms. Van Beek gave an overview of the new account-based fare system. The new fare structure with Connect Smartcards and Mobile Ticketing went live in May and final acceptance of the account-based system was approved in September. New features include the MATBUS Connect web page and app, Customer Portal, and mobile ticketing app. The system has been working well. As of August, 34% of riders were now using the new Connect Smartcards and Mobile Ticketing and only 6% were still using Magnetics and old Smartcards.

e. July-August 2022 Operations Report – Cole Swingen & Lori Van Beek

Mr. Swingen presented a summary of transit ridership. He prefaced his summary by acknowledging that they don't have the most accurate data from ridership during the pandemic while fares were free. There has been a mix of ridership increases and decreases systemwide when comparing current ridership to ridership last year. Looking at the Fargo transit routes, ridership changes compared to the previous year were mixed. Ridership for Route 16 and 18, paratransit, as well as Industrial Park TapRide users have notably increased compared to the year previous. Meanwhile, LinkFM ridership continues to decrease. As expected, college ridership has improved including a significant rise in NDSU TapRide users.

Ms. Van Beek presented ridership data for Moorhead Transit. Overall ridership is still lagging compared to pre-pandemic levels. Ms. Van Beek mentioned that Saturday ridership hasn't been recovering as much as weekday ridership. However, Metro Senior Ride has been rebounding and ridership is starting to get back to where it used to be.

4. Other Business

Hearing no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 AM.