

Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority
9/12/2023

1. Call to Order:

Board Chair, John Waltman, called the September 12, 2023 meeting of the Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority Board to order at 10:30 a.m.

2. Roll Call was taken:

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Waltman, Joe Henne, Brandon Wheeler and Lynda Garlitz

MEMBERS ABSENT: Nick Huyck (excused)

Those in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

3. Agenda: It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Lynda Garlitz	Add Neebish Schedule to the agenda in the Director's Report.
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4. Public Comment:

- Bob Malpass – Neebish Island Resident

5. Minutes: It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Joe Henne SECOND: Lynda Garlitz	Approve the August 1, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented.
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6. Finance Director Report:

- Finance Director Gordon reviewed July 2023 Financials. There were no questions from the board regarding EFT or A/P checks that was provided in the packets.
- Discussed MERS Delegation Requirement for the board to approve Ms. Gordon to vote as a representative of EUPTA at the annual MERS meeting. Board will need to make a motion.

7. Delegate Ms. Gordon as the MERS Officer as the EUPTA Representative. Discussed.

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Approve appointment of Ms. Gordon as the MERS Office Delegate representative for EUPTA to vote at annual MERS meeting.
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- Discussed Draft Budget for 2024. The State determines and uses this to advance funds for the year to agencies. They reconcile at the end of the year once everything is completed and this determines a pay back or money due to EUPTA. Ferries, in the past were 18% reimbursed with ARPA funds, but this fiscal year we will be receiving an additional 9%. We were told 2023 was the last time to receive any ARPA funds. This is on top of the 50% reimbursement. This year reimbursement rate for busing will increase 6.275%. This is a one-time bump of 45 million for the entire state. MPTA and Dusty Fancher (lobbyist) have been lobbying to increase 20-30 million every year. It was stressed that this is a one-time bump. Lobbyists trying to receive this increase every year. Most legislators are in very supportive of transportation.

8. Adopt 2024 Budget: Discussion. Ms. Gordon explained this is a tool the state uses to determine advance needs of budgets.

MOTION: Joe Henne SECOND: Lynda Garlitz	Approve the FY2024 Budget as presented.
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- It has been three years since an increase of fares. We need to implement smaller increases but on a more regular timeframe than last time. The International Bridge has just passed an increase of their fares every year for the next 10 years. They can decrease and pause but cannot increase more than the original proposed increase during those 10 years. The rate of inflation has increased 14% over the last 3-4 years. We have not increased prices since July 2020. COLA is not keeping up with CPI. We are estimating an increase in fares of 5%. The last few years we have had extra funding due to pandemic and this additional funding is disappearing and we need to make up for that. We are currently looking at January 1, 2024 to have increases in place. We will need to have a public meeting before there is an increase in prices. Neebish operations are changing and costs will increase from the current Captain's contract to employee operations. Fuel prices change daily.

9. Motion to proceed with the calculation of a fare increase for January 1.

MOTION: Joe Henne SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Motion to proceed with the calculation of fare increase for January 1, 2024
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- Bussing: Fares are up 36% due to the very successful Non-Emergency Medical Transportation program. There was a 12% increase in expenses. More services increase the need for more employees and other expenses.
- Ferry: Fares increase 2% from last year with a 7% increase in expenses. Passengers up 3% and vehicles are up 4%.

10. Director's Report:

- Facility Update: There is currently a lot of concurrent work going on:
 - Concrete work including sidewalks and gutters
 - Ceiling tile in admin portion
 - Painting, mechanical electrical and plumbing are onsite.
 - Drywall on going.
 - Fireproof walls are in up in back garages.
 - Flooring begins next week.
 - Once concrete is completed, paving should commence paving the first week of October. It is getting close. We are hoping to move in Mid-November.
- Cashless Update: Is continuing the same path and getting closer. The myEUPTA App is working well. Reporting system and Back Office continuing to be tweaked as needed. Discussed current app usage. The app is still not advertised as "Live."
- Neebish Update: There was a request from Pickford schools to change the 6:45 a.m. run to 6:30 a.m. to accommodate the bus schedule. There is currently one to two children riding the bus. They will get picked up on the Mainland. Jamie and Director made the decision to make both the 6:30 and 6:45 a.m. run until the board approved the change. Action Item and Motion to permanently change 6:45 a.m. to 6:30 a.m. Monday – Friday. Minor schedule adjustment.

11. Approve change in Neebish Island Ferry Schedule Discussion. It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

<p>MOTION: John Waltman SECOND: Lynda Garlitz</p>	<p>Approve the time change from 6:45 a.m. to 6:30 a.m. Monday – Friday on a permanent year-round basis.</p>
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- Discussed 10:00 p.m. run on schedule and how it is not being utilized. This gives the operators a very long day with not a lot of turnover time for rest. Traffic counts were pulled and Director Paramski provided the board with a spreadsheet showing these counts. Traffic is very light, as evident by the data provided. Would like the board to approve a motion to eliminate the 10:00 p.m. run on the schedule. We cannot justify two shifts at Neebish Island to accommodate these long days. We will be doubling costs with change of contract in March 2024. The USCG has been accommodating with the long shifts due to the breaks in the schedule to provide rest time for the crew. Suggest making this effective Monday to eliminate 10 p.m. shift. Trustee Garlitz suggested begin October 1, 2023.

12. Approve removal of 10:00 p.m. schedule in Neebish Island Ferry Schedule Discussion.
It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz	Eliminate 10 PM run on Neebish Schedule
SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	beginning October 1, 2023.

- Director Paramski discussed a request to go to two schedules instead of the current four schedules. There is confusion in regards to the current schedule. The change would be to go to a summer and winter schedule. Director Paramski provided copies of the existing schedule and then a proposal with two schedules consisting of summer and winter Schedule. Discussed. Please review and would like to bring motion of the two schedule scenarios at October meeting. This schedule makes it a manageable day to run for operator and deckhand. Discussed 11:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. Thought is to keep the time but since usage and counts are not high to make the run “by appointment only” (not a special). Customers would be required to call the captain no later than 8:00 p.m. on the day of the requested run to let them know the 11:00 p.m. run would be needed.
- Director Paramski informed the board that beginning September 19th, Tuesday and Thursday runs would begin from the mainland. The ferry would leave the mainland at the scheduled time. This is a temporary solution. Informational only.
- Discuss for next summer schedule will commence when get closer to Neebish logistics after the March contract is ended. We continue negotiations with Lon, Jamie, and crew for a solution after the contract. Director Paramski has met with union with discussions regarding day rate vs. hourly for Neebish employees. Total time of runs are dependent on season. The crew needs to be at the ferry at least 20 minutes before with logistics, depending on traffic, unload, etc. The crew will be there one hour at least for each run. The day is very broken for the Neebish operation. They are not only 12 hours but also on call for all 12 hours. We are currently discussing a five days on, five days off schedule. Discussed needs of the island and the fact that employees on call need to be available the entire time and within distance to get to ferry in a timely manner. Discussed EUPTA benefits of sick leave and annual leave and how that will play into scheduling, as well as other benefits, including pension. The current contract

addresses ice conditions and shut down in winter. If shut down is less than 10 days we currently pay for those days. If it is more than 10 days Captain Pringle pays back. Discussing how this will work with employees after contract is over. We are making progress on transition and succession plan.

- Board was informed Bois Blanc and Washington Island ferry schedules end early and runs are less, but they have more residents than Neebish.
- Other. – Maritime security committee will be holding a table top exercise at LSSU for active shooter scenario. Pete and head captains will be attending the meeting on Thursday. Teams will be comprised of various agencies and will have real life scenarios to review and each team will talk about what they would do and how they would react and present ideas to the group. The ferry system is labeled as a “soft target” by USCG.
- DIV inspection is Thursday. This is the last annual inspection for the EUPTA fleet. The other three ferries inspections have been completed and USCG approved and signed off.
- Akemi and Pete are currently working on procurement for a tractor for new facility. This vehicle will be 100% grant funded. Also working on purchasing updated radar and AIS system for three ferries. The current systems are out of date and we cannot buy replacement parts due to how outdated they are. The Neebish III has a brand-new system.

13. New Business:

- Trustee Garlitz inquired about the MSU Ferry survey and if it was completed. A draft copy of MSU survey is available and Director Paramski will provide a copy to the board.


14. Board Comment:

- Joe Henne: Evacuation process done on Mackinac Island. Has this ever been thought of for our islands. USCG drives and plans and initiates this process. 9:00 a.m. inspection on Mainland on Thursday, September 14, 2023.

15. Adjourn: It was moved and carried by roll call vote to:

MOTION: Joe Henne SECOND: Lynda Garlitz	Adjourn the meeting at 11:57 AM
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Lynda Garlitz, Secretary


Bonnie Kaunisto, Recording Secretary

Board Approved: