

Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority
10/3/2023

1. Call to Order:

Board Chair, John Waltman, called the October 3, 2023 meeting of the Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority Board to order at 10:33 a.m.

2. Roll Call was taken:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

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: Nick Huyck SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	It was approved to accept the October 2023 agenda as presented.
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4. Public Comment:

- Judy Eby
- Connie Lockwood
- Jim Widenhofer
- Phyllis Reed
- Mark Godsy
- Kristi Olson
- Douglas Wheelright
- Bob Malpass
- Cele Malpass
- David Livingston
- Brad Sommers
- Mike Pine
- Janae Danzy
- Klem Kelgar
- Marla Craig
- Marian Miller

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

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Approve the September 12, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented.
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6. Finance Director Report:

- Finance Director Gordon reviewed August 2023 Financials. There were no questions from the board regarding EFT or A/P checks that was provided in the packets.
- September 30th is the end of our fiscal year. Next month a draft of FY2023 financial statements will be provided. Several accruals for year-end will need to be made for any work performed in the fiscal year but not billed until October. The audit will be in December and we will be preparing for that in the upcoming months.
- Calculation provided to board regarding two options for Public Act 152. This Act was adopted in 2011. It places limits on employee medical benefits. Caps are set every year by The Department of Treasury. There are two options to opt into; the 80/20 split and Annual Caps. Since inception, EUPTA has adopted the 80/20 option. The sheet provided shows the difference in cost of the two. There is a \$30,000.00 savings to adopt the 80/20 split. EUPTA must adopt a plan, annually.
- Bussing and ferries are funded separately. Separate reports are filed with MDOT for the following:
 - Chippewa and Luce Busing (combined)
 - Drummond Island, Sugar Island and Neebish (combined)
- Each of the individual islands and busing are allocated expenses associated with its own operation. The only costs that are allocated across all five entities, is the mechanics cost and administration costs. These are based on a cost allocation plan approved by MDOT.
- Bussing- Passenger counts are up 7% and fare revenue is up 56%, due in large to the Rides to Wellness program. Expenses are up 17%. Providing more services incurs more expenses, hiring more drivers to provide the NEMT service.
- Overall ferry vehicle counts have increased 2% for all three islands. Revenue is up 2% for all three islands. YTD Expenses increased 9.84%.

7. Public Act 152 Medical Plan Adoption. Discussion. It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Nick Huyck SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Approve. Adopt Public Act 152 Medical Plan with the 80/20 plan, beginning December 1, 2023
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8. Director's Report:

- Facility Update: The facility is nearing completion. It is approximately a month or two out. We may be able to move in the month of November. The floor coverings are being placed this week, along with electrical and mechanical. Most of the concrete is completed. Payne and Dolan, Inc. is getting ready to pave. Planting and minor landscaping are happening, currently.
- Cashless Update: This is not much different than last meeting. People are using the app. A new device implemented on the ferries is working well since implementation in mid-September. Reporting continues to be a work in progress for the back office.
- Neebish Update: Pete Paramski, Director recommendation is to table schedule changes at this time. The 10:00 p.m. run would have discontinued October 1, 2023. We have until next year to work on a plan for the schedule. We need to clear up rumors. There are many considerations that go into the operations and schedules of all three ferries, including ridership counts, cost benefit analysis, and regulating agency considerations of time limitations on crew. The crew is limited to an amount of time they can work on the ferry. The Marine Safety manual clearly states a 12-hour shift. The Neebish Island crew has been given an exemption; due to the fact they are not underway 12 straight hours. They can rest in between runs. Every year this comes up at the annual inspection. Another limitation is staffing. We have advertised at all three locations for captains and deckhands on indeed and this has been widely unsuccessful in the past. Captains have a unique credential. Most of Drummond and Sugar Island employees live on the island they work at. We are extremely fortunate to have what we have. We recently have changed the schedule two days per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) due to the fact we have a captain living on the mainland. This small change alone caused a stir with the residents of Neebish Island due to a very small change in timing. This change had to happen as we have a captain that lives on the mainland. The only action item was the elimination of the 10:00 p.m. run on the summer schedule for 2024 and 6:45 a.m. changed to 6:30 a.m. to accommodate a school bus run for Pickford Schools. The two-change schedule that was handed out was a *DRAFT ONLY*. The schedule was a draft of two-change schedule for a starting point. The information was provided to Mr. Malpass at the previous meeting for review. It was never stated the board would vote on this schedule but to review it as a starting point for the two-schedule option.
- Neebish Island ridership data for the 10 PM run May-September ferry was pulled. It substantiated that data for the rider history of this run is low. Very few to none are currently using the 10 p.m. This is real data that the counts are low. It does not make good business sense to provide runs that are costing money but not being utilized. We can revisit this run in the future. We will need to measure the cost benefits. Good business sense is we continue to review all three schedules at all ferries and provide good use of public funds. There are other factors considered in decision making, including vessel depreciation, asking if it is worth

running ferries for one car in brash ice, etc. We are currently revisiting the winter schedule on Drummond Island, and reviewing the data for those runs. We review all the costs. The Neebish Island ferry current contract is ending in March and after this, increased costs will incur. Keeping the current Neebish schedule will completely double, or more than double in cost. If we run the Neebish Ferry equally as we do Sugar and Drummond, the cost will be over one million dollars for staffing. It is our job to review the cost benefit. There was a reduction of the schedule for winter at Sugar Island Ferry. This was after a review of the vehicles counts. Our job is to consider how can we make things better and more efficient. We have a lot of time before rescinding 10 PM schedule. We will schedule a Board Workshop to look at things closer. Our goal is to provide the best service we can with the funds we have. Trying to help everyone we can, but with public funding in mind, as well. The Neebish Island Ferry Captain has nothing to do with this schedule.

9. New Business

- Title VI plan approval. This plan is provided to us and mandated by MDOT and Federal Transportation
- Title VI Plan. Discussion. It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

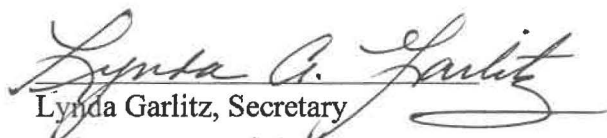
MOTION: Joe Henne SECOND: Lynda Garlitz	Approve Title VI Plan as provided
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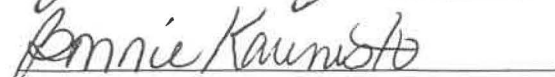
10. Board Comment:

- Lynda Garlitz – Would like a workshop to be help educate us on all the tentacles involved.
- Joe Henne – Misinformation is prevalent in our era and all sides need to understand what this does. Serving on a board is difficult enough. We have a great team
- John Waltman – Data Analysis is commended for our information to make decision.

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

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Joe Henne	Adjourn the meeting at 11:40 AM
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Lynda Garlitz, Secretary


Bonnie Kaunisto, Recording Secretary

Board Approved: