



RECORDED

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MOUNTAIN RIDES TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
Wednesday, October 21, 2020, 12:30 p.m.  
Conference Call**

The Mountain Rides Transportation Authority's Board of Directors met in a Regular Meeting on a conference call.

**PRESENT:** Chair Tom Blanchard (Bellevue), Vice-chair Kathleen Kristenson (Blaine County), Secretary Grant Gager (Ketchum), Melody Mattson (at-large), Kristin Derrig (Ketchum), Juan Martinez (Hailey), Peter Hendricks (Sun Valley), and Rick Webking (Sun Valley)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mountain Rides Executive Director, Wally Morgus  
Mountain Rides Director, Finance & Administration, Tucker Van Law  
Mountain Rides Director, Assets & Infrastructure, Ben Varner  
Mountain Rides Director, Community Development, Kim MacPherson  
Mountain Rides Operations Manager, Stuart Gray  
Mobility & Safes Routes Coordinator, Cece Osborn  
Emily Jones, *Idaho Mountain Express*  
Leif Elgethun, Safe Access  
Steve Perlinski, Safe Access  
Andy Rodriguez, Safe Access  
Mountain Rides Legal Counsel, Michael Pogue

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Tom Blanchard called to order the meeting of Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 12:31pm via conference call. Secretary Grant Gager called roll and determined that a quorum was present.

**2. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR, BOARD MEMBERS and STAFF**

Tom Blanchard said thank you to Kathleen Kristenson for running the meeting last month as he was out of town.

Grant Gager said as we gear up for winter season, he wanted to extend his gratitude to all the drivers, cleaners, mechanics, and all the frontline personnel. He also wanted to remind our teams that this is a good time to take a break and get some time off for rest and relaxation before things start to turn busy at the end of November.

Wally Morgus congratulated Tom Blanchard for being re-appointed for another three-year term on the board as the Bellevue representative. Wally also welcomed back Grant Gager to remain on the board.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA (incl. questions from Press)**

There were none.

**4. PRESENTATION: Safe Access: Access Management and Policy Compliance for Locations**

Leif Elgethun made a presentation for his company Safe Access.

Tom Blanchard suggested to turn this over to staff for further evaluation and then their recommendation to the board.

**5. ACTION ITEM: Approve Consent Calendar items**

- a. Approve: Minutes of Regular Board Meeting, Sept 16, 2020 and Special Board meeting, Sept 23, 2020
- b. Receive/file: Performance Dashboard report for September 2020
- c. Receive/file: Financial Statements and Bills Paid Reports for August 2020
- d. Receive/file: Planning & Marketing Committee, October 7, 2020, Minutes
- g. Receive/file: Finance & Performance Committee, October 7, 2020, Minutes
- h. Receive/file: Reports from Director, Community Development; Director, Finance & Administration; Director, Assets & Infrastructure; Operations Manager; Mobility & Safe Routes Coordinator; Executive Director

**Kristin Derrig moved to approve, receive, file, and adopt the Consent Agenda. Grant Gager seconded.** Grant Gager said it was nice to see the Valley route ridership come back. Grant also asked about the accident. Stuart Gray said the bus whacked into the Bluffs bus shelter. No one was hurt. **The motion passed.**

**6. ACTION ITEM:**

*New Flyer Electric Bus change order*

Wally Morgus said we ran this through both committees. When we had presented basically an \$820,000 new price on the bus, I've gone back and worked with New Flyer, really pressed them on this \$27,000 increase in price associated with the upgrade of the motor.

As it turns out, indeed, as we as expected, they added the gross price of the 2022 new motor and didn't eliminate the price for the 2016 which was going to be replaced by the 2022.

So the increment on that motor upgrade actually turns out to be the \$10,800, that you see in the itemized list of changes in the pricing there, so that the total price decrease per approved purchase order amount is \$17,135.

The total price of the bus is about \$802,000.

So, we're bringing this to the Board to discuss, and, hopefully, take action on and approve these change orders, and the prices associated with the changes being made to the base bus ordered off of the Virginia contract.

Rick Webking asked about the large \$5,000 item for the plug-in battery charging.

Ben Varner replied that a standard bus comes with a single plug-in. On the rear curbside of the bus, the passenger side of the bus, we need to have the ability to charge from both sides. The way our facilities are fairly limited and to give operations and maintenance the ability to put any bus in any bay at any time, this is basically an operational need, the way we're going to run the busses with mid-day charging.

We're not going to be able to burden the drivers, and, or maintenance personnel with bus 2101 must go in Bay 4 and bus 2102 must go in Bay 9. We want every bus to be able to go in any bay at any time.

That's something Blake kind of introduced us to as a mistake he had made with his first pilot program, that you really want to be able to charge these things anywhere at any facility at any time.

Rick Webking asked about the charging: So that charging happens inside a building, not on the outside? Ben Varner answered, correct.

Ben Varner said at this point in time with the first four chargers, we're putting two in Bellevue and two in Ketchum and all the charging will be done inside.

Wally Morgus said visually in Bellevue, the first two chargers will be put between the two main aisles in there so that's why we want to be able to charge buses on either side.

Quick and easy access to the chargers that are in the aisle in the middle, basically.

Grant Gager said he was supportive of all the changes.

**Grant Gager moved to approve and authorize the submission of the change order for the purchase of four New Flyer battery electric buses per purchase order number MRTA-XE35BEB-200520-01 including incremental cost triggered by the change order to purchase the four buses in an amount up to \$100,000. Juan Martinez seconded.** Rick Webking wanted clarification on the \$100,000 number.

Wally Morgus said that was the increment is for four buses and that number could come down to \$72,000 to match up with the roughly \$18,000 additional triggered by the changes.

Rick Webking recommended that they amend the motion not to exceed \$72,000.

**Grant Gager made a motion to amend the motion not to exceed \$72,000. Juan Martinez seconded. The motion passed.**

## **7. ACTION ITEM:**

### *Zero Fare Resolution*

Wally Morgus said this came out of the Planning & Marketing committee where they suggested we try to institute a fare free system into perpetuity with the understanding that there may come a point in time where we no longer have CARES funds providing a safety net so that we may need to amend this resolution and go back to charging fares. Nonetheless, the general feeling is to go to zero fare. This has been reviewed by legal counsel as well.

Grant Gager has been a proponent of making Mountain Rides fare free. Grant did ask if we made any of our FTA funding requests contingent upon or acknowledging that we do charge a fare and that we have matching fare revenue. Are we in any way jeopardizing our funding from FTA by making this resolution?

Tucker Van Law stated that we cannot use fare revenue as local match, we have to exclude it so he doesn't see any issues with FTA on this.

Rick Webking said we need to clean up the fixed route language and clarify which routes that will include.

Wally Morgus said that this resolution could remain in effect unless rescinded, superseded or amended by the MRTA Board and suggested that the resolution could be passed and then call on that final clause in the resolution when and if needed.

Peter Hendricks suggested adding the wording to say, "as long as economically feasible and decided by the board of directors."

Tom Blanchard suggested that in general, anytime the board passes a resolution, they can also dissolve that so if we reach a point where we can no longer support or service without some fare structure, we can abandon the resolution and move to a different format of pricing.

Rick Webking suggested adding the words Peter Hendricks suggested, "as long as it remains financially feasible for Mountain Rides to do so," at the tail end of the resolution.

Kristin Derrig moved to authorize Tom Blanchard, Chair, and Kathleen Kristenson, Vice-chair, to approve, by signature thereon, the Mountain Rides Transportation Authority resolution: Zero-Fare Fixed Route Bus Service. Melody Mattson seconded.

Rick Webking moved to amend the motion to add in the last paragraph after Blaine County, “so long as it remains financially feasible to do so.” Peter Hendricks seconded. The motion passed.

The main motion passed as well.

**8. DISCUSSION ITEM:**

*Mountain Rides Protocols and Actions Amid Uptick in COVID-19 Cases*

Wally Morgus started the conversation. We have been following firm protocols throughout the pandemic. We have been stepping up our cleaning and sanitation protocols, continuing maintain social distancing the best that we can, and seating being limited to seated passenger’s only. As the surge is upon us again we have gone back to look at our protocols in light of the public health orders. Looking at the City of Hailey in particular and limiting crowd gathering sizes to 10 and calling out the 64 square feet per person in any enclosed gathering up to 10 people, with that as a backdrop we went back to revisit our protocols. After looking at the data, Wally stated we are proposing limiting the number of people on a bus to 10 passengers. He said we are re-upping our commitment, which has really not wavered one bit during the whole pandemic, but to assuring sanitation on the buses and provision of masks, for those who may want to board the bus, keeping the drivers' compartment sealed off to the extent possible with the plastic shielding that we have in place in all of buses, and again, just raising to a higher level of consciousness, all of these things that we are doing, and specifically committing to that maximum load of 10 passengers per bus.

Stuart Gray said that what we are going to do with the Hailey Route is start 30 minutes early, and be a shadow Valley bus, because we've noticed that the usual, 10 or 11 school kids getting off at Cobblestone and we no longer have a school kid problem. And all of the Valley buses are showing passengers that are around the 10 or less mark. So, it looks like that's going to be handled and with it being code red, that could change.

Juan Martinez with the City of Hailey suggested that Mountain Rides could be exempted from the mandate of 10 people.

Wally Morgus said public transportation was called out but said that in our judgement, it’s in our best interests and best interests of the community that we serve that we up our protocols. He would feel comfortable continuing on this path but wanted to revisit the protocols and ask the board their thoughts.

Tom Blanchard supports the extra effort we are taking with our stepped-up protocols.

Peter Hendricks asked Juan Martinez if public transportation is exempt.

Juan Martinez confirmed said yes, MRTA would be exempt.

Peter Hendricks agrees with Wally and take the higher road and keep our employees and passengers well. He appreciates the readiness that MRTA can manage.

Grant Gager aligns himself with Wally Morgus and Peter Hendricks and to take the high road is the best one for us.

Rick Webking said we should look at the ventilation in the confined spaces on our bus. He also suggested that having documentation internally to address the cleaning protocols.

Wally Morgus said that we are documenting all the conversations and all the things we are doing currently so we have a record.

Ben Varner said our practice has come before the policy. We are getting everything in place, cleaning is being done and the checklist is there. We make our drivers the captains of their ship.

Wally Morgus said we will enforce the limits as best we can and in some cases will leave it up to the driver's discretion.

Tucker Van Law suggested that we tell passengers they should use an alternate way of transportation and not use the bus.

Wally Morgus said we are going to get out and tell people that is counter to our culture and he thinks by just putting that out there and communicating that with people, we're acknowledging, that we're in extraordinary times right now and extraordinary times sometimes require extraordinary measures especially for the bus company to be telling people to find another way to get to work.

Peter Hendricks said he was not in favor of the ad at all. It's like we are giving up and it's a bad message and we need to figure out how to do it.

Tom Blanchard and Grant Gager agreed. Tom said they would like to avoid the negative statement in the ad.

Kathleen Kristenson asked how often we are leaving people behind. She has been driving her car because she doesn't want to take room on the bus from someone else.

Ben Varner said we ran into capacity issues the first week of school. But we have not had to leave many people behind since then. We have not left any family pods behind. We always encourage the drivers to do the right thing as long as people are adhering to the mask mandate.

Wally Morgus said he thinks people will continue to self-regulate and we don't need to put the information from public health in the ad. We will clearly state our capacities. He appreciates Peter's support about taking the high road.

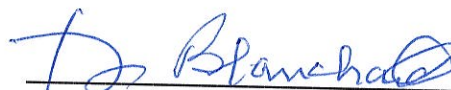
Juan Martinez has an issue with limiting the number of people on a bus because it's an essential service.

Grant Gager said he thinks honoring the spirit of the indoor restrictions in this public health emergency probably is the right side of the road to be on, and the side he would encourage us to be on.

Stuart Gray said he feels as if we're doing the very best, in order to institute the notion of taking the high road and doing what's really safe for Mountain Rides, for our drivers, and for our passengers.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

**Rick Webking moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:49pm. Juan Martinez seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**



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Chair Tom Blanchard