



RECORDED

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MOUNTAIN RIDES TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
Wednesday, August 19, 2020, 10:00 a.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, Transit Operations, Ben Varner  
Mountain Rides Director, Community Development, Kim MacPherson  
Mountain Rides Maintenance Manager, Carlos Tellez

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Tom Blanchard called to order the meeting of Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at 10:00am via conference call. Grant Gager took roll and determined that a quorum was present.

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

Tom Blanchard said he is seeing more articles about transit agencies that are suffering in terms of financial status, cutbacks and shutting back of service. He feels like Mountain Rides is very fortunate and well positioned and thanked staff for keeping an eye on that ball.

Kristin Derrig asked about the sign at Main & 4<sup>th</sup> in front of Sturtevant's. Kim Macpherson stated there is a sign in front of Sturtevant's stating that the new stop is one block north.

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

There were none.

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

- a. Approve: Minutes of Regular Board Meeting, July 15, 2020
- b. Receive/file: Performance Dashboard report for July 2020
- c. Receive/file: Financial Statements and Bills Paid Reports for June 2020
- d. Receive/file: Planning & Marketing Committee, August 5, 2020, Minutes
- g. Receive/file: Finance & Performance Committee, August 5, 2020, Minutes

- h. Receive/file: Reports from Director, Community Development; Director, Transit Operations; Director, Finance & Administration; Safe Routes Coordinator; Executive Director
- i. Approve: Surplus disposal of commuter vans

**Kristin Derrig moved to approve, receive, file, and adopt the Consent Agenda. Kathleen Kristenson seconded. The motion passed.**

**5. ACTION ITEM:**

*Approve Revised FY20 Capital Budget*

Wally Morgus stated that we are waiting for estimates from Idaho Power. The estimate came in lower than approved for Bellevue and we are still waiting for the Ketchum estimate. We may not have to open the FY20 budget to accommodate these expenditures.

Ben Varner said we are anticipating receiving the Ketchum quote by the end of this week.

**Kristin Derrig moved to table the FY20 revised Capital Budget to a date to be determined. Melody Mattson seconded. The motion passed.**

**6. DISCUSSION ITEM:**

*Bus & Facilities Maintenance, Sanitation, Other Protocols during COVID-19*

Wally Morgus said that the committee members asked that we make a presentation to the group about the cleaning of the buses.

Carlos Tellez spoke about the cleaning protocols on the buses. Historically, Mountain Rides has performed daily cleaning on all buses. This included sweeping, vacuuming, wiping handrails and wiping down the driver's cockpit area. Quarterly and annual deep cleans were also performed. When the COVID-19 crisis hit, aggressive disinfecting protocols were put into place. These include: wiping high touch areas (hand rails, stop request cords, seat grab handles, arm rests, driver's cockpit area, and door handles) with a hospital grade disinfectant, cleaning the HVAC system weekly with an industry recommended hydrogen peroxide/soap solution, and cleaning HVAC filters weekly.

In July, Maintenance Staff started applying a 30-day "nano-finish antimicrobial" coating to all interior surfaces on the buses. This makes daily cleaning easier and further protects passengers and drivers. The "nano-finish" product has also been applied to all high touch areas at both MRTA facilities. The Operations and Maintenance staff have been working in a very cooperative manner moving/swapping buses out mid-day to allow for the later buses to be cleaned each morning. It is a lot of bus assignments to juggle, but it is going well. Staff is currently getting bids for several "clean-air" projects at both MRTA facilities. This will include opening windows in Bellevue and HVAC upgrades at both facilities. Maintenance plans on adding a "bus disinfectant" to the cleaning staff for the winter season.

Carlos Tellez said it takes about an hour to clean the whole bus.

Ben Varner said we have the driver barrier to protect the driver, the drivers are disinfecting the bus between shifts with wipes and wiping down their entire compartment. As far as we are seeing Ben said we are seeing near 100% compliance with the local mask ordinances. We are offering masks for the public on our buses and they are being used. Every bus has a box of masks.

**7. DISCUSSION ITEM:**

*Electric Bus Livery (final)*

Wally Morgus said after going through both committees, we have settled on a classic, subtle, and well put together livery for the electric buses. We are adding in decal form on the header: zero emissions/electric bus.

**8. DISCUSSION ITEM:**

*FY21 Transit Service Plan*

Wally Morgus said this is the FY21 service plan we took through committees and it has not changed. Wally wanted to bring this in front of the board to see if there are any further thoughts or updated comments on the service plan. The Service plan for fiscal FY21 replicates the pre-COVID service plan for FY20 plan with the addition of increased weekend service on the Valley route. There is also increased service on the Blue route for winter and summer extending Blue one until midnight and then Blue 2 running until 2:30am. Overall the service hours have increased by 2200 hours at \$90/hour which equates to about \$205,000. The FY21 draft of the budget accommodates this increase and the budget remains balanced, even with the increased service.

Kristin Derrig said she was excited to see the bus go back to running late again. She will always still continue to push for the Valley route to run late considering what is going on with real estate in town now. Workers are doing a lot more commuting back and forth from Hailey and Bellevue to Ketchum. Kristin would have pushed for Friday and Saturday late night service but now that the Mint has closed down there may not be as much of a need.

Tom Blanchard suggested when we move into a healthier economic environment, maybe we could bring back the idea of using the bus to go out to restaurants, The evening special. Now that the bus is free, it will be a good reason to say take the bus to go out to dinner.

Rik Webking asked about whether Mountain Rides has any plans to bring back fares down the road.

Wally Morgus said that in our next fiscal 21 and fiscal 22, we anticipate not reintroducing fares because we have the funds scheduled out to supplement the fares lost. Beyond that, we do not know. As an organization we would like to continue as a fare free bus system but that may not be fiscally doable down the road.

**9. DISCUSSION ITEM:**

*Update of Organizational Performance vis-à-vis Strategic Framework*

Wally Morgus stated that he wanted to bring the strategic framework back to the board's attention and make this a standard operating procedure at least once a year. He wanted everyone to think about it, comment on it and share comments about our performance against the strategic framework. He also wanted to bring it to everyone's attention during the budgeting process in regard to merit raises in particular.

Wally Morgus said that we have done a really good job during the pandemic in particular and living to our strategic framework and focus and not letting it create an insurmountable bump in the road. As a staff, we have talked about two concepts of the pentad of focus which is organizational integrity and economic sustainability.

Ben Varner said looking at the pentad of focus, we are checking every box now. We are a little cautious on the community engagement side during the pandemic. We appreciate board support when we gave out the hazard pay bonuses with the CARES act funding and really reinforcing our appreciation of our employees. We are running incredibly safely right now and that is with continued retraining. We hear from the community how important Mountain Rides is for the community and carrying the essential workers. Looking at the salary survey a few weeks ago, Mountain Rides is on the low end of the payscale with our drivers. It feels like there was board agreement that we do need to boost that starting pay our incoming drivers this winter. We have put a responsible budget together, increased service and we have CARES funding, thank goodness for the FTA and ITD funneling those dollars to us; we can afford to do the right thing. Ben Varner said for the drivers and maintenance personnel and for the people that are really getting the job done day in and day out, it is not that they deserve anything, they have earned these raises. For

the folks that make \$18-19 an hour, the difference is between \$.25 and \$.50. When we hire someone at Mountain Rides, we sell the long-term career; if you do a great job and operate safely there is a real opportunity here in the Wood River Valley. If we lose the ability to sell the idea of some merit raises over the next few years, we may have some hiring and retention problems. We have only lost one full-time driver for a greener opportunity that she had been pursuing for many years. Most of our losses at Mountain Rides have been due to retirement.

Tucker Van Law commented on the current fiscal year, FY20 saying that we have managed to stay within our currently adopted operating budget through the whole process. We monitor our budget very carefully and try and make sure we are making smart decisions with our expenditures. With the CARES funding is allowing us to give our partners a discount with their funding over the next 3-5 years projected out and allowing us to use more local dollars per capita funding. So we are in a good financial position.

Kim MacPherson said she agreed with her colleagues. This organization works very efficiently with a small staff. We treat our drivers as well as maintenance staff, everyone really well. There is a reason we retain our drivers and the school district has a hard time keeping drivers. We have a good little company here in the Valley. We do a lot of the community and all of our salaries are in line and not more than any other organization in the Valley. This is place where the cost of living is a little higher than other places to live and we take that into account. I believe in Mountain Rides and the things that we have done; our employees and I think we have a really great team.

Tom Blanchard said he felt like we were in line with the strategic plan and we are in a good position to keep moving forward in that way.

Peter Hendricks said it is a great idea to bring the pentad of focus out every year and review. Under service excellence that he would like to see added under that category is the care and nurturing for the good health of our employees and customers. As far as the merit increases are concerned, he would like to see Mountain Rides plan before the budget conversation. With the whole coronavirus situation, the City of Sun Valley is looking at the relevancy of the comprehensive plan that they just did about five years ago. The demographics are changing, there is an unbelievable hot real estate market, and increases in the school districts. The Sun Valley Community School has a waiting list for every grade. We may be looking at a paradigm shift that we perhaps talked about and anticipated but did not think is was going to occur in four months. We will need to be adroit and nimble and be able to pivot as we need to.

Grant Gager aligned himself with Peter Hendricks. He does see a lot of changes in the Valley, but he does not share some of the optimism that others do. There was an economic bump that we saw in June, but it has dissipated in the month of July.

## **10. DISCUSSION ITEM:**

### *Conduct of Upcoming Board/Committee Meetings*

Wally Morgus asked the group if they were comfortable with the virtual meeting setting for both committees and board meetings. Some conversations may be better in person rather than virtual. Tom Blanchard said he personally likes the personal interaction that occurs with an in-person meeting. He does like the efficiency of the zoom meetings especially if he only has one item he is listening in for and does not have to leave his house.

Grant Gager agrees with in-person meetings. He also asked if we could move our meetings back to 12:30pm start.

Peter Hendricks would also like the personal interaction but is in favor of continuing the zoom meetings. The 12:30pm time works fine.

Kristin Derrig agrees with the 12:30pm time and likes the personal interaction as well.

Rick Webking agrees with the 12:30pm time and wants to continue with zoom meetings.

Kathleen Kristenson agrees with the 12:30pm time and can meet however the group decides.

Juan Martinez agrees with the 12:30pm time.

Melody Mattson agrees with the 12:30pm time.

Wally Morgus said in September we will start with the 12:30pm board meeting.

Tom Blanchard said let's bring this discussion of in-person meetings up again in a couple months.

11. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Per Idaho Code 74-206(1)(b), to discuss a personnel matter  
**Peter Hendricks made a motion that the Mountain Rides' Board of Directors enter Executive Session as authorized by Idaho Code 74-206(1)(b). Kristin Derrig seconded. The motion passed. Roll call: Tom Blanchard, yes, Kathleen Kristensen, yes, Grant Gager, yes Kristin Derrig, yes, Juan Martinez, yes, Peter Hendricks, yes, Rick Webking, yes, and Melody Mattson, yes.**
12. **Chair Tom Blanchard stated they returned to open/public session at 11:21am.**
13. **ACTION ITEM:**  
*Per Executive Session*  
Grant Gager was locked out of the executive session and was not able to deliberate.  
**Peter Hendricks moved to direct the chairman of the board to have a compensation discussion with the executive director of Mountain Rides. Juan Martinez seconded. The motion passed.**  
Grant Gager was absent for the vote.
14. **ADJOURNMENT**  
**Peter Hendricks moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:28am. Juan Martinez seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**



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Chair Tom Blanchard