



RECORDED

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MOUNTAIN RIDES TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
Wednesday, May 20, 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) and Rick Webking (Sun Valley)

ABSENT: Peter Hendricks (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
Safe Routes Coordinator, Cece Osborn
Mountain Rides Operations Manager, Stuart Gray

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tom Blanchard called to order the meeting of Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at 10:00am via conference call. Grant Gager called roll and determined that a quorum was present.

2. COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR, BOARD MEMBERS and STAFF

Kristin Derrig commented that it could be a busy summer due to visitors renting many long-term rental units.

Grant Gager took this opportunity to thank staff that are on the phone now and also those that are not for their hard work over the last couple of months.

Wally Morgus reported to everybody that morale is high and good among the troops on the front line. Their mental state is all good, their psychological state is all good. Actually most of them, if not all of them at this point are carrying with them and wearing face masks, particularly when there are passengers boarding and or on the bus. So we are being diligent on that part. I think we have a good set of people who get it, and how important it is for the public's perception, and truly safety, how important it is for them to be wearing the mask. Month to date for May ridership is about 35% of what it was same period last year. And during the depths of the crisis, we were down more around 10 to 15%. So we are starting to see a bit of a comeback and potentially trending upward on a daily basis.

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 Special board meeting, March 16 and Regular board meeting, April 15, 2020
- b. Receive/file: Performance Dashboard report for April 2020
- c. Receive/file: Financial Statements and Bills Paid Reports for Mar 2020
- d. Receive/file: Planning & Marketing Committee, May 6, 2020, Minutes
- g. Receive/file: Finance & Performance Committee, May 6, 2020, Minutes
- h. Receive/file: Reports from Director, Community Development; Director, Transit Operations; Director, Finance & Administration; Safe Routes Coordinator; Executive Director

Kristin Derrig moved to approve, receive, file, and adopt the Consent Agenda. Juan Martinez seconded. The motion passed.

5. DISCUSSION ITEM:

PPE for Staff and Riders

Wally Morgus brought up the issue of mandating masks for riders and asked the board to adopt a policy.

Tom Blanchard said there are some issues with mandating something for riders that we are not providing.

Wally Morgus said that we could have a supply of masks soon. We have the driver's area blocked off and they have 6 to 10 feet of physical distancing for passengers. Generally speaking passengers have been physical distancing themselves, the market has been taking care of itself. Suggestions from the drivers saying they have family members that ride, if a mother and daughter that are living together, want to sit together, should we allow that on the bus. Staff has added signs on the buses, and we are installing a shower curtain-like barrier for the drivers on all buses. As we try to rebuild ridership it lets our riders know that we are paying attention.

The group continued the discussion.

Grant Gager said that he would probably just guide staff to make wearing masks a strong recommendation and kind of observe that and observe compliance to make sure that they are being safe and taken care of.

Tom Blanchard said that the feeling of the board is that we prefer not to have a strict hardline policy but be very educational and encouraging in terms of mask use.

6. ACTION ITEM:

Authorize/approve COVID-19 Hazardous Duty/Special Efforts Pay

Tucker Van Law said we are looking to pay our employees \$1.75 an hour, not including any paid time off benefit they may have received during the period from January 30th, 2020, which is a government designated start date of the emergency through April 30th, 2020, which is the date of the Governor of Idaho's lifting the most restrictive stay at home orders. This did go through both the Finance and Performance Committee and the Planning and Marketing Committee and we are really just looking for board approval.

Grant Gager moved to approve the hazardous duty pay efforts as presented. Kathleen Kristenson seconded. The motion passed.

7. ACTION ITEM:

Authorize/approve Routes & schedules, June 15 – August 16, 2020

Kim MacPherson stated we are proposing to put a schedule for this summer to start on June 15th and run until August 16th. Blaine County School District Starts on August 17th, which changes our valley needs. And then we will start working on a plan for when school goes back into session. Then we will have our regular route planning for the Winter/Spring schedule. The blue route will run on a 30-minute schedule throughout the day, ending at 12 AM for the summer. And the Hailey route will be on the current schedule. The valley route will run consistently throughout the day, seven days a week. And during commute times we are adding a few commuter runs back in.

Ben Varner said the real implications of this on the valley route is that we have added 10 round trips over the seven-day schedule. The big picture with 10 round trips added in is that is 20 hours of staff time and costs that we are actually adding in over and above the adopted transit plan and the adopted budget. So we are looking at a \$2000 cost per week increase in service for 10 weeks, starting June 15th and then going through mid-august.

Ben also said that when we get to that 12 or so people on a bus, the driver could there is another bus in 30 minutes. Currently, Stuart has what we are calling kind of a shadow bus in the afternoon. We've got a driver basically on stand-by, ready to go doing some things around the office and ready to hop in a bus to help the three o'clock bus when it pulls into Wells Fargo, and there's 20 people there. We can have another bus there in five minutes to make that trip south and split those loads and keep everybody safe.

Kristin Derrig asked if there would be room to extend the service on blue, if it shows a need, or demand for the later runs. One of the things she sees with people coming into the bar, with the events being canceled, that puts a lot of people out, more in towns, than at the events. Ben Varner said that we are going to be flexible, and if we start seeing a lot of ridership on that last bus and things pick it up that we are open minded about resuming service still closer to two AM.

Grant Gager moved to approve and authorize MRTA staff to implement the summer 2020 bus schedule for the period June 15 through August 16, 2020. Juan Martinez seconded. The motion passed.

8. ACTION ITEM:

Authorize/approve Joint powers FY21 Funding Requests

Wally Morgus said the current year, FY20, funding from the joint powers was \$1.429 million which includes Sun Valley company as well. We have the opportunity to apply and we are being encouraged by the ITD Public Transportation Department to do this with our CARES funds. We have the opportunity to allow them to flow back into the community. Tucker Van Law and Wally Morgus did a thorough analysis of the CARES act funds and a five-year projection forward of expenses and revenues for MRTA. There was an amount left of the Cares Act funds that was available to basically subsidize the joint powers contributions over the first year of the recovery period and possibly the second year. So, we are applying \$356,000 of that Cures Act money that we have available as an offset to the joint powers funding for fiscal 21. We are we are subtracting Cures Act funding of \$356,000, from that number joint powers amount, coming to a fiscal 21 joint powers request balance, of \$1.073 million dollars. That represents a

25% year over year decrease in joint powers funding of Mountain Rides. This is being very well received by the joint powers. Reducing this ask has big impacts on the economy.

Rick Webking moved to approve the FY21 Funding Requests to the Joint Powers as presented and authorize the Executive Director to submit said Funding Requests to the Joint Powers during their impending FY21 Budget Cycles. Grant Gager seconded. Tom Blanchard said he was not convinced that it is just a one-year need.

Wally Morgus said we have about \$240,000 reserved for a second years' worth of funding reductions, and actually maybe more than that.

Grant Gager said he thought that this is a very prudent and fair plan. Everybody certainly recognizes the unique situation that we're in, and also, he said this FY 21 budget is really only possible, because we are a Federally funded or federally supported entity, and in a crisis the government supports federally funded entities to drive economic recovery and so we are the rare beneficiaries of that. I do think that this probably is a multi-year thing and we needed to reserve some funding for subsequent years, as well. **The motion passed.**

9. ACTION ITEM:

Authorize/approve Purchase Orders for Battery Electric Buses and Charging Stations

Wally Morgus said we are just remaining diligent in the long term, business planning of Mountain Rides, an organization that will be in existence for at least the next 50 years, if not the next hundred years and beyond. We are throwing down a big chunk of money on battery electric buses and the infrastructure given the sort of the economic climate that surrounds us here in the valley. He also wanted to make it clear that we are spending already granted federal funds and Idaho DEQ funds to make these purchases happen. It is another bit of federal funding/stimulus coming into our economies. And from that point of view, he feels really good about what we are doing, including there is the infrastructure to be built out, which will be done by local contractors building that out for us. We feel like it is the right thing to do near term and long term for this valley and community. He said we are ready to push the button on purchase orders from Battery Electric buses 35' Excelsior charging XE buses from New Flyer of America industries. We are ready to roll this, looking only for that one last approval from the board to go ahead and push the button and make this happen.

Grant Gager moved to approve the Purchase Order for four battery electric buses and the Purchase Order for four charging stations and authorize the Executive Director to execute said Purchase Orders and submit them to the vendors. Kristin Derrig seconded. Grant Gager said this really is kind of a fantastic day for mountain rides and said thank you to Tucker and Wally and all the staff, for their hard work to date. **The motion passed.**

10. ADJOURNMENT

Tom Blanchard moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:17am. Grant Gager seconded. The motion carried unanimously.



Chair Tom Blanchard