

**Marquette County Transit Authority  
1325 Commerce Drive Marquette, MI 49855**

**Board Meeting Minutes of March 21, 2024**

**Call to Order:** 6:00 PM by Chairman Bill De Groot.

**Roll Call:**

Present: Bill De Groot -Chair, Karen Kasper, Ed Anderson, Scott Krah, Jason Wallner, Pete LaRue, Tim Overmyer, Sean Hobbins.

Others Present: Bill Geller-Executive Director, Kevin Hodges- Operations Manager, Mike Richer-Operations Manager, Kristine McDonnell-Finance Officer, Janet Cobb-Administrative Assistant.

Excused or Absent: Barb Owdziej, Taylor Klipp, Dawn Schuknecht.

**Minutes:**

Motion made by Pete LaRue to approve the minutes of the February meeting. Supported by Karen Kasper. Unanimously approved. Motion carried.

**Consent Agenda:**

Motion made to accept consent agenda items A-D by Sean Hobbins. Supported by Pete LaRue. Unanimously approved. Motion carried.

**Agenda:**

Motion made by Jason Wallner to approve the agenda. Supported by Pete LaRue. Unanimously approved. Motion carried.

**Opportunity for Citizens to Address the Authority.**

Brooke Clark a social worker in the community said that she appreciates the services we offer. She would like to see expanded services for the disabled population and people who want to use public transportation. She would like to offer her services to conduct a survey of the community.

Dimitri a citizen of Marquette stated he took a bus to this meeting and it was a good experience. The bus driver was excellent. He would like to see us reach out to the community using media, public relations and marketing.

Madison a Student at NMU would like to see us have a Global Positioning System and have better on-line maps. She would like to help in some way and make it as low cost as possible.

Alex a student that lives and works in Marquette said that Marq-Tran provides a good service. He does have some worries about Marquette City routes. He stated more students would use our service. We need better marketing and ease of use. Would like to see dedicated bus stops to bridge the gap.

Bill De Groot stated that there is no GPS on any of our buses. Our committees are working on that. He also thanked the public for their comments.

### **Action Items:**

1. Paul Nardi of Andrews, Hooper and Pavlik PC presented the draft of the audit to the board. Sean Hobbins questioned the effect of COVID-19 on our services. He stated that the millage is up for renewal in 2026. We don't know what the new normal is going to be by the Authority. He asked if we have a fund balance policy. Bill DeGroot stated the Finance committee will address it. The audit presentation then carried on. The audit must be filed with the state by March 31, 2024. Motion made by Jason Wallner to approve the draft of the audit with some spelling corrections made. Supported by Scott Krah. Unanimously approved. Motion carried.
2. Finance committee reports of 2/27/24 and 3/18/24 were presented by Bill De Groot. After Covid hit we received double the funding from Federal Operating assistance and about a third more from State Operating assistance. Plan on a trajectory of the revenue brought to the board by the finance committee. The gain is in capital and revenue. We are on par with our investment strategies. The percentage of gain might go down in the future. We received a 296,000.00 grant for the HVAC system but it might be costlier than anticipated.
3. Discussion of the action words list.
  - a. Dependable
  - b. Engagement
  - c. Accessible
  - d. Community focused
  - e. Sustainable- strike this one
  - f. Professionally Delivered
  - g. Support-strike this one
  - h. Safety
  - i. Reliable
  - j. Accessible
  - k. Affordable
  - l. Consistent
  - m. Friendly
  - n. Positive

Our next steps are to review and discuss what they mean to us and the community. Pick three or four of them. Narrow this list down. And come up with a mission statement.

4. Strategic Planning will be kept on the agenda. We need to come up with a mission statement first. Bill Geller did find the old mission statement: To provide a Safe,

Economical Countywide Public Transportation System. Transportation is an integral part of what makes Marquette County an “All American County” and its communities some of “Americas Most Livable Communities.” Bill De Groot said the committees handle policies and bring them to the board. We have to be financially and operationally prudent. All voices should be heard and respected.

**Any Old or New Business:** None.

**Upcoming meetings:**

Board meeting April 18, 2024 at 6:00 PM.

**Board Member Comments:**

*Scott Krah* Thanked the public for their comments.

*Karen Kasper* stated that the Marq-Tran web site is annoying with pop ups. She asked for clarification on the route changes. The Ishpeming Shopper runs all day. There will be Bell Memorial coverage on every run. The Marquette Shopper is going to the Days Inn complex. And will provide services for the organizations in that area. The North Route will be coming off Sugar Loaf Avenue and will go through the roundabout to enter NMU campus and hit fair avenue to the medical center. This all starts April 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Jason Wallner* said the Negaunee route is being noticed by the community. Hopefully ridership will increase. He will be resigning from the board as he is moving to Lansing. His last meeting will be in April.

*Ed Anderson* advised that the roundabout project involving Lakeshore Drive and US 41 is starting up again.

*Sean Hobbins* likes the strategic planning conversation. He inquired Bill Geller about public and employee security. He asked about a keycard system to keep the building safe. Bill Geller will put out a bid for this and he has TSA coming to do a security check.

*Pete LaRue* indicated that him and his wife have health issues and having physical therapy at Bell Memorial. Some patients cannot drive there. It was suggested that these patients schedule a door to door bus ride.

*Bill DeGroot* stated that the public address their questions to the Executive Director or the Chairman of the board.

Bill Geller gave the executive directors report. He has applied for 5 new buses. Bill will be on vacation 4/1/24 through 4/8/24. He will also be gone to the Rural Transit Managers workshop in Mt. Pleasant he will leave on 4/15/24 the workshop is 4/16/24 through 4/17/24. Our annual application was approved for FY 2025. He presented two positive letters that were sent to us by community members. Bill discussed the incident at the Transfer Station and Jansen house. The police took care of it. He showed appreciation to the public comments.

**Opportunity for Citizens to address the Authority:** Demetri spoke about fat bike tires and can we obtain larger bike racks to accommodate them? He would like to see Marq-Tran to invest in bus stops. He expressed his appreciation for what Marq-Tran does.

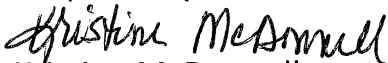
Alex thanked the board for hearing the public comments and asked if the committee meetings are available for the public to attend.

**Adjournment:**

Motion made by Jason Wallner to adjourn the meeting, Supported by Scott Krah. Unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Chairman Bill DeGroot adjourned the meeting at 7:24 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kristine McDonnell

Finance Officer