

**Macatawa Area Express Transportation Authority**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, November 24, 2025**  
**Approved Minutes**

**Members Present:** Chair Russ TeSlaa, Treasurer Jason Latham, Secretary Meika Weiss; Board Members, Doug Becker, Margo Walters, Kevin Klynstra, Kristen Myers, Nathan Bocks, and Doreen Sun

**Staff Present:** Ryan Novotney, Beth Higgs, Kait Riegling, Sandra Korhorn, Charlie Veldhoff, and Lynn McCammon

**11.25.1 Approval of the Minutes for September 22, 2025 & September 29 Board Meetings**

Approved motion made by Walters, supported by Latham. Motion carried unanimously.

**11.25.2 Public Comment**

Holland Township resident Lori Phillips expressed concern about the decision to discontinue Saturday MAX service rather than the Night Owl (evening) service, stating that the change disproportionately affects riders with disabilities. Novotny explained that Saturday service averages approximately 60 passengers, while the weekday Night Owl service provides essential transportation for workers returning home after late shifts. The MAX Chair requested that Ms. Phillips submit her concerns in writing for further review.

**11.25.3 Marketing Committee**

Higgs stated that the marketing team continues to work on material for the new routes. They are also busy preparing for the annual employee holiday party to take place on December 18.

**11.25.4 Executive Committee**

**11.25.4a Amended 2026 Millage Resolution – Action**

Higgs provided background on the amended resolution, noting a revision to the projected first-year tax levy for 2027. The original estimate of \$2,472,433 was updated to \$2,454,982 based on a closer review. She also reported that legal counsel recommended revisions to the ballot language to more clearly describe the intended use of millage funds. Becker asked whether the updated language might be confusing with regard to distinguishing the renewal of the current tax levy from the proposed increase. Higgs and City Finance Director Lynn McCammon explained that legal counsel drafted the ballot language in accordance with statutory requirements, and that public understanding of the ballot proposal will be communicated through marketing efforts. Motion to approve made by Becker, supported by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

**11.25.4b Park Township Contract - Action**

Novotny presented an updated draft of the Park Township service contract noting that most of the language is consistent with the current contract. The percentage of funding provided by MDOT has changed from the previous contract, and the updated agreement reflects this change accordingly. Novotny requested approval of the proposed contract, which will be forwarded to the Park Township Board for their

consideration and signature. Motion to approve made by Latham, supported by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

**11.25.4c** ***Purchasing Policy & Manual Rev 17 - Action***

At the September 2025 board meeting, staff requested revisions to the current Purchasing Policy, including an increase to the “Small Purchase” threshold from \$50,000 to \$250,000. This change aligns with FTA and MDOT recommendations and is intended to streamline the procurement process for both the transit agency and potential bidders. Action on the proposed change was tabled, as Board members requested data on the number of purchases made at the \$50,000 and \$250,000 levels over a defined period. That information was presented at this meeting, along with an additional proposed revision requiring Board approval for all purchases exceeding \$50,000 prior to bid acceptance. These revisions, along with other updates to the policy, were presented to the Board for approval. Motion to approve made by Weiss, supported by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

**11.25.4d** ***Drug & Alcohol Policy Revisions - Action***

Higgs requested the Boards approval for revisions to the MAX Drug & Alcohol Policy to ensure continued compliance with the most recent updates issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). Following a comprehensive review, several updates were made to the existing policy. These revisions align MAX’s policy with current DOT requirements and best practices for employee safety and regulatory compliance. Motion to approve made by Myers, supported by Weiss. Motion carried unanimously.

**11.25.4e** ***Paid Time Off (PTO) Revisions - Action***

Higgs requested Board approval for revisions made to their PTO Policy 307. Currently the policy refers to PTO as being “earned” or “accrued.” However, the organizations practice is to award PTO days based on employees’ years of service at the beginning of each calendar year (or upon hire, as applicable). To ensure alignment between policy language and actual practice, the proposed revisions replace all references to “earned” or “accrued” PTO with the term “awarded.” Additionally, language related to the PTO cap has been reviewed and adjusted to ensure clarity in how capped PTO balances are applied and maintained. These edits provide transparency for employees while maintaining consistency with our PTO administration procedures. Legal counsel assisted in reviewing and revising this policy to confirm that the language accurately reflects MAX practices and remains compliant with applicable laws. Motion to approve made by Latham, supported by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

**11.25.5** ***FY2025 EEO Annual Program - Information***

Veldhoff reported on the breakdowns of each EEO category statistic. Highlighted that MAX is lower than the national average with female drivers by roughly 7%. However, with all areas of MAX we are within the averages. MAX Human Resources department records and keeps track of any reason we do not hire a candidate. This year, MAX’s turnover rate has declined. There has been no EEO complaints filed this year.

**11.25.6** ***Directors Report***

Novotny reported that the EV charging equipment has been delivered, with additional details to be provided at a later date. He also noted that a Request for

Quote has been issued for I.T. services. MAX currently relies on multiple vendors for various I.T. needs, but the goal is to consolidate these functions under a single provider.

**11.25.7**

**Adjournment**

A motion was made by Becker and supported by Weiss to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.