Macatawa Area Express Transportation Authority
Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 27,2026
Approved Minutes

Members Present: Chair Russ TeSlaa, Treasurer Jason Latham, Board Members; Margo Walters, Kristen Myers, Doug Becker, and Doreen Sun

Members Absent: Michael Schultheis, Mieka Weiss

Staff Present: Ryan Novotny, Beth Higgs, Kait Riegling, Sandra Korhorn, Charles Veldhoff, Juana Lopez and Shelby Pedersen

4.27.1 Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4.27.2 Approval of March Board Meeting Minutes

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

4.27.3 Marketing Committee

Higgs presented the invitation for the MAX "Sweet Side of Transportation" event scheduled for April 30 and encouraged board members to attend. MAX will host the event to educate the public on the upcoming millage. Refreshments, small giveaways, and live sketch artists will be featured.

4.27.4 Executive Committee

4.27.4a *Max Bus Pass Changes – Action*

Max Transit is proposing two updates to its bus pass structure for both fixed route and demand-response/paratransit services to begin June 1. Pedersen and Korhorn presented the changes that all passes will be stamped with expiration dates (60 – days), ceasing physical pass sales in bulk, and eliminating select passes. Pedersen clarified that these changes are being proposed to remain in compliance with NTD as well as improving accounting accuracy. Walters had the concern of accessibility with physical passes. Pedersen clarified there will still be physical passes to purchase for those without access to a smart phone, and passengers who are not able to navigate the MAX apps. Korhorn ensured the board that MAX is not moving away from cash payment for rides. Motion to approve made by Becker, supported by Latham. Motion carried unanimously.

4.27.4b *Bus Operator Status Changes and Seniority (Part time and full time) - Action*

Novotny presented this new policy that would establish fair and consistent guidelines for determining seniority and managing status changes between full-time and part-time bus operators. If an employee changes from Part Time to Full time, or vice versa the employee would move to the bottom of the bid line process. Novotny clarified no years of service benefits would change. Walters questioned the fairness of this model, stating she would prefer an alternative resolution, such as requiring employees who

change classification within 12 months of hire to forfeit seniority for the bid line process, or alternatively basing seniority on total hours worked. Becker concurred. Motion to table made by Latham, supported by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

4.27.4c ***Vehicle Backing Up Policy - Action***

Novotny presented the proposed Vehicle Backing Up Policy to allow MAX transit vehicles to reverse with a safety framework. Operators are expected to make sound judgements as trained and use their discretion and responsibility without prior authorization when safe. A motion to approve was made by Walters and supported by Becker. Motion carried unanimously.

4.27.4d ***Ridership Reports for March 2026***

There was no report.

4.27.4e ***Financial Reports for March 2026***

There was no report.

4.27.4f ***Expenditure Reports for March 2026***

Novotny reported that MAX is under projected expenditures at 47%.

4.27.5 Directors Report

Novotny provided a brief update on the propane fleet project as well as Swiftly data reporting issues. Novotny asked VIA (partner company of Swiftly) for a following up meeting to address next steps. The RFP for propane buses go out next month. MAX is currently exploring options for qualified electricians to complete explosion-proofing of the garage facility.

4.27.6 Adjournment

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