Macatawa Area Express Transportation Authority
Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 26, 2026
Proposed Minutes

Members Present: Chair Russ TeSlaa, Secretary Meika Weiss; Board Members, Doug Becker, Margo Walters, Kristen Myers, and Doreen Sun

Staff Present: Ryan Novotny, Beth Higgs, Kait Riegling, Sandra Korhorn, Charlie Veldhoff, Sue Gorby, Rob Ghansah, Tawney Valderas Brent Etzel, and Lynn McCammon

1.26.1 Open Public Hearing on Proposed MAX Service & Fare Changes
Postponed to next MAX board meeting.

1.26.2 Public Comment

Holland Township resident Lorrie Phillips expressed dissatisfaction with MAX providing emergency assistance on a day when regularly scheduled bus service was suspended. Ms. Phillips also reiterated her previous concerns regarding the suspension of Saturday service.

Mr. Novotny explained that Emergency Services contacted MAX to request assistance following a 100-vehicle pileup. Two MAX drivers volunteered to assist at the scene. Due to extreme cold temperatures and dangerous road conditions, MAX was unable to operate regular service, and employees were not required to report to work.

1.26.3 Approval of the Minutes for November 2025 Board Meeting
Approved motion made by Becker, supported by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

1.26.4 Marketing Committee
Higgs stated that Marketing is continuing to work on new route material as well as preparing for millage approaching

1.26.5 Executive Committee

1.26.5a *MAX Service & Fare Changes – Action*
This action has been postponed.

1.26.5b *Resolution of Intent - Action*
Novotny presented the FY 2027 annual public transportation plan and application for state financial assistance under Act 51; to certify that no changes have occurred to the agency's eligibility documentation; to approve the Section 10e(18) Accessibility Plan amendment. As well as approve the balanced operating and capital budget totaling $6,227,603, including estimated federal, state, and local operating funds and $725,494 in capital funds; and to appoint MAX Director Ryan Novotny, or his designee, as Transportation Coordinator with authority to act on behalf of the Authority and to execute all related grant agreements, amendments, and authorizations with the Michigan Department of Transportation. Motion to approve made by Russ, supported by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

1.26.5c ***Revenue Receipt Reporting Policy Revisions- Action***

Higgs requested Board approval of revisions to the Revenue Receipt & Reporting Policy to reflect updated procedures resulting from the replacement of our finance software system, as well as two scheduling software systems for fixed route and demand respond services. Becker brought up the fact that fare price is included, making it so MAX would have to reapprove the policy any time there is a fare change. Motion to table this action made by Becker, supported by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

1.26.5d ***Federal Awards Policy - Action***

This action has been postponed.

1.26.5e ***Vehicle & Equipment Maintenance Policy Manual Rev - Action***

Higgs stated that staff have reviewed and fine-tuned the Vehicle & Equipment Maintenance Policy & Procedures Manual. Higgs would like to revise Policy Revisions on Page 5 – "Record Keeping": Revise responsibility from the Operations Manager to the Procurement Coordinator/Grant Specialist, who currently maintains the historical records for revenue and support vehicles. As well as "Determining Compliance": Revise preventative maintenance inspection of a sample selection of vehicles to all FTA funded vehicles. Staff are requesting Board approval for revisions made to the Vehicle & Equipment Maintenance Policy & Procedures Manual as written. Motion to approve made by Weiss, supported by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

1.26.5f ***MAX Uniform Policy Rev7 (bus operators) - Action***

Gorby requested Board approval for revisions made to their Max Uniform Policy Rev7. Gorby stated that bus operators are required to wear uniform slacks while performing duties that include extended sitting, passenger assistance, kneeling, bending, and exposure to various weather. Other frontline staff performing physical work are permitted to wear more durable and weather-appropriate clothing. Gorby mentioned this would also ensure consistency throughout the company between uniform policies as well as how it can benefit recruitment. Walters brought up that in the uniform policy it states women must wear bras. She requested to include broader language such as "Support garment." MAX staff agreed to the amendment. Motion to approve made by Walters, supported by Weiss. Motion carried unanimously.

1.26.5g ***Personal Appearance Policy (office staff) - Action***

Higgs requested Board approval for revisions made to their Personal Appearance Policy for office staff. Currently the policy does not allow jeans or office shorts. Changes have been made to include appropriate jeans, shorts, and leggings. Motion to approve made by Weiss, supported by Decker. Motion carried unanimously.

1.26.5h ***Ridership Reports for December 2025***

There was no report.

1.26.5i ***Financial Reports for December 2025***

McCammon informed the Board that MAX's audit is complete and awaiting a report. Auditors will present the information at the February meeting.

1.26.5j ***Expenditure Reports for December 2025***

There was no report.

1.26.6 **Directors Report**

Novotny reported that with the audit complete MAX is looking forward to Triennial Review. The first phase of the review is underway, and the MAX team has been working diligently on the FTA Recipient Information Request packet due February 27.

MDOT responded to Ryan regarding a previous contract authorizing MAX to proceed with the purchase of two electric Optimal buses. This project is within budget and supported by grant funding.

1.26.7 **Adjournment**

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