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

Members Present: Chair Russ TeSlaa, Secretary Meika Weiss, Treasurer Jason Latham, Board Members; Michael Schultheis, Margo Walters, Kristen Myers, and Doreen Sun

Members Absent: Doug Becker

Staff Present: Ryan Novotny, Beth Higgs, Kait Riegling, Sandra Korhorn, Juana Lopez and Lynn McCammon

3.23.1 Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3.23.2 Approval of January Board Meeting Minutes

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

3.23.3 Marketing Committee

Higgs presented the MAX millage postcards mailed to absentee voters on March 13 and noted that a second batch will be sent on April 15 to voters casting ballots at the polls. She also showed videos MAX produced highlighting riders and their experience with MAX Transit.

3.23.4 Executive Committee

3.23.4a ***FY2025 Financial Audit Presentation and Approval***
MAX received a clean, unqualified audit opinion, with no deficiencies identified in internal controls over financial reporting. A motion was made by Latham and supported by Walters to approve the audit report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

3.23.4b ***Revenue Receipt Reporting Policy Revisions- Action***
Administration presented a memorandum requesting Board approval of revisions to the Revenue Receipt and Reporting Policy to reflect updated procedures following the implementation of a new finance system and updated scheduling software for both fixed route and demand response services. The item had previously been tabled at the January 26 Board meeting at the Board's direction to remove references to the cost of bus passes. The proposed revisions include the removal of all references to bus pass pricing, the deletion of the MAX main office address to allow for future changes, and the elimination of references to outdated scheduling software. The policy has also been updated to include Token Transit for fixed route services and the MAX app for demand response services as recognized fare payment methods. In addition, the refund policy has been amended to clarify that bus passes remain generally non-refundable, with exceptions permitted under special circumstances at the discretion of management, such as verified relocation outside the service area or the death of a passenger. The revised policy, with all new and modified language highlighted for ease of reference, was presented for consideration. Higgs recommended approval of the

revised Revenue Receipt and Reporting Policy, to take effect immediately upon Board approval. Motion to approve made by Latham, supported by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

3.23.4c ***Federal Awards Administration Policy Revisions -Action***

Higgs presented revisions to the Federal Awards Administration Policy and Procedures Manual to reflect operational and system changes since its last update in March 2024. The updates were made to ensure alignment with current procedures, responsibilities, and internal controls. Key revisions include updates to reflect the implementation of a new finance software system and timekeeping system, replacement of outdated MDOT grant management software references, and strengthened internal controls within the cash receipts process. The policy also clarifies that grant budget approvals are made by the Board, updates staff responsibilities to reflect current practices, and replaces outdated forms within the appendices. The revised document, with changes highlighted for review, was presented for Board consideration. A motion was made by Walters and supported by Weiss to approve the revisions to the Federal Awards Administration policy. Motion carried unanimously.

3.23.4d ***Employee Termination Policy Revisions and Authorization of Deduction Property Costs Form- Action***

Higgs presented a proposed revision to the Employee Termination Policy to clarify procedures for the return of Authority property upon separation from Macatawa Area Express (MAX). The update specifies that all issued items must be returned as directed and formally authorizes payroll deductions for unreturned or damaged property, where permitted by law and supported by a signed authorization form. The revision ensures compliance with applicable wage deduction regulations and reinforces employee accountability. No other changes were made, and the remaining policy language continues to address exit procedures, final wage payments, and continuation of benefits. Schultheis inquired about how to determine value of property. Riegling stated we will use and include the FTA Fair Market Value Plan. Higgs agreed to modify the policy to include that language. A motion was made by Walters and supported by Weiss to approve the revisions to the Federal Awards Administration policy. Motion carried unanimously.

3.23.4e ***Request for Proposal (RFP) IT Vendor- Action***

Novotney stated MAX issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for comprehensive IT services on January 5, 2026. Following issuance of the IT Services RFP, proposals were evaluated based on qualifications, technical approach, experience, service model, quality of proposal, and cost. After review and scoring, the evaluation committee recommends awarding the contract to VC3. VC3 demonstrated strong public-sector experience, a comprehensive co-managed IT support model, robust cybersecurity protection, and a clear understanding of the agency's operational needs. VC3 proposed the monthly price of $5,757 totaling $207,265 after a 3-year contract term plus no price increase if MAX were to exercise the 2 one-year options. Based on overall qualifications and value, staff recommends the Board authorize contract negotiations and award to VC3. Novotney requests Board approval to award the contract for Co-Managed I.T. Services to VC3. Motion to approve made by Latham, supported by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

3.23.4f ***Procurement of Two Electric Vehicles (EV's)- Action***

Novotney reported that over the last four months, MAX has been working with Hoekstra Transportation and MDOT to have Optimal EV Bus's made available for purchase here in Michigan by piggybacking off of an existing Iowa State contract. These buses have an excellent level of fit and finish, and the drivetrain has proven robust. These vehicles have a range of 125 miles, which is more than enough for our service area. Last month these vehicles became available for purchase. These vehicles come in at $391,535. Max has funding to purchase two of these vehicles for a total of $783,070. Action Request MAX staff requests Board approval to purchase these two Optimal EV Buses. Motion to approve made by Weiss, supported by Walters. Motion carried unanimously.

3.23.4g ***Ridership Reports for January & February 2026***

There was no report.

3.23.4h ***Financial Reports for January & February 2026***

There was no report.

3.23.4i ***Expenditure Reports for January & February 2026***

There was no report.

3.23.5 **Directors Report**

Novotny provided a brief update on the propane fleet project, noting that with improved weather conditions, work on infrastructure, including the propane fueling system is expected to resume in the coming weeks. He also reported that Swiftly, our fixed route scheduling system, is not currently capturing ridership data as expected and indicated that staff may need to engage Via, Swiftly's partner, to help resolve the issue.

3.23.6 **Adjournment**

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