Macatawa Area Express Transportation Authority
Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 28, 2026
Proposed Minutes

Members Present: Chair Russ TeSlaa, Secretary Meika Weiss, Treasurer Jason Latham, Board Members; Kristen Myers

Members Absent: Michael Schultheis, Margo Walters, Doug Becker

Staff Present: Ryan Novotny, Beth Higgs, Kait Riegling, Charlie Veldhoff, Juana Lopez, and Lynn McCammon

9.28.1 Open Public Hearing on Proposed FY2027 Budget

There was no comment.

9.28.2 Opportunity for Public Comment

There was no comment.

9.28.3 Approval of August 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

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

9.28.4 Marketing Committee

Higgs announced that MAX Transit has reached eight million rides! To celebrate this milestone MAX is hosting a passenger celebration at the depot. Higgs invited the Board to stop by October 8th to celebrate!

9.28.5 Executive Committee

9.28.5a FY2027 Proposed Budget – Action
Novotny went over FY2027 proposed budget. MAX increased expenses by $80,000 to take into account that MAX will be changing accounting services FY2027.
A motion was made by Latham and supported by Weiss to approve Public Act 152. Motion carried unanimously.

9.28.5b FY2027 Resolution of Intent – Action
Novotny briefly went over FY2027 Resolution of Intent draft. Public Acts of 1951, as amended (Act 51), it is necessary for the Macatawa Area Express Transportation Authority to provide a local transportation program for the state fiscal year of 2027 and therefore, apply for state financial assistance. Motion to approve made by Weiss, supported by Latham. Motion carried unanimously.

9.28.5c FY2026 Year-End Budget Amendments - Information
Novotny presented FY2026 Year End Budget Amendments. At the beginning of FY26, $400,000 of 5307 was applied to previous years (FY25) expenses to build MAX Transits cash balance. This allowed MAX to be financially secure as they waited for

revenues to stream in. This resulted in fewer 5307 funds reported for FY26. This number also reflects investment income, private donations, property tax increases, and higher passenger ridership than originally projected. Routine expenses increased slightly, mainly due to an increase in part-time drivers and insurance premiums. Admin expense also increased due to the contract with VC3, the new I.T. company. Transit Maintenance expenses increased because of snow removal being double what we anticipated. The excess revenue has been placed in Contingency, presenting a balanced budget for FY26. A motion to approve was made by Myers, supported by Latham. Motion carried unanimously.

9.28.5d **MDOT Master Agreement – Action**

Novotny proposed an agreement where the Board Chair and/or Executive director can approve and execute project authorizations regardless of amount for any programs designated for Macatawa Area Express Transportation Authority.
Motion to approve made by Latham, supported by Weiss. Motion carried unanimously.

9.28.5e **Five-Year Vehicle Contract - Action**

Novotny requests approval of a five-year contract with The Bus Center (Hoekstra Family of Companies) for Optimal S1 low-floor propane buses, available for use by other transit agencies, and an initial order of 5 buses for a total not to exceed $1,400,000 and authorize the Executive Director to execute the contract and related documents.
Motion to approve made by Latham, supported by Weiss. Motion carried unanimously.

9.28.5f **West Michigan Health Insurance Pool (WMHIP) Trustee Resolution - Action**

Higgs went over Article 6.1 of the Bylaws of the West Michigan Health Insurance Pool ("WMHIP"). It requires that each member entity name a Trustee and Alternate Trustee to serve on the Board of Trustees for the WMHIP. The Governing Body of the Member has chosen individuals in accordance with Article 6.1 to serve as Trustee and Alternate Trustee. Higgs explained that this resolution changes the designated Trustee from former Executive Director Elisa Hoekwater to current Executive Director Ryan Novotny.
Motion to approve made by Weiss, supported by Latham. Motion carried unanimously.

9.28.5g **Title VI Programs and Procedures - Action**

Every three years, MAX must submit to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) a copy of its updated Title VI Program. The newly updated Title VI Program was presented to the Authority Board for review and approval. Motion to approve made by Weiss, supported by Myers. Motion carried unanimously.

9.28.5h **Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Revisions – Action**

The Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) is the agency's formal safety management document. It establishes the processes, procedures, responsibilities, and safety performance measures the agency uses to identify hazards, assess and mitigate safety risks, and continuously improve the safety of its transit operations. Higgs requests Board approval on the revisions to Appendices E, F, and G of the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan as reflected in the revised PTASP dated

September 1, 2026. A Motion to approve made by Latham, supported by Myers. Motion carried unanimously.

9.28.5i **December 24 – Christmas Eve Holiday Closure – Action**

Novotny requested the Board's approval to establish December 24 (Christmas Eve) as an annual organizational closure, beginning this year, so that employees may have the opportunity to spend meaningful time with their families and loved ones during the Christmas holiday. This would be an annual organizational closure, with employees receiving the day off each year in accordance with the organization's applicable holiday and paid-time-off policies. A Motion to approve made by Myers, supported by Latham. Motion carried unanimously.

9.28.5j **Monthly Performance Report - Information**

Novotny announced MAX is still actively hiring. MAX has driver retire dates coming up as well as new routes launching. MAX is focused on making sure proper staffing sets new routes up for success.

9.28.5k **Ridership Reports for August 2026- Information**

There was no report.

9.28.5l **Financial Reports for August 2026 - Information**

After review of the budget McCammon announced that MAX is in a much better spot than it was last fiscal year.

9.28.5m **Expenditure Reports for August 2026**

There was no report.

9.28.6 **Directors Report**

Novotny announced that he has been looking at propane and gas vehicles, he plans to go with mechanics to review used bus inventory. He also reported that discussions regarding lease insurance and related legal matters are ongoing. Novotny is pursuing an MDOT grant to support new route signage. The route launch is planned for April 2027.

9.28.7 **Adjournment**

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