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

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

Members Absent: Michael Schultheis, Margo Walters, Doug Becker

Staff Present: Ryan Novotny, Beth Higgs, Charlie Veldhoff, Juana Lopez, and Sandra Kohorn

10.26.1 Opportunity for Public Comment

There was no comment.

10.26.2 Approval of September 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

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

10.26.3 Marketing Committee

There was no marketing update.

10.26.4 Executive Committee

10.26.4a Countywide Feasibility Study – Action
Novotny recommended that the Board authorize execution of a contract with HDR Michigan, Inc. for the completion of a Countywide Service Study in an amount not to exceed $314,790. The study will evaluate the feasibility of expanding public transportation throughout Ottawa County, including service needs, potential service models, regional coordination, funding opportunities, and stakeholder engagement. HDR was selected through a competitive, FTA-compliant procurement process as the highest-ranked proposer. They are also familiar to the area, with recent work for Harbor Transit, Flint MTA, and the Mecosta Osceola Transit Authority. The project will be funded through the ARPA Metropolitan Planning Grant, with completion anticipated within 18 months. Motion to approve made by Latham, supported by Myers. Motion carried unanimously.

10.26.4b Accounting Services – Action
Novotny requests approval on a three-year contract with Gabridge & Company, PLC for third-party accounting services. The contract will transition MAX's accounting and financial reporting functions from the City of Holland to Gabridge, including payroll, grant compliance, audit preparation, and financial oversight support. Novotney greatly thanks City of Holland for allowing us to be a client for so long. Gabridge was selected through a competitive, FTA-compliant procurement process. Services will be funded through MAX's general operations budget, with recurring services beginning January 1, 2027. This contract includes a first-year workload review to evaluate actual service hours and adjust subsequent-year fees.
A motion to approve was made by Latham, supported by Weiss. Motion carried unanimously.

10.26.4c **Grant Awards – Information**

Novotny was excited to announce grant funding received in support of the proposed relocation of MAX's transit hub from the Louis Padnos Transportation Center to Westshore Mall. MAX received a $5,000 Community Enhancement Program grant from MACC to support Phase 1 temporary hub operations and an MDOT Infrastructure Projects Authority Fund award of up to $260,000 to support Phase 2 architectural and engineering design of the permanent facility. The proposed relocation is intended to improve service reliability by eliminating delays associated with nearby railroad crossings. This allows MAX to serve growing employment, healthcare, retail, and residential areas along the US-31.

10.26.4d **Holland Motor & Bus Co. Procurement Protest - Information**

Novotny updated the board that MAX received three letters of protest from Holland Motor Homes & Bus Company (Holland Bus). This was regarding the Board's award of the five-year vehicle contract to The Bus Center (Hoekstra Transportation). Novotny reviewed and denied the first two under the Written Protest Procedures in the RFP. The third was received after the protest period closed and was not accepted. Although the third letter was untimely, staff reviewed the issue it raised and amended the contract.

10.26.4e **Monthly Performance Report – Information**

Novotny announced he is currently streamlining this report with Sue Gorby to provide more information and relevant data.

10.26.4f **Ridership Summary FY2026 - Information**

Veldhoff presented the FY2026 ridership and performance annual report ending September 30, 2026. Total ridership decreased 4.7% compared to FY2025. Fixed-route ridership declined 4.6%, while demand-response ridership decreased 1.5%. Routes 3 and 8 experienced ridership increase of 12.3% and 10.2%. Youth and senior ridership also grew across fixed-route services. Night Owl ridership decreased 31.3%, reflecting a reduction in service vehicles. Despite ridership declines and significant summer road construction, on-time performance improved to 95.3% for fixed routes and 97.2% for Reserve-A-MAX, with both services meeting or exceeding the Authority's 95% performance goal. Since its formation in 2000, MAX has provided more than 8 million rides!

10.26.4g **Ridership Reports for September 2026 - Information**

There was no report.

10.26.4h **Financial Reports for September 2026 - Information**

Novotney announced that we are close to coming under budget for this past year. Final federal Operating Assistance drawdowns have not been completed.

10.26.4i **Expenditure Reports for September 2026 - Information**

There was no report.

10.26.5 **Directors Report**

Novotny announced that American Flatworks' purchase order is in, paying the materials to start the project soon. He is still in discussion regarding lease insurance for the new transfer center.

10.26.6 **Adjournment**

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