

**18th Meeting of the
MATBUS Coordination Committee
April 15, 2026 – 9:00 AM
Metro COG Conference Room/Zoom**

Members Present:

John Strand, Fargo City Commission, Interim Chair
Julie Bommelman, Fargo Transit Director
Susan Thompson, Fargo Finance Director
Sebastian McDougall, Moorhead City Council
Jenica Flanagan, Moorhead Finance Director
Mike Rietz, Moorhead Assistant City Manager
Dustin Scott, West Fargo City Administrator
Peyton Mastera, Dilworth City Administrator
Brit Stevens, NDSU Transportation Manager
Ben Griffith, Metro COG Executive Director

Members Absent:

Deb White, Moorhead City Council
Denise Kolpack, Fargo City Commission

Others Present:

Adam Altenburg, Metro COG
Shaun Crowell, MATBUS
Brenda Derrig, City of Fargo
Josh Gordon, MATBUS
Luke Grittner, MATBUS
Taaren Haak, MATBUS
Jean Henning, City of Fargo
Aiden Jung, Metro COG
Nicole Lipinoga, Metro COG
Wyatt Papenfuss, City of Fargo
Matt Pinotti, MATBUS
Jordan Smith, MATBUS
Cole Swingen, MATBUS
Megan Zahradka, City of Moorhead
Linghao Zhang, Metro COG

1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Agenda

Mr. Smith proposed amending the agenda to include a discussion on the MNDOT quarterly meeting under Other Business. A motion to approve the agenda, as amended, was made by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Griffith. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from March 18, 2026

A motion to approve the minutes for the March 2026 regular meeting was made by Mr. McDougall and seconded by Mr. Griffith. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

2. Public Comment Period

No members of the public addressed the committee.

3a. Resolution to Waive Advertising Fees for all Partner Agencies

Mr. Swingen presented a resolution to waive advertising fees for all partner agencies. He noted that the effort is intended to remove barriers to advertising with MATBUS. Partner agencies would still be responsible for covering the cost of the bus wrap or advertisement itself, but the monthly advertising fee would be waived.

Interim Chair Strand expressed his appreciation for the resolution and encouraged all partner agencies to explore advertising opportunities with MATBUS.

Mr. Swingen noted that bus wraps typically last five years. He also stated that non-partner agencies are currently charged \$2,000 per month for advertising. Ms. Thompson added that non-partner entities should also be encouraged to advertise, as it could provide an additional revenue source for MATBUS.

A motion to approve the resolution to waive advertising fees for all partner agencies was made by Mr. Griffith and seconded by Ms. Thompson. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

4a. March Budget to Actuals Review

Ms. Henning provided an overview of the March Budget-to-Actuals review. She noted that MATBUS was continuing to monitor staffing-related expenses and that, despite still having five vacant positions, overtime costs had significantly exceeded projections. She added that healthcare elections were currently helping offset overruns. While overtime expenses are approximately \$155,000 over budget, healthcare elections have reduced overall costs by roughly \$400,000.

Ms. Henning noted that MATBUS received its Section 5307 apportionment. She stated that Fargo received \$3,015,275, of which \$843,569 would be suballocated to Moorhead due to apportionment issues identified last year. As a result, Moorhead's total apportionment would be \$1,714,119, while Fargo's total apportionment would be \$2,171,706.

Ms. Henning stated that an amendment had been submitted to deobligate funding for the Dilworth Transfer Hub. She also stated that the Section 5310 Program Guide had been approved and that staff would be working on an amendment to Metro COG's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Ms. Flannagan questioned the discrepancy between staff wages and overtime expenses. Ms. Henning replied that, during the transition to City of Fargo staffing, it was difficult to accurately project driver wages and healthcare elections for incoming employees.

Ms. Flannagan also asked about the status of the 5307 suballocation. Mr. Smith stated that there is currently no letter to the City of Moorhead, but noted that the process should be completed in April.

4b. Security Incident Highlights and Summary

Mr. Swingen provided an update on recent safety incidents. He noted that, in one incident, an individual who had been trespassed from the property threw a pair of scissors at a moving bus. He also reported an incident at Essentia Hospital involving two individuals in a

possible stabbing incident. Fargo Police Department was called, and the two individuals were removed from the bus.

4c. Driver Safety and Survey Results

Mr. Swingen provided an update on ongoing efforts to address safety within the MATBUS system, including the completion of a Driver Safety Survey. He explained that the 14-question survey was available to drivers from March 10 through April 7, 2026, and was distributed through multiple methods, including safety meeting announcements, posters with QR codes, and paper copies. He noted that the survey was anonymous, though drivers could choose to provide their names for follow-up questions. He also noted that the survey may be conducted again in 2027 to help track trends in responses over time.

4d. Operations Update

Mr. Pinotti provided an update on MATBUS operations. He reported that 66 of the system's 75 rosters currently had full-time drivers assigned. He noted that six rosters remain open due to an ongoing driver shortage, but added that three new full-time drivers were recently hired and were currently in training. He stated that the new drivers are expected to transition into revenue service within approximately one month.

4e. Quarterly Ridership Update

Mr. Grittner provided an update on quarterly ridership trends for MATBUS, including a route-by-route overview. He reported an 8.7 percent decrease in total system ridership compared to the first quarter of 2025, with Fargo/West Fargo/NDSU routes declining by 11.6 percent and Moorhead/Dilworth routes decreasing by 1.9 percent. He noted a slight 0.1 percent increase in paratransit ridership compared to 2025.

5. Other Business

Mr. Smith provided an update on the Greater Minnesota Transit Advisory Committee meeting held on March 12, 2026. He reported that much of the discussion focused on updates to the 2027 operating funding formula for urban and rural transit systems, as well as the funding target-setting process.

Mr. Smith reviewed several proposed 2027 Minnesota funding targets, including \$136 million in operating assistance, with up to an additional \$3 million for funding formula transition support; \$17.1 million for vehicle replacement, including \$4.4 million in federal discretionary funding; \$5 million for facilities; \$1 million for large capital projects; and \$1 million for technology improvements such as dispatch systems, video surveillance, ARMER radio systems, and fare collection projects.

Mr. Smith stated that next steps include the Office of Transit and Active Transportation (OTAT) finalizing funding targets and notifying transit providers, followed by the release of grant solicitations between May and August 2026.

Interim Chair Strand adjourned the meeting at 10:16 AM.