

**17th Meeting of the
MATBUS Coordination Committee
March 18, 2026 – 9:00 AM
Metro COG Conference Room/Zoom**

Members Present:

Deb White, Moorhead City Council, Chair
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Cole Swingen, Assistant Transit Director (proxy)
Sebastian McDougall, Moorhead City Council
Jenica Flanagan, Moorhead Finance Director
Mike Rietz, Moorhead Assistant City Manager
Peyton Mastera, Dilworth City Administrator
Brit Stevens, NDSU Transportation Manager
Ben Griffith, Metro COG Executive Director

Members Absent:

Denise Kolpack, Fargo City Commission
Julie Bommelman, Fargo Transit Director
Susan Thompson, Fargo Finance Director
Dustin Scott, West Fargo City Administrator

Others Present:

Adam Altenburg, Metro COG
Heidi Benke, MATBUS
Shaun Crowell, MATBUS
Brenda Derrig, City of Fargo
Cindy Girdner, Valley Senior Service
Josh Gordon, MATBUS
Jean Henning, City of Fargo
Aiden Jung, Metro COG
Nicole Lipinoga, Metro COG
Michael Maddox, Metro COG
Wyatt Papenfuss, City of Fargo
Matt Pinotti, MATBUS
Jordan Smith, MATBUS
Megan Zahradka, City of Moorhead

1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Agenda

Chair White proposed amending the agenda to include a discussion on the impact of new federal policies on CDLs under Other Business. A motion to approve the agenda, as amended, was made by Mr. Mastera and seconded by Mr. Griffith. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

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

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

2. Public Comment Period

No members of the public addressed the committee.

3a. MnDOT 2027-2030 Draft TIP Project Approval

Mr. Smith presented the draft 2027–2030 TIP project list for approval, noting that the process was coordinated with the City of Moorhead. As part of this update, staff reviewed projects currently included in the TIP and made adjustments to reflect updated cost estimates and anticipated funding needs. He also noted that a minivan is likely to be removed from the program in either 2027 or 2028.

Mr. Smith added that, following committee approval, the projects will still need to proceed through the TIP and STIP approval processes with Metro COG and the State of Minnesota.

A motion to approve the MnDOT 2027-2030 Draft TIP Projects was made by Mr. McDougall and seconded by Ms. Flannagan. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

4a. February Budget to Actuals Review and 2025 Operational data Update

Ms. Henning provided an overview of the February Budget-to-Actuals review. She noted that MATBUS is currently reconciling its 2025 finances. The final billing for 2025 was issued during the week of March 9, and no additional billing was anticipated. She also explained that reporting reflects a one-month lag, as the final billing was only recently completed.

Mr. Swingen provided an update on staffing, reporting that contingent offers have been extended for all five vacant positions, with new hires expected to begin on April 13. He added that vacancies have resulted in higher-than-usual overtime; however, he anticipates a significant decrease in overtime once the positions are filled and the school year concludes.

Ms. Flannagan asked whether regular wages are currently under budget due to the vacancies. Ms. Henning confirmed that wages are under budget and noted that MATBUS can provide those figures.

4b. Security Incident Highlights and Summary

Mr. Swingen provided an update on recent safety incidents, noting that an incident involving an individual attacking someone at a bus shelter received media attention. He reported that the individual was taken into custody and charged. He also presented a monthly summary of incidents, broken down by category.

Chair White commented that receiving this report on a monthly basis would be beneficial for tracking incident trends over time. Mr. Swingen responded that he can provide the report on a recurring monthly basis.

4c. 2027 Budget Process Update

Mr. Swingen provided an update on the 2027 budget process. He noted that MATBUS had reached out to all jurisdictions to schedule meetings to discuss the budget. He added that discussions regarding the cost allocation model and the interim joint powers agreement have already taken place, with additional meetings planned in the near future. Once service levels are agreed upon by the partner jurisdictions, MATBUS will develop a preliminary 2027 budget based on those assumptions.

Mr. Strand asked about bus wraps and their contribution to revenue. Mr. Swingen reported that nearly 50 percent of the fleet is wrapped, generating approximately \$70,000 annually. Mr. Strand expressed interest in leveraging bus wraps more effectively to promote ridership and increase revenue.

4. Other Business

Chair White brought a recent news article to the committee's attention regarding a new policy that would restrict or revoke access to Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDLs) for certain individuals, including those seeking asylum, refugees, and DACA recipients. She asked whether this policy could impact MATBUS employees.

Mr. Pinotti noted that several drivers are New Americans and may be affected by the proposed policy.

Mr. Strand added that this issue should be considered alongside ongoing discussions of federal funding, emphasizing the importance of remaining attentive to potential changes in federal policies and funding levels.

Mr. Smith provided an update on Ms. Bommelman's medical leave, noting that a return date has not yet been determined. He indicated that any questions could be directed to him or Mr. Swingen in the meantime.

Chair White adjourned the meeting at 9:27 AM.