



Mountain Line

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Board of Directors Minutes for Wednesday, March 19, 2025

NOTE: IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROVISIONS OF THE ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES THE SUMMARIZED MINUTES OF NAIPTA BOARD MEETINGS ARE NOT VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTS. ONLY THE ACTIONS TAKEN AND DISCUSSION APPEARING WITHIN QUOTATION MARKS ARE VERBATIM.

The Board of Directors met in Regular Session on Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 10:00am in the Mountain Line VERA Room, 3773 N. Kaspar Dr., Flagstaff, AZ 86004. This was a WEB BASED meeting. Members of the Board and Mountain Line staff attended in person, by internet conferencing, or by telephone. The public was invited to attend.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jeronimo Vasquez, (Chair), Board of Supervisors, Coconino County;
Josh Maher, (Vice Chair), Associate VP for Community Relations, NAU, designee, (Zoom);
Tony Williams, Vice President of Student Services, CCC, designee, (Zoom);
Miranda Sweet, Vice Mayor, City of Flagstaff;
Lori Matthews, City Councilor, City of Flagstaff

**Three of our five Board member seats must be present to constitute a quorum.*

***The City of Flagstaff holds two seats.*

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED:

None.

MOUNTAIN LINE STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager;
Jacki Lenners, Deputy General Manager;
Sam Short, Workforce Director;
Randy Sherping, Operations Director, (Zoom);
Anne Dunno, Capital Development Manager;
Jeremiah McVicker, Maintenance Superintendent;
Codi Weaver, Human Resources Manager, (Zoom);
Heather Higgins, Purchasing and Contracts Officer, (Zoom), joined at approximately 10:02am;
Bizzy Collins, Strategic Performance Planner;
LaReina Reyes, Associate Transit Planner, (Zoom);
Jon Matthies, IT Manager;
Rhonda Cashman, Executive Assistant and Clerk of the Board;
Scott Holcomb, Mountain Line Attorney, (Zoom)

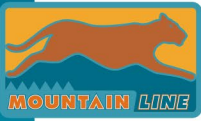
GUESTS PRESENT:

Mandia Gonzales, Transportation Planner, MetroPlan;
Jeff McKay, Vice President for Capital Planning and Campus Operations, NAU, alternate, (Zoom)

1. CALL TO ORDER -Chair Vasquez called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00am.
2. ROLL CALL

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3. SAFETY MINUTE
-Sam Short, Workforce Director

Mr. Short reported on railroad track safety.

4. MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES
-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager

Ms. Dalmolin recognized the March milestone anniversary.

5. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public online or in the room requesting to speak. A written public comment was received via email related to the Fare Free Transit Update agenda item. It will be read into the record at that time.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES 2/19/2025:

Director Matthews made a motion to approve the minutes for the February 19, 2025 meeting. Director Sweet seconded. There was no discussion. All approved, none opposed. Motion carried.

NAME	YES VOTE	NO VOTE
Jeronimo Vasquez	X	
Josh Maher	X	
Tony Williams	X	
Miranda Sweet	X	
Lori Matthews	X	

7. VULNERABLE ROADWAY USERS PLAN PRESENTATION
-Mandia Gonzales, Transportation Planner, MetroPlan

Ms. Gonzales shared an informative presentation with Board members. There were no questions.

Ms. Dalmolin asked if the Board would consider going into an executive session to discuss the Financial Audit. Mr. Holcomb reminded staff and Board members that an executive session can only be called if there is notice of the executive session on the agenda for said topic or if the topic is on the agenda and legal consultation is needed. Board members determined that a special meeting would be called within the next two weeks with availability of each Board member confirmed through a Doodle Poll as soon as possible.

DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS:

8. COMPENSATION STUDY

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-Sam Short, Workforce Director

The Board may provide direction, but there is no recommendation from staff at this time.

Mr. Short stated our consultants on this project are TransPro and Mercer. The last compensation study was done in 2019 with implementation in 2020. He noted that the Operators and Operations Supervisors are not recommended for additional wage adjustments by this study due to the raise implemented in July 2024. He shared preliminary recommendations from the consultants related to grade structure changes and modification of the pay range tables. He reported the recommendation includes five positions identified for immediate adjustment as a result of grade and range changes. He summarized that several other positions that have been identified as being compensated below competitive with an anticipated recommendation that changes will be necessary to remain competitive in the labor market. There were no questions.

9. FY2026 OPERATING BUDGET

-Josh Stone, Financial Manager

The Board may provide direction, but there is no recommendation from staff at this time.

Ms. Dalmolin presented this item on behalf of Mr. Stone. She noted the overall budget is increasing by nine percent. Outside of the workforce budget changes reviewed last month, the Operations budget is increasing by \$123,000. She reviewed the items related to the increase: IT supplies and contracts; Utilities, Water, and Electricity; Vehicle Parts and Supplies; Facilities Supplies and Contracted Services; and Travel and Training. One Board member requested more detail before approval of the budget in June. Ms. Dalmolin responded that a line by line budget will be available in preparation for the May meeting in an effort to ensure Board members have adequate time to request changes before the proposed adoption in June. There was no further discussion.

10. BIANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

-Bizzy Collins, Strategic Performance Planner

The Board may provide direction, but there is no recommendation from staff at this time.

Ms. Collins stated she is reporting on performance in the first half of the fiscal year (FY) 2025, July through December 2024. She shared that fixed route ridership is now at 72 percent of our pre-COVID ridership level. There was a question about the riders per hour figure representing total ridership across all routes and a request to clarify the number of routes. Ms. Collins replied that yes, riders per hour are reported across all routes, and there are nine routes. She noted that Paratransit ridership is also at 72 percent of our pre-COVID ridership level. One Board member asked what this ridership level can be attributed to, specifically paratransit. Ms. Collins responded that passengers don't seem to go out as much when there is risk of sickness and programs have been slow to come back. She shared that Microtransit ridership is up; the City Taxi program is down six percent; the County Taxi program is up eight percent; and there are currently 13 Vanpools. She noted some employers have been covering expenses in addition to the County subsidy. She reviewed peer agency comparisons and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to the Strategic Plan Scorecard. She noted for each goal whether the goal was met or not. There was a question as to how the FY2028 projection was calculated.

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Ms. Collins replied that it is determined by current ridership plus anticipated ridership increases when Proposition 488 changes are implemented. Ms. Dalmolin stated the projection does include the current increases we are experiencing as well. Since staff refer to pre-COVID ridership consistently, one Board member suggested that data be added to the chart as an FY2019 comparison for context and they additionally inquired about the On-Time Performance Metric goal of 95 percent. Ms. Collins stated that our new Operations Director asked the same question, and the On-Time Performance Metric will be re-evaluated. Ms. Dalmolin stated that we now have a better system, which provides better data for better comparison. There was a question asked about Mountain Express ridership being included. Ms. Collins responded that it is included. Ms. Dalmolin reported that the Board will be asked to adopt goals later this year and this will be included in discussion at the May Joint meeting. There was no further discussion.

11. ELECTRIC BUS PERFORMANCE REPORT

-Bizzy Collins, Strategic Performance Planner

The Board may provide direction, but there is no recommendation from staff at this time.

Ms. Collins reported that Mountain Line has two electric buses, one made by Gillig, and one made by New Flyer, and we have two chargers. She noted that reoccurring operator training is helping with electric vehicle efficiency; efficiency decreases a bit in the winter. She reported on Gallons of Diesel Avoided and Carbon Dioxide Emissions saved. One Board member inquired about the spike in the graph for July 2024. Ms. Collins explained that both electric buses were out of service for repairs at that time; we still had charging costs but no mileage or service to demonstrate cost over miles. Chair Vasquez commented that electric vehicles appear to save money. There was a question about the higher cost of electric bus ownership and whether staff know the true cost comparison. Ms. Collins stated she would bring back a full lifetime cost of an electric bus with the next report. There were no further comments or questions.

12. BUS GRAPHICS AND DRIVER'S BARRIER

-Jeremiah McVicker Maintenance Superintendent

The Board may provide direction, but there is no recommendation from staff at this time.

Mr. McVicker shared photos of the new bus wrap. He stated that a little facelift makes a big difference on the buses. There was a question about the cost to wrap each bus. Mr. McVicker replied that it is approximately \$7,000 each. Ms. Dalmolin stated that the articulated buses are not currently getting new wraps. Mr. McVicker reported that the artic's have a few years left on those wraps. Mr. McVicker also shared photos of the old versus the new driver's barrier. He pointed out there is better ventilation and a window that can be rolled down for better customer service with the new driver's barrier. There was a question about using the new bus wrap design for the artic's. Mr. McVicker responded that it is the plan, unless we receive public comments that would cause staff to question the current design; it is not set in stone. There was another question about the cost of the wrap design. Ms. Lenners replied that she would have to check since Mountain Line uses a graphic design firm. Ms. Dalmolin shared that Mountain Line did receive a safety and security grant to offset the cost of the driver's barriers. She also noted that the bus wrap design would have been higher, but only a minor change was

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made from the electric bus wrap for the hybrids. One Board member commented that is good for Board members to have this information. There was no further discussion.

13. REPLACEMENT BUSES

-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager

Staff recommends the Board of Directors authorize purchase of hybrid diesel electric buses instead of battery electric buses.

Ms. Dalmolin stated she did provide alternatives in her presentation, even though they were not in her staff report. She shared that a federal government directive was received on March 12th to audit unobligated grant funds. She clarified the difference between awarded and obligated funding. She noted she and Ms. Lenner were just in Washington, D.C., and everything felt good, all meetings went well with legislators. She reported that when the directive was received, she called our legislative liaison right way; he advised things would settle at first but with this directive recommended changing the type of replacement buses on order. She reviewed the two bus awards, each for how many buses, the year of award and whether they were awarded for electric or low emission vehicles. The funds have not yet been obligated. There was a lengthy discussion about the obligation process and whether to switch the replacement bus order to hybrid to avoid the risk of loss of the grant funds completely. The Board members were thoughtful in their questions and discussion of the matter, but concern and frustration was also voiced about sidelining our community goals. Board members also suggested there be a public information plan to share this news with the public. Director Sweet made a motion to authorize the purchase of hybrid diesel electric buses as recommended. Director Matthews seconded. There was no further discussion. All approved, none opposed. Motion carried.

NAME	YES VOTE	NO VOTE
Jeronimo Vasquez	X	
Josh Maher	X	
Tony Williams	X	
Miranda Sweet	X	
Lori Matthews	X	

Ms. Dalmolin stated she is grateful for staff that have invested a great deal of time and effort related to electric vehicles and there are still plans for replacements in future to be zero emission, but this bus order is important for replacement and providing service levels for the community. Chair Vasquez stated his appreciation for all the work on electric vehicles that has been done by staff; he commented that we are caught in the current situation and need replacement buses. There were no further comments.

14. FARE FREE TRANSIT UPDATE

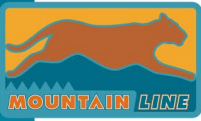
-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager

No action is recommended by staff for this discussion item.

Due to timing, this item was tabled to the April Board meeting.

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PROGRESS REPORTS:

There were no questions regarding the progress reports.

15. DOWNTOWN CONNECTION CENTER (DCC) MOVE-IN
-Anne Dunno, Capital Development Manager
16. BUS SIMULATOR UPDATE
-Sam Short, Workforce Director
17. DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY
-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager
18. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS
-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager

Ms. Dalmolin shared the following highlights:

- March anniversaries were recognized.
- Ms. Dalmolin stated she would write a more detailed report on the Washington, D.C. visit, noting that Chair Vasquez may join Mountain Line staff in D.C. in the fall.

Ms. Dalmolin committed to a Doodle Poll being sent out that day to work toward scheduling the special meeting via Zoom for 30 minutes. There was a request to hold it on Tuesday, close in time to the City Council meeting.


ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE AND STAFF:

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE AND IDENTIFY AGENDA ITEMS

April/May Working Agenda

The next Board meeting will be April 16, 2025, and it will be a hybrid in-person and Zoom meeting based in Flagstaff in the VERA Room at Mountain Line, 3773 N. Kaspar Dr., Flagstaff, AZ 86004 at 10am. The public is invited to attend. April agenda items may include but not be limited to The Coordinated Plan, August Service Changes – Close Public Comment Period, Financial Audit, Organizational Structure Review, Capital Budget Overview, Mountain Express Update, First Mile/Last Mile, Land Use/Code Project, Triennial Review Closeout Report, and Delegation of Authority Updates. The April agenda will be available for review on Mountain Line's website and at Mountain Line's public posting places (listed on the Mountain Line website) at least 24 hours prior to the meeting and should be consulted for a list of items that will come before the Board.

19. ADJOURNMENT -Chair Vasquez adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:01pm.



Jeronimo Vasquez, Chair of the Mountain Line Board of Directors

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ATTEST:

Rhonda Cashman, Executive Assistant and Clerk of the Board

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