



Mountain Line

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Board of Directors Minutes for Wednesday, August 27, 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, August 27, 2025, at 10:00am in the Mountain Line Ponderosa Room, 216 W. Phoenix Ave., Flagstaff, AZ 86001. 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;
Tony Williams, Vice President of Student Services, CCC, designee;
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, left at approximately 11:23am;
Sam Short, Workforce Director;
Randy Sherping, Operations Director, left at approximately 11:23am;
Jeremiah McVicker, Maintenance Superintendent, left at approximately 11:23am;
Anne Dunno, Capital Development Manager, left at approximately 11:23am;
Codi Weaver, Human Resources Manager, left at approximately 11:23am;
Heather Higgins, Purchasing and Contracts Officer, (Zoom), left at approximately 11:23am;
Bizzy Collins, Strategic Performance Planner, (Zoom), left at approximately 11:23am;
LaReina Reyes, Associate Transit Planner, (Zoom), joined at approximately 10:57am and left at approximately 11:15am;
Aliya De La Torre, Finance Coordinator, left at approximately 11:23am;
Sam Bradbury, Systems Administrator, left at approximately 11:27am and returned at approximately 12:24pm;
Jon Matthies, IT Manager, left at approximately 11:27am and returned at approximately 12:24pm;
Rhonda Cashman, Executive Assistant and Clerk of the Board, left at approximately 11:27am and returned at approximately 12:24pm;
Scott Holcomb, Mountain Line Attorney, (Zoom);
Cameron Stanley, Mountain Line Attorney, (Zoom)

GUESTS PRESENT:

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Jeff McKay, Vice President for Capital Planning and Campus Operations, NAU, alternate, (Zoom), left at approximately 12:05pm;

Eddie Thomas, Insurica, (Zoom), left at approximately 10:37am;

Ehren Bingaman, TransPro, (Zoom), joined at approximately 10:03am and left at approximately 12:05pm;

Brendan Morgan, TransPro, (Zoom), left at approximately 12:05pm;

Micah McNatt, Mercer, (Zoom), left at approximately 12:05pm

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

2. ROLL CALL

3. SAFETY MINUTE

-Sam Short, Workforce Director

Mr. Short reported on emergency preparedness.

4. MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager

Ms. Dalmolin recognized the August milestone anniversaries.

5. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public in attendance at the meeting and there were no public comments received via email.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 6/18/2025

Director Williams made a motion to approve the minutes for the June 18, 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	

DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS:

7. INSURANCE POLICY EXCESS LIMIT REQUIREMENTS

-Sam Short, Workforce Director

Staff recommends the Board of Directors approve lowering Mountain Line's Insurance Policy Excess Limit requirements from 21 million dollars to 16 million dollars for Fiscal Year 2026.

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Mr. Short reported that Mountain Line has currently maintained excess liability insurance coverage of \$21 million, but notification was received at the end of June that the insurance company offering the \$10 million layer would no longer do so for any amount; however, they would extend the policy until September 1st to allow time for staff to find alternative coverage. He noted the market has changed and that it would take two companies to offer half the coverage for more than double the cost. He explained staff consulted partner agencies regarding reduced coverage, down to \$16 million, and all were okay with doing so. Mountain Line's insurance broker, Eddie Thomas, from Insurica, shared that costs have increased due to legal, economic, and "hard market" factors; there is less capacity in the reinsurance layer. He stated our prior provider, Great American, is out of the market since they could not price coverage to make a profit. He noted less than one percent of claims are catastrophic, and Arizona is a tier 3 state with no discounted premiums. He explained best practice is to carry \$5-\$10 million and more is not necessary. He recommended considering another drop to \$11 million in total coverage next year. Ms. Dalmolin stated the most recent revision of the Master Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) allows the Board of Directors to set the amount of insurance coverage. There was a lengthy discussion regarding amount of coverage and cost. Ms. Dalmolin noted that action is needed today for FY2026 coverage and then discussions regarding next year's coverage can commence in November. Chair Vasquez suggested modifying the recommendation to reduce the excess liability coverage to \$13 million instead of the \$16 million as recommended by staff as it is the most cost effective amount of coverage. Director Sweet made the motion as suggested by Chair Vasquez. Director Matthews 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	

8. PARATRANSIT GUIDE AND RULES OF SERVICE DELIVERY

-Randy Sherping, Operations Director

Staff recommends the Board of Directors conduct a public hearing and close the public comment period that was opened on June 18, 2025, for proposed changes to Mountain Line Paratransit Guide and Rules for service delivery.

Mr. Sherping explained the proposed changes in detail and reviewed the survey results from the client outreach effort. He recommended the Board close the public comment period and approve the proposed changes. Director Matthews made a motion to close the public comment period and approve the service changes as presented. Director Maher seconded. There was no discussion. All approved, none opposed. Motion carried.

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

9. IMPACT OF CHANGE TO DRIVER WAGE

-Sam Short, Workforce Director

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

Mr. Short noted that the Board approved the \$5 per hour pay increase for Operators and Operations Supervisors on June 26, 2024 and it was effective July 1, 2024. He reviewed the data regarding past applicants and new hires versus those in FY2025, as well as the number of training classes and trainee counts over the same time periods. He noted since the August 11th class, 25 Operators have been hired. He communicated the next steps are to utilize assessment tools and focus on retention; removing the "under the hood" requirement, should help, as it has been a stumbling block for some. Ms. Dalmolin stated the "under the hood" waiver specifically was approved by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and they have deferred to state departments of transportation for implementation. Mr. Short stated that the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has been quick to adopt other changes, so staff are hopeful. There were a couple of questions regarding how many driver openings there are now and how it is determined to start the next class. Mr. Short replied that this time last year we were struggling to offer full service, and that is better now, and the next training class is scheduled as needed. He also noted that the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Course has been a tremendous help. There was a request to explain Part Time Minus, Part Time Plus, and Full Time. Mr. Short briefly explained what each one stood for related to time commitment. Ms. Dalmolin shared what each one stood for related to the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) and benefits. There were no further questions.

10. ANNUAL SAFETY REPORT

-Sam Short, Workforce Director

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

Mr. Short defined vehicle collision as "any contact" between a Mountain Line vehicle and another object or person. He reviewed the FY2025 safety statistics, most notably that of the 80 collisions, 79 were not considered reportable to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). He also noted there were nine "near misses" reported and nine workplace injuries, all considered minor with no significant time off needed. He communicated the next steps are to start using an assessment tool Ms. Weaver found which is used by the Montana Mountain Line; use of the bus simulator which arrived yesterday, and everyone is excited to use; and hire a Safety Coordinator. There were some questions about how much time off for workplace injuries is not "significant", how much did the bus simulator cost and can other agencies use it. Mr. Short said no one needed more than a couple of days off regarding the workplace injuries. He replied that the bus simulator cost was approximately \$650,000. Ms. Dalmolin explained that the bus simulator was purchased with funds leftover from the CDL Course project; Mountain Line

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received congressionally directed spending from Senator Kelly's office. Both Mr. Short and Ms. Dalmolin were supportive of partner agencies using the bus simulator when available. Mr. Short reported that a film crew would be visiting soon to record real life scenarios that can be used in the simulator in the future. Ms. Dalmolin commented that it will be nice to have operators practice in the simulator before they are out on the road in a bus. There was another question about the one reportable accident and the criteria it met. Mr. Short responded that the criteria are if there is a fatality, which was not the case; if anyone was treated immediately away from the scene, which would also trigger drug testing for the Operator; or if either vehicle was towed from the scene because it was inoperable. There was no further discussion.

11. ANNUAL FLEET REPORT

-Jeremiah McVicker, Maintenance Superintendent

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

Mr. McVicker noted that the fleet department finally became fully staffed. He noted it is fleet staff responsibility to maintain all Mountain Line vehicles, including oversight of the contracted janitorial services for bus cleaning. He communicated the fleet composition is both Hybrid buses (Miles Per Gallon, higher is better) and Battery Electric Buses (BEB), (Kilowatts per Hour, lower is better). He noted the operators are doing a great job driving to maximize the BEB efficiency. He shared that our fleet is aging, but buses will be kept if they are performing well. He explained the cost of a maintenance mile is equal to the mechanics time plus parts. There were a couple of questions about the change in bus type recently ordered and how many years before replacement. Mr. McVicker stated four hybrid buses are on order and the other two are on hold, hoping that BEB can be ordered, and buses deemed beyond their useful life are re-evaluated every year for possible replacement. There was another question about when to discuss the order of the other two buses. Ms. Dalmolin shared that staff are going to Washington, D.C. in October and the plan is to purchase the buses in June. She noted there is a long delay of building hybrids now due to the change related to the executive order.

12. ANNUAL UPDATE ON THE BUS STOP REHABILITATION PROGRAM

-Jeremiah McVicker, Maintenance Superintendent

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

Mr. McVicker stated bus stops are reviewed annually. He shared the rehabilitated stops information for FY2025. There was a question about where the dollars go that were not used in FY2025. Ms. Dalmolin states that they go back into the transit tax fund for future use. A photo was shared of the rehabilitated Target shelter being installed. Mr. McVicker reported on the five proposed shelter rehabilitations for FY2026 at approximately \$165,000. He noted they will be re-evaluated in the spring. There were no other questions.

13. FLAGSTAFF UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT (FUSD) UPDATE

-Bizzy Collins, Strategic Performance Planner

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

Ms. Collins reported that FUSD passes and trips have increased. She noted that FUSD paid \$41,000 for their passes this school year, which is \$20.50 each. She shared a map showing

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the top 15 bus stops as marked. She concluded from the data that all routes have been used and FUSD ridership accounts for five percent of all ridership. This data will help inform our upcoming operational assessment. FUSD passes will continue to be distributed and the passes are valid through June 30, 2026. There were a couple of questions about the ecoPASS cost per year and how the ecoPASS price is calculated. Ms. Collins confirmed FUSD is paying \$20.50 per pass for the year, and she stated FUSD is in the top tier with approximately 2000 employees. Ms. Dalmolin stated that the way the ecoPASS works is that passes have to be purchased for all employees. She noted the program will be evaluated in the operational assessment as it has probably been 10 years since it was last reviewed. There was no further discussion.

PROGRESS REPORTS:

There were no questions regarding the progress reports.

- 14. FY2024 TRIENNIAL REVIEW STATUS UPDATE
-Bizzy Collins, Strategic Performance Planner
- 15. DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY
-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager
- 16. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS
-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager

This item was skipped to allow more time for the executive session.

The Board considered a motion to convene an executive session. At approximately 11:22am, Director Williams made a motion to go into executive session. Director Matthews 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	

Executive sessions are closed to the public.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The executive session was convened at approximately 11:27am pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03 for the following purpose:

- 1. Discussion with the Mountain Line General Counsel for legal advice and among the Board with

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Mountain Line CEO and General Manager regarding the results of the Compensation Study as relates to the Mountain Line CEO and General Manager compensation and negotiation of the employment contract. A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(1), (3) & (4).

2. Consultation and discussion with Mountain Line's legal counsel for legal advice and with Mountain Line's legal counsel and staff regarding Mountain Line's Fiscal Year 2024 Financial Annual Audit and employment issues related thereto: A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(1), (2), (3) & (4).

Following the conclusion of the Executive Session, the Board reconvened the public meeting at approximately 12:24pm.

DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEM:

17. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO) AND GENERAL MANAGER CONTRACT AMENDMENT
(No Staff Report)
-Sam Short, Workforce Director
Staff recommends the Board of Directors adopt the fifth amendment to the CEO and General Manager Contract to amend annual earnings as identified in the Compensation Study or as negotiated between the Board and the CEO.

This item was tabled to the September Board meeting.

ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE AND STAFF:

Chair Vasquez stated that Our Lady of Guadalupe Church will hold a celebration May 16, 2026 and the organization has submitted a road closure request to the City.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE AND IDENTIFY AGENDA ITEMS

September/October Working Agenda

The next Board meeting will be held on September 24, and it will be a hybrid in-person and Zoom meeting based in Flagstaff in the Mountain Line Ponderosa Room, 216 W. Phoenix Ave., Flagstaff, AZ 86001 at 10am. The public is invited to attend. September agenda items may include but not be limited to the Organizational Structure Plan, Electric Bus Performance Report, Biannual Performance Report, Mountain Line Annual Report, In-Person Meeting Attendance Discussion, Bus Simulator with Images, Sprinter Van Lease, Triennial Review Closeout Report, and Delegation of Authority Updates. The September 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.

18. ADJOURNMENT -Chair Vasquez adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:24pm.



Josh Maher, Vice Chair of the Mountain Line Board of Directors

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ATTEST:

Rhonda Cashman

Rhonda Cashman, Executive Assistant and Clerk of the Board

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