

Mountain Line

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Board of Directors Minutes for Wednesday, April 15, 2026

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, April 15, 2026, 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:

Josh Maher, (Chair), Associate VP for Community Relations, NAU, designee;
Miranda Sweet, (Vice Chair), Vice Mayor, City of Flagstaff;
Tony Williams, Vice President of Student Services, CCC, designee;
Jeronimo Vasquez, Board of Supervisors, Coconino County, arrival at approximately 10:03am;
David Spence, Councilmember, City of Flagstaff, alternate

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

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

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Lori Matthews, City Councilor, City of Flagstaff

MOUNTAIN LINE STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager;
Jacki Lenners, Deputy General Manager;
Sam Short, Workforce Director;
Megan Coons, Finance Director;
Anne Dunno, Capital Project Manager;
Codi Weaver, Human Resources Manager;
Heather Higgins, Purchasing and Contracts Officer;
Bizzy Collins, Strategic Performance Planner, (Zoom);
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:

Rick Tadder, Management Services Director, City of Flagstaff, joined at approximately 10:05am and left at approximately 11:40am;
Karen Kruse, The Kruse Group, joined at approximately 10:16am and left at approximately 11:07am;
Jeff McKay, Vice President for Capital Planning and Campus Operations, NAU, alternate, joined at approximately 10:38am;
Sydney Rittershaus, Member - Free Mountain Line Project Group;

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Mico Gooden, Free Mountain Line Project Group;
Anthony Chiappetta, Free Mountain Line Project Group;
Taylor Franklin, Free Mountain Line Project Group;
Camille Spiro, Free Mountain Line Project Group;
Leshia Curtis, Free Mountain Line Project Group;
Emma Mitchell, Free Mountain Line Project Group;
Jacob Janikowski, Free Mountain Line Project Group;
Bianca Daniels, Member, Free Mountain Line Project Group;
Eryn Yeager, Free Mountain Line Project Group;
Tristan Romano, Free Mountain Line Project Group, arrived at approximately 10:05pm;
Another member of the Free Mountain Line Project Group arrived at 10:11am and left at approximately 10:40am

1. CALL TO ORDER -Chair Maher called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00am.
2. ROLL CALL
3. SAFETY MINUTE
-Sam Short, Workforce Director

Mr. Short reported on bicycle awareness.

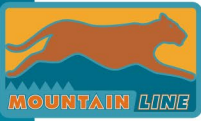
4. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

There were five members of the public in attendance at the meeting that wanted to speak.

- Leshia Curtis, 86011 – She communicated that free Mountain Line service would provide opportunities for those who cannot afford a bus pass, removing the barrier to employment, doctor appointments, and shopping. She also stated there would be fewer cars on the road, making Flagstaff a sustainable connected community.
- Emma Mitchell, 86001 – She shared that everyone deserves to travel the City in its entirety; free Mountain Line service would reduce traffic, help businesses, and allow people to enjoy our city.
- Jacob Janikowski, 86001 – He stated that a free Mountain Line service would improve air quality and offer economic benefits.
- Eryn Yeager, 86011 – She communicated that Mountain Line service should be free to students and everyone, allowing people to travel to the East side of town to the mall, theater, and small businesses. She also stated that the unsheltered community would feel supported. She noted that affordable reliable transportation is needed to get a job; it would improve the economy and the environment.
- Bianca Daniels, 86001 – She stated her major is environmental sustainability. She reported that she does drive a car in Flagstaff and that is why she is advocating for free Mountain Line service to reduce emissions. She shared that she believes it would increase ridership and reduce accidents. She stated free service would make everyone's experience smoother and safer; Flagstaff is a great city with viable transit options.

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All speakers requested that the Board of Directors vote to make Mountain Line fare free at the May meeting, and buses go fare free by August 2027.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
 - a. Regular Board Meeting 3/18/2026
 - b. Special Board Meeting 3/26/2026

Vice Chair Sweet made a motion to approve the minutes for both March 18, 2026 and March 26, 2026. Director Vasquez seconded. There was no discussion. All approved, none opposed. Motion carried.

NAME	YES VOTE	NO VOTE
Josh Maher	X	
Miranda Sweet	X	
Tony Williams	X	
Jeronimo Vasquez	X	
David Spence	X	

DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS:

6. AUGUST SERVICE CHANGES
-Jacki Lenners, Deputy General Manager

Staff recommend the Board of Directors conduct a public hearing and close a public comment period for the proposed August 2026 service enhancements. Staff also recommend the Board of Directors approve the recommended service changes for implementation in August 2026.

Ms. Lenners reviewed the proposed service changes by route in detail. She reported the most feedback provided was against the removal of the Thompson Loop bus stops on Route 8. She stated Operations staff have tested the timing and it is possible to extend the route as proposed while keeping the Thompson Loop portion of the route. She noted the timing may be tight at certain times of day. She shared that a more comprehensive route assessment will be done as part of the Operational Assessment study that is in progress. There were no questions. Chair Maher requested to vote in two parts. Director Williams made a motion to close the public hearing. Vice Chair Sweet seconded. There was no discussion. All approved, none opposed. Motion carried.

NAME	YES VOTE	NO VOTE
Josh Maher	X	
Miranda Sweet	X	
Tony Williams	X	
Jeronimo Vasquez	X	
David Spence	X	

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Vice Chair Sweet made a motion to approve the Service Changes and keep the Route 8 Thompson Loop as presented. Director Vasquez seconded. There was no discussion. All approved, none opposed. Motion carried.

NAME	YES VOTE	NO VOTE
Josh Maher	X	
Miranda Sweet	X	
Tony Williams	X	
Jeronimo Vasquez	X	
David Spence	X	

7. REVIEW OF INTERNAL CONTROLS

-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager

No action is recommended; the Board may direct staff to take additional actions to bring updated information for future action.

Ms. Dalmolin reported that staff recently met with City of Flagstaff finance team to review financials. She shared that the internal controls being presented for discussion are related to Payroll, Accounts Payable, Other, and Federal Grants. The audit revealed that some Mountain Line records were being stored in third party storage solutions (staff private accounts) in violation of record retention rules and that IT is working on solutions to cure this problem. She confirmed that Bank Reconciliation will be done by the 10th of each month; Software and Software Access is being addressed in a new User Manager Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Finance and Human Resources portals and websites; internal review and audit of Journal Entries and documentation for the FY2026 Audit is being conducted; Purchase Orders SOP and training is underway to ensure we complete this step as required; Authorization for ACH payments directly from our accounts was removed in October and staff are reviewing for transactions between July 1, 2025 and October for proper documentation; Developing process for posting and documenting payroll in the proper year; and Revised process for drawdown actions to ensure proper checks and balances are in place. Staff are working with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on mechanism to pay back those funds identified as double drawn. Ms. Dalmolin recognized the material weakness finding related to Cash Management was due to this double draw and lack of controls or checks and balances. The process did require, continues to require, that all reimbursement requests along with supporting documents be pre-approved by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) before submitting a request for funding. She also noted that workflows are being restored in the grant system to ensure the CEO receives timely notice of drawdown activity. This workflow was altered and those notices were not being sent in FY2025 allowing drawdowns to be done without proof of documentation. There were no questions.

8. FY2027 OPERATING BUDGET

-Megan Coons, Finance Director

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

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Ms. Coons explained that the overall Operating Budget will increase by 18 percent over FY2026 for a total of \$16,819,613. She noted the Workforce Budget is 64 percent of the increase at \$1,074,557. Additionally, there is a planned Service Expansion increase of \$1,375,000 and an increase of \$173,642 for Other Operating expenses. She reported the increase in Other Operating expenses is broken down into the following categories: Indirect Overhead increase of \$66,000 for Human Resources Professional Services, Legal Fees, Audit Services, and Cyber Security Staff Training; Banking Fees increase of \$25,000 which was previously reported net of revenue and the increase will now be offset by higher reported revenue; Vehicle Maintenance increase of \$57,000 due to increased repair costs related to our aging fleet; Printed Materials increase of \$15,000 for service change communication and printing new ride guides; Computer and Phone Supplies increase of \$5,000 to support multiple locations and a greater variety of equipment; Facilities Supplies increase of \$5,600 for maintenance and janitorial supplies; and there is not an anticipated Liability Insurance increase, but the budget may need to be adjusted when the final contract values are known. There were no questions.

9. FY2027 CAPITAL BUDGET

-Megan Coons, Finance Director

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

Ms. Coons reported the FY2027 Capital Budget is \$34,211,709. She reviewed the Capital Projects involved: First Mile/Last Mile, Downtown Connection Center, Kaspar Maintenance Facility, Vehicle Replacement and Rehabilitation, Bus Stops-New and Refurbished Amenities, and Planning Studies, Training, Software, Administrative Projects, with budgeted values presented in a table. She shared that the FY2026 carry forward is \$27,742,667 which was previously approved and new funding for FY2027 is \$6,469,042 with the amounts broken out for each project and year in another table. There were no questions.

10. APPLY FOR TWO (2) HYBRID DIESEL-ELECTRIC BUSES AND APPROVE PURCHASE

-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager

Staff recommend the Board of Directors 1) direct staff to cease the attempt to obligate federal funds for no emission vehicles and modify application for low emission vehicles and 2) approve the purchase of two (2) 35 foot hybrid diesel-electric GILLIG buses using the 2025 award of federal funding obligation application (the 'grant application') for replacement low-no emission buses.

Ms. Dalmolin stated that in January she received Board approval to apply for two battery-electric buses for expansion and replacement, and that submission has been unsuccessful to date. She shared that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has advised that only standard bus propulsion is being approved. She noted that in light of the situation, staff recommend changing the grant application to purchase two low emission buses through the Washington State contract. She stated that with the suspension of the Procurement Resolution, we need approval to purchase two hybrid electric buses, but the expense won't be incurred until 2029; allowing us to issue a letter of intent and to get in line for that delivery. She noted she still needs to contact the City staff to confirm if Proposition 488 allows for the purchase of hybrid

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buses. Director Williams made a motion to have staff stop the attempt to obligate federal funds for two zero emissions vehicles and approve purchase of two 35-foot hybrid diesel-electric Gillig buses using the 2025 award of federal funding obligation application for replacement low-no emission buses. Director Vasquez seconded. There was no discussion. All approved, none opposed. Motion carried.

NAME	YES VOTE	NO VOTE
Josh Maher	X	
Miranda Sweet	X	
Tony Williams	X	
Jeronimo Vasquez	X	
David Spence	X	

11. APPROVE AMENDING CONTRACT NO. 2024-130 PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES CONSTRUCTION MANAGER AT RISK SERVICES (CMAR) TO INCLUDE GUARANTEED MAXIMUM PRICE (GMP) NO.2 IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$2,784,858.

-Anne Dunno, Capital Development Manager

Staff recommend the Board of Directors approve amending Contract No. 2024-130 Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure Upgrades Construction Manager at Risk Services (CMAR) to include Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) No. 2 in amount not to exceed \$2,784,858.

Ms. Dunno reviewed the proposed three new Highway 180 and five new Soliere pedestrian crossings, including showing the locations on maps. She stated the Highway 180 construction will start on May 22nd and the plan is to be done before school starts, then the Soliere construction will begin, and completion is expected in December. There were no questions. Director Vasquez made a motion to approve the contract amendment as presented. Vice Chair Sweet seconded. There was no discussion. All approved, none opposed. Motion carried.

NAME	YES VOTE	NO VOTE
Josh Maher	X	
Miranda Sweet	X	
Tony Williams	X	
Jeronimo Vasquez	X	
David Spence	X	

12. DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROGRAM COMPLIANCE CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

-Sam Short, Workforce Director

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

Mr. Short reported that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Staff from the Drug and Alcohol Compliance Division came to Flagstaff to audit Mountain Line in November 2025. The corrective action completion was due by March 19, 2026. He reviewed the corrective action

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areas that have been completed: Policy Manual Review, Drug and Alcohol Program Manager Review, Records Management Reviews, and Urine Collector and Breath Alcohol Technician Reviews. He noted the following corrective actions are still pending: Insufficient testing during all service hours, NextCare Urine Collector documents, and NextCare Breath Alcohol Technician documents. He communicated that the goal is to have the Transit Safety Specialist and the Workforce Director get Urine Collector and Breath Alcohol Technician certifications. He explained that there is no person or facility available in Flagstaff to perform this testing between 4am and 11pm. Ms. Dalmolin shared that NextCare is a Department of Transportation testing site which puts them at risk of losing their certification or designation. She also mentioned that we have changed providers several times. Mr. Short stated that services have diminished over time, especially for random testing and we may be able to cut out NextCare. Ms. Dalmolin explained we need to cover random and post-accident testing for drivers and mechanics and there are time limits on when testing can be performed. There was a question about what other agencies are doing in rural areas. Mr. Short responded that most likely they are not doing it but haven't been audited by FTA yet. Director McKay stated that Northern Arizona University (NAU) is in the same boat as Mountain Line and he would like to collaborate and help offset the burden for both organizations. Mr. Short was appreciative of the offer. There was another question about the time commitment for staff. Mr. Short explained that it will be an approximate cost of \$1,000 per person and a week's worth of time for the training to be certified and then after staff are certified, approximately eight hours per quarter for the testing and upkeep of the machinery used. There was no further discussion.

13. DOWNTOWN CONNECTION CENTER (DCC) UPDATE

-Anne Dunno, Capital Development Manager

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

Ms. Dunno stated she is providing an update only. She stated that the current construction is to place Arizona Public Service (APS) power lines underground in the bus platform area. She shared a few maps from 2022 that show the phasing of the overall DCC project, the Phase 2a Interim Operations Hub for when the Rio de Flag is under construction and then Phase 2b for the civic space. She said the plan is to complete 60 percent design by December 2026 and then sit on the plans until the Rio de Flag construction is done. She explained that staff decided against bottom of bus/ground chargers because we have already invested in the Pantograph charger at Kaspar. She reported that staff still need to meet with City staff regarding the City practice of not allowing power lines over sewer lines. She noted the Civic space portion of the project will be shared with the City Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Events (PROSE) Department. She shared that the staff involved will meet at the end of the month and plan to confirm the 60 percent design by the end of the year. There was a question about when the Civic Space will be completed. Ms. Dunno responded that the Rio project needs more funding, and staff are hoping to find out more in June 2026; a contract may be awarded in 2027, and a contractor may be working in the area until 2030. Ms. Dalmolin stated her prediction would be for the bus area to be done by 2032, but the Civic Space may end up behind work on Mike's Pike. Ms. Dunno mentioned the need for the Rio contractor to have a north/south connection and access under the railroad tracks. There was no further discussion.

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14. OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND FIVE-YEAR PLAN UPDATE

-Bizzy Collins, Strategic Performance Planner

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

Ms. Collins shared that a Request for Proposals was completed last fall and we had 8 responses. Transpo was the selected consultant firm, and the kickoff was held in January. She outlined the four key elements of the assessment: System Performance - Mountain Express, Comprehensive Transit Alignment with NAU, and Route reliability and efficiency; Proposition 488 Implementation – Expand service hours, More frequent service, and New service areas; System Gaps – Support student travel needs [Northern Arizona University (NAU), Coconino Community College (CCC), Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD), and Charter Schools], Growth outside of service area and the Permanent Transit Network, Service to Fourth Street, Safe Streets Master Plan; and Cost Sharing and Pass Programs. She said they are in the thick of the analysis now. She reviewed the project timeline: Analysis phase complete in August; Draft short-term recommendations in October; Finalize short-term recommendations in January; and Detail phased growth for years 2-5 and update the Five-Year Transit Plan in 2027. She noted that the defined success outcome is improved access to frequent transit service, now and into the future. She shared a graph that showed transit access changes achieved with the August 2026 Service Changes for categories of riders including Access to Jobs, Population, Low Income, Minority, and Youth, also noting the current access levels. Ms. Dalmolin wanted to clarify that the contractor Transpo who is doing this work should not be confused with TransPro who does more Human Resources work. There were no questions.

15. MOUNTAIN EXPRESS 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 there were 34 days of service, daily during holiday break, and then weekends in January, February, and March with 23-minute frequency, free to riders, and Arizona Snowbowl paid 63 percent of the actual costs associated with the route. She noted increased outreach was done. She shared a graph and communicated that the increased frequency resulted in a 63 percent increase in ridership. She stated there was not much snowfall this year. She reported some key performance data: the service was started in 2015 to reduce congestion on US 180; if every bus rider drove a car instead, there would have been 103 more cars per day on US 180; and 40 metric tons were saved from entering Flagstaff's air, equal to removing 9 cars for one year. She reviewed the passenger survey results from 69 respondents and of significance was that 61 percent were new riders; some areas that need improvement were noted, such as on-time performance and real time arrival information (Transit App) and staff are looking into remedies. She shared the next step is to review the Operations Assessment results related to impacts of frequency, March weekend service, and marketing improvements; understand passenger survey results; determine the future service model; and develop funding strategies. There was a question about when this topic would be brought back for Board discussion regarding future service. Ms. Collins stated she thought that would be in June. Ms. Dalmolin noted that it needs to happen before negotiating a contract

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with Arizona Snowbowl. There was a comment about funding sources related to the optics of riding for free, for example Arizona Snowbowl is free to ride and Route 10 is free to ride for NAU students and FUSD students are not paying to ride while others must pay a fare. Another Board member recognized that the Arizona Snowbowl pays what would have otherwise been collected as fares. Ms. Dalmolin clarified that agencies or businesses pay on behalf of riders and the funds are used for operations. She noted this was the first season Arizona Snowbowl has not paid 100 percent of the cost because Mountain Line wanted to demonstrate that frequency would impact ridership; this was a one-time situation to help with data collection for the Operational Assessment. She further clarified that NAU students only have free access to ride Route 10 as NAU pays in lieu of fares while students pay to ride other routes and FUSD is paying for their student bus passes. There was no further discussion.

PROGRESS REPORTS: None.

16. MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager

Ms. Dalmolin recognized the April employee milestone anniversaries. She noted the reordering of this agenda item was done per the Board's request.

17. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS

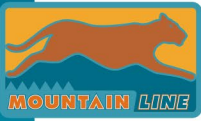
-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager

Ms. Dalmolin shared the following highlights:

- She recognized the other April employee anniversaries.
- She shared the DCC Phase 2, Part 1 map for our modified transfer center with increased lighting in the row near the railroad tracks. She noted areas will shift in the future and staff remain dedicated to safety.
- She noted that the Phoenix Avenue construction will impact Pizzicletta for about 5-6 weeks during their busy season for outdoor seating and Mountain Line has offered to help offset the cost.
- She encouraged Board members to take a look at the Kaspar facility as we have torn down the old car shop garage area on the west end of the main facility. There was a staff celebration with shovels yesterday.
- Flagstaff Downtown Business Alliance has moved into our tenant space and there will be an exchange of services for the lease in the future.
- The South West Transit Association (SWTA) Annual Conference (March 30-April 2) was attended by the CEO and Deputy General Manager. During the conference, staff met with FTA and sessions attended included Education and Employment Transit Partnerships, AI Adoption in Transit, Training and Coaching to Improve Safety, and Federal Regulatory Changes. Ms. Dalmolin presented on Creative Local Match Plan with Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG) and Value of Transit Associations on behalf of the Arizona Transit Association (AzTA). Additionally, she provided an Arizona update to the full SWTA membership.

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- The AzTA Conference (April 6-8) was attended by the CEO, Deputy General Manager, Finance Director, Clerk of the Board, and the Associate Transit Planner. Staff met with the FTA Regional Administrator and the Deputy Regional Administrator. Sessions included Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) training, Pathway to Leadership, Employee Engagement, Mentorship programs, Microtransit stories, and FTA Grant Management practices. The CEO presented on three panels: Legislative Update (State and Federal outlook), Statewide Opportunities for funding Transit, and Fare Free – A look at three systems.
- The executive session requested by the Board will be held on April 29th, 2-4pm.
- The May 21st Board meeting will be held 8am-12pm per the Board's request for a four-hour meeting.
- Two on-site interviews for the Deputy General Manager of Operations will be held next week.
- Staff have revisited the candidate pool and hopes to have news about hiring the Planning Director soon.
- The fund balance will be reviewed in May.

ITEMS FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF:

Vice Chair Sweet stated she went with Kate Morley from MetroPlan to the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) meeting and asked the Governor's staff to advocate for the AZ State Match Advantage for Rural Transportation (SMART) fund.

SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE AND IDENTIFY AGENDA ITEMS

May/June Working Agenda

May agenda items were reviewed and Chair Maher asked to confirm with staff that the Free Fare item is a discussion only item in May. Ms. Dalmolin confirmed.

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, May 21, 2026 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 8:00am. The public is invited to attend. May agenda items may include but not be limited to the Procurement Resolution, Adoption of Roles and Expectations of the CEO and Board of Directors, Bus Stop Improvement Plan, Fare Collection Procurement Award, RFP 2022-270 Arch and Bio Amendment 2, Adoption of Roles and Expectations of the CEO and Board of Directors, Financial Plan Review, Budget Presentation, Fare Free Discussion, Bus Stop Improvement Program, Operational Assessment Update, and Delegation of Authority Updates. The May 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 Maher adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:49am.

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Joshua Maher

Josh Maher, Chair of the Mountain Line Board of Directors

ATTEST:

Rhonda Cashman

Rhonda Cashman, Executive Assistant and Clerk of the Board

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