

Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority
Board Meeting Minutes
2/4/2025

I. Call to Order:

Board Chair, John Waltman, called the February 4, 2025 meeting of the Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority Board to order at 10:31 a.m.

II. Roll Call was taken:

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Waltman, Lynda Garlitz, and Jeff Middlestead

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brandon Wheeler (excused), Joe Henne (excused)

III. Pledge of Allegiance:

Those in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Director Paramski welcomed Trustee Jeff Middlestead to the board.

IV. Agenda: It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Jeff Middlestead	Approve the February 4, 2025 agenda, as with addition of Election of Officers to new business
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V. Public Comment:

- Phyllis Reed
- Cele Malpass

VI. Minutes: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: John Waltman	Approve the January 3, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented.
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VII. Finance Director Report:

Ms. Gordon discussed the A/P and EFT transfers for December 2024. Questions were fielded from board members. Ms. Gordon asked the board if we should begin to approve the A/P and EFT transfers.

Trustee Garlitz motioned that going further, the board will motion to approve A/P and EFT transfers: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: John Waltman	Approve official board approval of A/P and EFT Transfers of the prior month.
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- Finance Director has Submitted three applications to MDOT for FY2026. Applications are for replacement vehicles and dock and vessel upgrades for the ferry system.

VIII. Director's Report:

- We recently experienced the first semi-major ice event at Sugar Island since 2018. We had an excessive amount of brash ice coming down river from the harbor. We had great communication with USCG and they sent the ice breaker to clean up the ice the next day. No delays resulted in the event. Construction and moving equipment at the locks was responsible for the ice coming down river. USCG and contractor has made some changes going forward. It was great that they were able to find a cause and effect and come up with a solution.
- Yacht Solutions upgraded the navigational equipment last week on the Sugar Island Ferry. Drummond Islander IV received this same equipment last year. The Drummond Islander III navigational equipment will be upgraded in the spring at drydock. All equipment will be same, and the crews will be familiar with it no matter what vessel they are operating. The crew is very happy with new system. 100% local funds were used for this purchase. We wanted continuity on all of the boats. This purchase was for safety for the vessel, passengers, and crew. It put us 30 years ahead in technology
- Sugar has a deckhand out on medical. Our part-time employee will be filling in full time for the four-week period.
- John Sovey is a part-time captain working for us. He will be able to captain independently soon.
- The camera system needs to be fixed at Sugar. The antenna is broke but we can still get footage. We are looking into Starlink on the vessel to address the camera system, as well as on island side.
- Drummond and Neebish are running smoothly and it is business as usual.
- Working on RFQ for Naval architect and specs for the drydock for Drummond III.
- The mechanics are purchasing a snowblower for the Neebish Crew.
- Spring trainings – Director Paramski and Finance Director Gordon will be attending the March 12 Legislative meeting. Big topic will be local bus operating money. Reduction in funding equals reduction in service. There are two groups from MPTA and Mass Trans. Both will be at meeting to help push for increased funding.
- Rural Transit Managers meeting in Mt Pleasant coming up in the near future. MDOT is the co-sponsor and OPT will be presenting.
- Facility still has a small punch list. They are currently working on the drain for the oil tank and a plumber is scheduled. Spring work will include gravel and rain gutters. It is still an open contract with a few things going on.
- Took a call to assist to move residents out of Wood Creek today to help evacuate their complex due to an active shooter situation.

- Anderson Tackman Auditors will be presenting the audit report at the March 2025 meeting.
- February 21st will take effect the new earned sick leave act. This does not affect federal employees. This was a voter-initiated law; therefore, it cannot be repealed but it can be changed via the legislature. Webinars have been attended. Any employer with one or more employees has to provide all employees 1-hour sick leave for every 30 hours worked. Employees can accumulate up to 72 hours per year. Sick leave can be rolled over, but does not have to be paid out upon separation of employment. Small businesses will be affected immensely. Toolkits are available but software programs have not been updated yet.
- Bussing: 13% decrease in fare revenue and 11% decrease in total revenue. NEMT has slowed down a little bit. We continue to do well for the 5-year period. The State reimbursement rate is down. This year it is 34%. FY2026 we are looking at 30% reimbursement rate. The Association is trying to get legislature to increase this for the FY2026. Expenses have increased 1.75%. Ms. Gordon reviewed the graphs.
- Ferries: Fare revenue is up slightly. There is a slight shift in type of fare collection (credit card vs. cash). Discussed costs of the new building, and it is proving to be more energy efficient. Discussed travel expenses and Ms. Gordon explained that the RTAP grant covers all costs for training/conferences attended by employees up to \$7,500 per year. Travel for NEMT is for drivers who are gone for the day or sometimes overnight.
 - Ms. Gordon stated that we are no longer receiving ARPA funding which was in the amount of \$84,000.00 last year. We have reviewed the 1st quarter of FY2026, which is the slowest time of year for traffic. Traffic regularly increases in third quarter.
 - Graphs for ferries were reviewed. Drummond Island highest revenue comes from full fares. Sugar Island 73% from 20 trip ticket (commuter tickets). Neebish fares are about 50/50 with commuter and full fares.
- Trustee Garlitz motioned to amend the above motion to include approving the Finance Directors report along with approving A/P and EFT transfers.

Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

<p>MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: John Waltman</p>	<p>AMEND above motion to state: Beginning in March the board will approve accepting the prior months A/P and EFT Transfers and the Finance Director's report.</p>
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IX. New Business

- Election of Officers. Discussion. It was moved and carried by unanimous vote to:

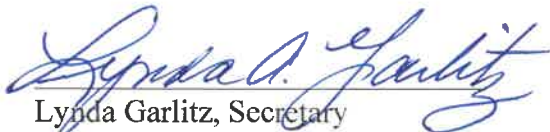
MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: John Waltman	It was moved to table the election of officers until March due to only three board members at the February meeting.
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X. Board Comment:

- Lynda Garlitz
- Jeff Middlestead

XI. Adjourn: It was moved and carried by unanimous vote to:

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Jeff Middlestead	Adjourn the meeting at 11:15 AM
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Lynda Garlitz, Secretary



Bonnie Kaunisto, Recording Secretary

Board Approved: