

Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority
Board Meeting Minutes
4/7/2026

I. Call to Order:

Board Chair, John Waltman, called the April 7, 2026 meeting of the Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority Board to order at 10:32 a.m.

II. Roll Call was taken:

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Waltman, Jeff Middlestead, Lynda Garlitz, Joe Henne, and Brandon Wheeler

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

III. Pledge of Allegiance:

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

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

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Approve agenda as presented
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V. Public Comment:

- None

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

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Lynda Garlitz	Approve the March 3, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented.
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VII. Finance Director Report:

- Ms. Gordon fielded questions regarding the A/P and EFT transfers for February 2026.
 - Bussing – Passenger fares for February had a 45% increase and 55% increase for the year. Luce was down for the quarter, due to the absence of a second vehicle. We should see an increase next month, as the new employee will be working and completing runs for our Curtis area. Bussing fares have increased significantly with the Non-Emergent Medical Program. The Mobility Manager, Kathy Neubert, has been dedicating her time 100% since October 1, 2025 to the program. This program continues to succeed with Kathy’s oversight. There have been over 615 trips all over the state of Michigan with every NEMT vehicle being utilized. Bussing expenses, including employee wages, have increased due the program needs. The

more rides we have, the more employees we need to sustain the tremendous growth of this program. Kathy is doing a great job. Ms. Gordon reviewed the number of passengers vs. fare revenue. For the NEMT program, fare revenue is charged by the hour of service as opposed to each passenger.

- Ferries – All three (3) of the ferry’s fares have decreased for February. The year to date is at a 3% increase. Traffic has had slight increase YTD. Typically, traffic is slow until Memorial Day for all of the ferries. The Jeep the Mac is scheduled for May 8 and 9. The event includes Drummond Island. The last two years attendance has been down due to Mackinac Bridge Lane closure. This has decreased attendance of jeeps traveling across the bridge. There is no scheduled closures on the bridge this year, so we are hoping to see an increase in traffic.
- Finance Director’s Report: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

<p>MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler</p>	<p>Approve February A/P and EFT Transfers, Financial statements, and Finance Director’s Report as presented</p>
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VIII. Director’s Report

- Drummond Islander V Design: Director Paramski has been communicating with the Naval Architect and is in the process of finalizing the hull design. They are making requested changes, and once that is finalized, they will then determine weight of steel. This is how the rough cost of the vessel is determined. Director Paramski reported there has been good progress. The same architect is also working on Sugar Drydock design of the ramps. They were working on designing ~~for~~ new ramps to be installed during Dry Dock this summer and this has been completed.
- New Point of Sale Device: We are migrating to a new point of sale system for the ferries. The new system is Square. Bonnie Kaunisto provided a presentation of the new system, including a new device. The system will provide updated payment devices and a platform that is more user friendly than the previous program. We are anticipating a smooth transition with no interruption to EUPTA customers.
- Neebish Island Ferry Schedule Update: Ice situation at the ferry has cause multiple delays and shutdowns. This type of interruption is typical in harsh winters. There has been good communication and cooperation with USCG. Day to day and run to run and communication is being completed on all

platforms. There have been minor delays due to conditions at Drummond with some shutdown in the evenings.

- The Neebish Island Ferry extended schedule has been an ongoing topic and has become political involving Senator Damoose. Although the funding from the legislature did not get approved. We have been able secure additional funding for operating expenses that has never been available before. There is a grant from the Federal Government that is funneled to MDOT and then will be funneled to EUPTA. Rules have recently changed for capital grants and we now can use a small percentage of the grants for operating expenses. We have double checked to ensure sustainability to continue this type of schedule and hire full time employees to cover the shifts and we have been assured this is the case. We will be able to continue to use the grant money for operating expenses. Now is the time to add a second shift at Neebish is since we don't have the money earmarked for anything. This schedule will add four (4) new full-time position; 2 captains and 2 deckhands. We are currently recruiting. We are looking at two, 9 hour shifts. Shift 1 will be 6:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and shift 2 will be 3:00 pm. to midnight. This will mean there will be at crew at the ferry from 6:00 a.m. until 12:00 a.m. (midnight). There will not be a crew at the ferry from 12:00 a.m. until 6:00 a.m. but we will have on-call coverage. One crew will work boots on ground 9 hours and on call 3 hours. They will begin their shift at 3:00 a.m. as on call and then work their regular shift beginning at 6:00 a.m. The second shift will begin their shift at the ferry at 3:00 p.m. until 12:00 a.m. and be on-call from 12:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. This takes care of the USCG 12-hour regulation. Our priority was to ensure this was sustainable for future to be able to hire full time people with benefits. We did not want to see someone move here, leave a job, etc. and then have the possibility of being get laid off in 2 years. Funding seems to be ongoing and sustainable.
- Time table – We are hesitant to give a date as there are lot of moving parts that need to be finalized before a schedule is put in place. Our intent to have something in place late spring / early summer. We currently struggle with Neebish Crew relief for sick leave, vacations, etc., and this will help alleviate those concerns.
- We will need to secure staffing and training before we can schedule. We are looking at a few options with the runs and continue to have a summer and winter schedule. Specials will now be available again.
- Neebish Island Ferry Schedule: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Joe Henne SECOND: Lynda Garlitz	Approve a second shift be added to Neebish Island ferry schedule when administration is able to set up timeline and hire necessary crew members
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IX. Old Business

- None

X. New Business:

- None

XI. Board Comment:

- Lynda Garlitz
- Jeff
- John

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

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz

SECOND: Joe Henne

Adjourn the meeting at 11:10 AM


Lynda Garlitz, Board Secretary


Bonnie Kaunisto, Recording Secretary

Board Approved: 5/5/2024