

Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority
Board Meeting Minutes
3/3/2026

I. Call to Order:

Board Chair, John Waltman, called the March 3, 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, and Brandon Wheeler

MEMBERS ABSENT, Lynda Garlitz (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.

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

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Jeff Middlestead	Approve agenda as presented with added Sugar Update on Director report
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V. Public Comment:

- Leon Hank

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

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Jeff Middlestead	Approve the February 3, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented.
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VII. Audit Report:

Anderson, Tackman & Co presented the FYE 9/30/2025 Audit Report. Ken from Anderson, Tackman reported EUPTA's audit resulted in an "unqualified opinion" which is the highest level of assurance that the financial records are accurate. Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote fielded questions:

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Jeff Middlestead	Approve the FYE 9/30/2025 Audit Report as presented.
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VIII. Finance Director Report:

- Ms. Gordon fielded questions regarding the A/P and EFT transfers for January 2026.
- Submitted all of the applications to the state for FY27. This included ferry, bus, and JARC. Ms. Gordon explained the lengthy process which includes requests for capital items. She explained the MDOT's criteria for replacing busses. For the Marine application, this always includes dry docking 4 out of the 5 years. This

continues to be expensive, as costs continue to rise. The applications include upgrades i.e., dock upgrades/repairs.

- Ms. Gordon sent bids for an Equinox and solicited four (4) dealerships in Northern Lower Peninsula and the Upper Peninsula. Three (3) dealerships responded and the low bid was awarded to Wheeler Motors. The vehicle was delivered, and is in service. We have a grant for another SUV, and will be sending out requests for bids in the near future. This vehicle will be purchased through state and federal grant funding.
- Bussing -Ms. Gordon reviewed the graphs. Bussing fare revenue had a 76% increase in January. Mobility Manager is spending 100% of time with non-emergent medical transportation and the results speak for themselves. The more vehicles we have in service equals an increase in revenue. The success of this program and the amount of people our service helps. Luce County is down in numbers, due to difficulty in finding employees to operate a second vehicle. The director will provide information in his report.
- Ferries – Ms. Gordon reviewed the graphs and they are showing that the fares are almost identical comparatively to last fiscal year. They are up 4% for the year-to-date comparison. We are operating at a deficit in the winter, which is normal. Discussed graphs with the board.
- Finance Director’s Report: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Jeff Middlestead	Approve January A/P and EFT Transfers, Financial statements, and Finance Director’s Report as presented
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IX. Director’s Report

- Drummond Islander V Design: The first rendition has been reviewed by the EUPTA group and sent back with changes to the hull and some dimensions. We are making good progress.
- Drummond Islander IV Rudder Repair Update: Director Paramski provided the board with a slide show reviewing the repair of the rudder on the Drummond Islander IV. The rudder was stopping at 22 degrees +portside. The crew put a fishing camera in the water to view the rudder and found that a bolt had loosened and was stopping the rudder from turning. A local diver was contacted and tightened the bolts on February 19th. This was a temporary repair that did not hold. Director Paramski was able to secure a team out of lower Michigan on Thursday, February 27. They were able to schedule a dive for the repair on Saturday, February 28. The repair took approximately 6 hours. They replaced all

of the nuts and bolts and welded them to ensure they will not become loose. They were able to complete the repair successfully and the ferry will not have to go to drydock this spring to address this rudder issue. The dive repair was expensive but saved expenses by not having to drydock the ferry in the Spring. The company videotaped and took photos of the repair, as shown in the slideshow. The crew will be viewing the rudder with an underwater camera on a weekly basis to ensure the bolts remain in place.

- Newberry Dial-a-Ride (DAR): There has been a vacant position at the Newberry Dial-a-Ride since the beginning of December. We have recently hired two people to fill this vacancy. One driver will be working on Saturdays and some evenings for the JARC program the other will work five days per week. This will improve service to our Newberry Dial A Ride program.
- Sugar Island Ferry Update: The Soo Locks open on March 25, 2026. We are currently having ice issues at the docks and the crossing and have had missed runs and shutdowns. We have been completing at least two runs for shift change and to accommodate residents to get to work and home, and get provisions. The ice flow is pushing big blocks of ice into the docks, and this is not safe for our customers, crew, or the ferry. The USCG is doing what they can to help.
- Director Paramski and Finance Director Gordon will be attending the Michigan Legislative meeting next week in Lansing at the Capitol. This is an annual event for the transportation agencies to meet with Michigan State Representatives and Senators to lobby for funding.

X. Old Business

- Resolution No 2024-33 – Discussed the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners resolution that had requested financial support from the State for infrastructure to help with securing funding to expand the schedule at Neebish Island Ferry – Update was that nothing happened and budget was approved without the funding requested by Damoose.

XI. New Business:

- By – Laws and Rules of Procedure – This was provided to the board for a first reading review. Request the board review and suggest and changes, including possible omissions or errors. There are a few things in there that are in conflict with Articles of Incorporation. A document providing differences will be provided to the board.

XII. Board Comment:

- Jeff Middlestead

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

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Jeff Middlestead	Adjourn the meeting at 11:41 AM
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John Waltman, Board Chair



Bonnie Kaunisto, Recording Secretary

Board Approved: 9.7.2024