

Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority
Board Meeting Minutes
1/13/2026

I. Call to Order:

Board Chair, John Waltman, called the January 13, 2026 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, Jeff Middlestead, Brandon Wheeler, and Joe Henne

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:

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| MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Joe Henne | Approve agenda with addition to add closed session for union negotiation. Add to New Business after Policy Review. |
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V. Public Comment:

- None

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

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| MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Jeff Middlestead | Approve the December 2, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. |
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VII. Closed Minutes: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

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| MOTION: Joe Henne SECOND: Lynda Garlitz | Approve the December 2, 2025 Closed Meeting Minutes as presented. |
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VIII. Finance Director Report:

- Ms. Gordon fielded questions on the A/P and EFT transfers for November 2025. Mileage rates increased to 72.5 cents.
- Bussing – We ordered three busses and one transit van last week. These are funded through a grant. We will begin rotating the busses once the new busses arrive. When we dispose of a vehicle that was purchased with state funds, we are required to make it available on the state website to other agencies for 30 days, then it can be listed on the MIBID website. When vehicles are purchased with a grant and then sold the rules are that if sold for anything over \$10,000, we are allowed to keep

\$5,000, and anything sold under \$10,000 we are allowed to keep the funds. Money from vehicles sold that were purchased with Local funds are kept in house. The busses are always well used when they go to bid.

- The application process for 2027 has begun and is due February 16. Finance Director Gordon has applied for the vehicles that will be up for replacement. The JARC application is also due. This is usually due February 1, but is now due on the 16th. The state implemented a new program to submit all applications in. We have been provided a little extra time to complete the applications. A “Resolution of Intent” process will be provided to the board next month. We are required to submit a public notice in the newspaper of what we are applying for
- Audit field work was finished up last month. Anderson and Tackman will provide a board presentation at the March meeting.
- New Year’s Eve one of our NEMT drivers was in an accident. The passenger was dropped off and the driver was pulling onto the business spur and could not see due to the high snowbanks. He was hit in the passenger side rear door. No one was hurt, and no tickets were issued. The insurance company is sending an adjuster to determine the severity of the damage. The vehicle was an older one, with 130,000 miles. The airbags were deployed. This vehicle is almost fully depreciated. Ms. Gordon recommends purchasing a replacement vehicle. Ms. Gordon informed the board that we sold a few vehicles and the proceeds are \$25,500 for all three. This almost pays for another vehicle. She stated that a lack of vehicle equals lack of service, therefore it equals a lack of revenue. Currently the bussing is at a surplus of \$39,000 for October / November.

- Purchase NEMT Vehicle: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

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| MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Jeff Middlestead | Submit and send bids to purchase a new vehicle for NEMT. This will replace the vehicle that was in an accident. Purchase the vehicle with local funds. |
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- Ferries – Ms. Gordon reported that November fares were up 1%. She explained that during the winter months we operate with a deficit. Traffic slows down but the operating expenses remain the same. In May, traffic and revenue begin to increase.. July-September are the busiest months and normally remedy the deficit to surplus with steady traffic.
- Finance Director’s Report: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

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| MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler | Approve November A/P and EFT Transfers, October Financial statements, and Finance Director’s Report as presented |
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IX. Director's Report:

- Drummond V Design: There is currently no update from last month. The design phase is continuing and this usually takes approximately one year. Once design is finished it will take approximately one year for construction. We are hoping the design phase is less time due to the fact they will be utilizing the Neebish Islander III Hull design concept.
- Drummond III Update: The Drummond III is still in drydock. It is in the water at MCM and they are conducting work on it. The in-house sea trial on December 22 did not go well. There were compartments that froze, and a hydraulic line leaked. The engines and gensets are running well. The ferry was not ready for the USCG inspection. We are anticipating scheduling this in the next week (Update: Inspection 21 JAN 26).
- United Steelworkers Union Contract Negotiations – We added this to the agenda as a closed session
- Annual Great Lakes Captain Association Meeting. The conference was hosted in Traverse City, Michigan. There were a number of vendors who attended as well as a large USCG contingent. Discussions and sessions included last year's season's best practices, things that happened, Soo Locks project, and the electric battery issue with fires igniting. Director Paramski stated this conference had great information and felt it was well worth the attendance of EUPTA. All EUPTA Ferry crews were represented at the conference.
- Great Lakes Water Levels – One of the presentations at the conference was from NOAA. They discussed the fact that the Great Lakes have reached low levels comparable to a few years ago. We currently have an issue at Neebish with logging trucks loading and unloading on the ferry. We had a logging truck get stuck on the ferry. The water levels vary with the difference of the wind directions. Director Paramski contacted the logging company and discussed a plan to cease logging operations on the island at this time. We will reassess in spring with the hope that the spring run-off will bring the levels up.

X. Old Business

- None

XI. New Business:

- Policy Review – Weather Policy 2.01- First reading. Director Paramski would like the board to review this and then any comments provide at next meeting. He explained the policy is for informing public. Discussed various scenarios and the fact that decisions for weather related shut-downs are on case-by-case basis. Director Paramski made a few recommendations of changes and will bring an updated policy proposal to next board meeting.
- Weather Policy: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

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| MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler | To Table the 2.01 Weather Policy to February 2026 Meeting. |
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- Closed Session: Discussion; It was moved and carried by roll call vote:

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| MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler | Approve going into closed session regarding Collective bargaining strategy and negotiations for the United Steelworkers Union at 11:15 after a five-minute break. |
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- Open session: Discussion; It was moved and carried by roll call vote:

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| MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Joe Henne | Approve to move to open session. 12:00 |
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XII. Board Comment:

- Jeff Middlestead

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

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| MOTION: Joe Henne SECOND: Lynda Garlitz | Adjourn the meeting at 12:02 PM |
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Lynda Garlitz, Secretary


Bonnie Kaunisto, Recording Secretary

Board Approved: 2/3/2026