

Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority
Board Meeting Minutes
4/8/2025

I. Call to Order:

Board Chair, John Waltman, called the April 8, 2025 meeting of the Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority Board to order at 10:30 a.m.

II. Roll Call was taken:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

III. Pledge of Allegiance:

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

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

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Lynda Garlitz	Approve the April 8, 2025 agenda as presented
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V. Public Comment:

- Lori Miller
- Phyllis Reed
- Michael O'Connor
- Simon Langner
- Tom Farnquist
- Allen Walther

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

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Approve the March 4, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented.
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VII. Finance Director Report:

Ms. Gordon discussed the A/P and EFT transfers for February 2025. Questions were fielded from board members.

- Bussing: There was a 6% decrease in passenger fares. If you look at the graphs over a five-year period, FY24 was a banner year as far as passenger revenue. It was probably our peak year in NEMT, FY22 through FY23 is when it started to slowly increase and now things have leveled off.

- We are in the process of procuring 2 mini vans with state and federal grants. One will have the manual lift for the wheelchair. This has been purchased off of the State Contract. The other van we are procuring locally meaning we solicit dealerships for bids. This van is to replace the minivan in Newberry which is a 2018 so it's up for replacement. Zero local dollars will be used for the purchase of the vehicles.
- Ferries: Fares decreased 1% system wide on the ferries in February and YTD we're up 1% or \$4,756. Vehicles and Passengers were down 10% in February and we're down 1% and 2% respectively. Again, this is our slow time of year so we are operating at a loss. Things will start picking up in April, March is usually another slow month.

Finance Report: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz
SECOND: Joe Henne

Approve February A/P and EFT Transfers
and the Finance Director's report.

VIII. Director's Report:

- Director Paramski has been in communication with Justin Bravatto, USCG Director of Vessel Traffic. He has stated we are not out of the woods yet with the ice situation in the river. He gave kudos to the EUPTA Crews for their constant and informative communication. Mr. Paramski discussed the ice issue on Neebish and showed video of Neebish Islander Ferry as it was pushed down the rock cut and traveling back up through the ice. He stated what great communication the crew has had with USCG, Chippewa Co. Central Dispatch, island community, and office. There was one run that was missed on Sunday April 6, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at Neebish. There is potential for ice at Drummond this week so the USCG will stage an icebreaker in the lower river. Neebish area was cleared out of ice yesterday.
- Drummond V: The RFQ was advertised last week. We are soliciting Naval Architects for a design for the new Drummond Islander V. They are due on 24th of April. We solicited various firms and publicly advertised as well. We have been working on this funding for a new boat for close to nine years. Director Paramski explained that the need is there for a new boat due to the fact that during peak season Drummond has long lines and backups for the ferry. We need additional resources to help alleviate the backups. When there are two boats operating during peak season, we do not have the backup problem. Drummond Islander III is a swing boat for annual drydocking for other ferries, therefore 4 out of 5 years the Drummond Islander III is not available at Drummond to help with the overflow. The addition of Drummond Islander V benefit is twofold; there will always be two boats at Drummond during peak season, and it will be a backup swing boat for the other two crossings. This will also alleviate any worries regarding a boat down due to some type of issue. We have an aging fleet that needs the upgrade. This new boat will serve EUPTA as a whole agency. There are currently no specific specifications but we have provided information regarding the needed dimensions of the new vessel. There is discussion regarding engines on both ends but nothing has been set in stone. The naval architect will be providing ideas. The funding has been secured. There are

always variables that can happen regarding enough money, i.e. Covid, Extra Tarriff costs, etc. The design takes about one year and construction will take about one year.

- Drummond Islander III drydock, specs have been written. We will be using a sole source bidding process. We have provided the ship yard with our task list and needs for repair. They will then come back with prices and then we submit to Lansing for approval.
- Director Paramski and Finance Director Gordon are currently working on a National Ferry Boat Census report. All ferry operators are required to fill this intensive questionnaire out every few years. This is the process the Federal Ferry Boat program uses to decide how federal funds are distributed to ferry boat transit agencies.
- The punch list on the facility is dwindling down and most of the remainder list is outside work. We are patiently waiting for the snow to leave to finish.
- The next project is for dock inspections. There will need to be underwater inspections completed at all 8 docks.
- Director Paramski addressed the fuel issue at Sugar during the ice storm. Fuel is obtained from Crystal Flash and Blarney Castle, both located in the Lower Peninsula. The Sugar Islander is fueled once every two weeks and the date to fuel just happened to be on a day the Mackinac Bridge was closed. Our team began communications with fuel providers for an alternate fuel source. A plan was put in place to reduce trips until a fuel truck could cross the bridge. After contact with a few companies, Autore Oil had a load of fuel that didn't have a home and we were able to obtain that. In the end we only had reduce runs for a couple of hours.

IX. New Business

- Election of Officers –Chair. A nomination for John Waltman as Chair was submitted and accepted. Discussion.

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Nominated John Waltman for Chair
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- Election of Officers. Vice-Chair. A nomination for Joe Henne for Vice- Chair was submitted and accepted. Discussion

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Nominated Joe Henne for Vice-Chair.
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- Election of Officers. Secretary/Treasurer. A nomination for Lynda Garlitz for Secretary was submitted and accepted. Discussion

MOTION: John Waltman SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Nominated Lynda Garlitz for Secretary /Treasurer
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- Election of Officers. Accept the nominations of the above of Election of Officers as a full slate in one vote. Discussion. It was moved and carried by unanimous vote

MOTION: Joe Henne SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Accept the nominations of the following election of officers: John Waltman – Chairperson; Joe Henne – Vice-Chairperson; Lynda Garlitz – Secretary/Treasurer
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- Review Equal Employment and Affirmative Action Policy: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Table the Equal Employment and Affirmative Action Policy until June 2025 after more clarification comes from the Federal Government.
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- Review Local Procurement Policy
This policy is written similar to an approved policy by MDOT. It was recommended by the board to have a local procurement policy in place. This policy mirrors the federal and state recommendations. Discussion. It was moved and carried by unanimous vote

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Joe Henne	Table the Local Procurement Policy until the May 2025 meeting.
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- Review Earned Sick Time Policy (ESTA). Discussion. It was moved and carried by unanimous vote

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Accept the Earned Sick Time (ESTA) Policy as presented.
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X. Board Comment:

- John Waltman
- Lynda Garlitz
- Joe Henne
- Jeff Middlestead

XI. Closed Session: Roll Call - It was moved and carried by unanimous vote to:

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Go into Closed Session to discuss an Employee Issue and Union Items at 11:33 with a 5-minute recess beforehand.
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XII. Open Session: It was moved and carried by unanimous vote to:

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Move into Open Session at 12:17:
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XIII. Union Wage Neebish: Discussion. It was moved and carried by unanimous vote to:

MOTION: Joe Henne SECOND: Lynda Garlitz	Increase the Neebish Captains and Deckhands wages to adjust them to be on the same union comparison wages as the Drummond and Sugar crews, retroactive to February 1, 2025.
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XIV. Administration Wages: Discussion. It was moved and carried by unanimous vote to:

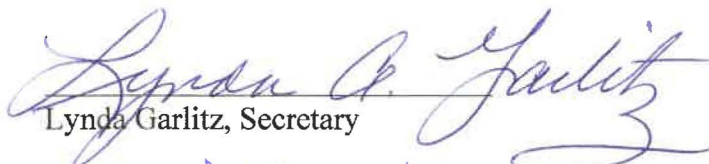
MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Joe Henne	Increase the compensation of administrative staff the same percentage as the wages were raised for Drummond and Sugar Crews; retroactive to February 1, 2025.
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XV. Board Stipend: Discussion. It was moved and carried by unanimous vote to:

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Jeff Middlestead	Increase the compensation of the board members stipend to \$75.00 per meeting, to be comparable to other boards in the community.
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XVI. Adjourn: It was moved and carried by unanimous vote to:

MOTION: Joe Henne SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Adjourn the meeting at 12:21 PM
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Lynda Garlitz, Secretary


Bonnie Kaunisto

Bonnie Kaunisto, Recording Secretary

Board Approved: 5/6/2025