

Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority
Board Meeting Minutes
8/4/2026

I. Call to Order:

Board Vice Chair, Joe Henne, called the August 4, 2026 meeting of the Eastern Upper Peninsula Transportation Authority Board to order at 10:30 a.m.

II. Roll Call was taken:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brandon Wheeler, Lynda Garlitz, Jeff Middlestead, Joe Henne,
MEMBERS ABSENT: John Waltman (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: Lynda Garlitz	Approve agenda as presented with a break at 10:45 a.m. and review appeal packets and then jump FOIA Appeals under New Business on the Agenda at 11:00 a.m. to connect with Foster & Swift to facilitate the Appeals.
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V. Public Comment:

- None

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

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Approve the June 2, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented.
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VII. Minutes: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Approve the June 22, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes as presented.
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VIII. Minutes: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Lynda Garlitz	Approve the June 22, 2026 Closed Meeting Minutes as presented.
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IX. Finance Director Report:

- Ms. Gordon fielded questions regarding A/P and the EFT transfers for May and June 2026. She also reviewed the graphs

- Ms. Gordon discussed the MERS Officer Delegate Form for voting at the annual meeting. The board needs to approve the delegation. The delegation allows Ms. Gordon to vote on approval of the minutes from the prior years' meeting. The form has to be board approved and voted on for Ms. Gordon to be able to vote.

Delegates: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Approve Agordon to be a MERS Delegate at the October meeting.
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- Approval to close Central Savings Bank Health Savings Account. This account was designated for our health savings account and it is no longer required to have a designated account. We can use our regular checking account. Ms. Gordon proposes closing the designated health savings account and transferring the funds to the EUPTA general checking account. This action is required to be approved by the board to close and transfer funds to general account.

Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Jeff Middlestead	Approve the closure of the Central Savings Bank EUPTA Health Savings Account and transfer the funds to the Central Savings Bank EUPTA General Checking Account.
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- Update Signature Card for Office Fund Checking Account. The authorized signers on the account are as follows: Kathryn Neubert, Pete Paramski, Bonita Kaunisto, and Ariana Wolf.

Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Approve removing Grace Akemi Gordon from the Office Fund Checking Account as a signer and Adding Pete Paramski, Bonita Kaunisto, and Ariana Wolf as signers to the account.
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- Pete Paramski introduced Ariana Wolf as the new EUPTA Finance Director and welcomed her.
- ***Appeal for FOIA with Foster and Swift at 11:00 a.m. so we will move to New Business at this time.***

X. New Business

- FOIA Appeals- Foster and Swift Attorney; Ms. Anne Seurnyck introduced the FOIA Fee Appeal and explained the appeal. The board members were provided the appeal information and time to review each appeal. Ms. Seurnyck reviewed the first appeal, provided information, background and invited board discussion. She stated that based on the information the board has two choices. The board can make a motion to uphold the FOIA Coordinator's initial response, which would be a motion to deny the appeal, or they ~~board~~ can make a decision to make adjustments to the FOIA Coordinator's initial response. Board Discussion. The letter provided to the board outlines the reasons why the fees were appropriate and were justified under the Freedom of Information Act. Ms. Seurnyck reviewed the charges and what other agencies charge, including adding the fringe benefit to the wages. She stated that

agencies look at a variety of scenarios and that when public funds are at play, with public time, the agency is entitled to try and recoup some of the fees for that time. Ms. Seurnyck fielded questions regarding fees, and her personal recommendation is to charge the maximum you can under FOIA.

- Ms. Seurnyck reviewed the charges on the second appeal and recommended the same as the first appeal. There was discussion regarding the employees who have access to information, who know the software better, etc. She explained every FOIA is recommended to be looked at on a case-by-case basis for the charges. Again, you may do 1 of 2 things; The board can make a motion to uphold the FOIA Coordinator's initial response, which would be a motion to deny the appeal, or they board can make a decision to make adjustments to the FOIA Coordinator's initial response.
- Appeal 1: Discussion; It was moved and carried by roll call vote:

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler SECOND: Lynda Garlitz	Approve Denying the Appeal 1 and uphold the FOIA Coordinators initial determination and deny the appeal for the reasons stated more fully in the proposed response letter.
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Roll Call: Wheeler (Yes), Middlestead (Yes), Garlitz (Yes), Henne (Yes)

- Discussed Appeal 2: Ms. Seurnyck Attorney Reviewed Appeal 2 regarding the denial of information. She stated that nowhere it states that EUPTA is required to keep a FOIA log, except in the instance of a spam or junk mail and there was not any requests that were in the spam/junk mail, therefore there are no records that exist. She discussed the FOIA requirements.

FOIA Appeal 2: Discussion; It was moved and carried by roll call vote:

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Jeff Middlestead	Approve Denying the Appeal 2 and uphold he FOIA Coordinators initial determination and deny the appeal for the reasons stated more fully in the proposed response letter.
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Roll Call: Wheeler (Yes), Middlestead (Yes), Garlitz (Yes), Henne (Yes)

End call regarding FOIA appeals and return to Finance Director's Report

- Bussing – There was 55% increase in contract fares for NEMT. The revenue in Luce County is still recovering from our lack of a second driver.
- Ms. Gordon is working on fiscal year-end budgets and will bring them to the September board meeting.
- Bussing ridership graphs show the breakdown of first three quarters of the year. Ms. Gordon discussed the graphs; May and June, which includes the YTD information.
- Ferries – Ms. Gordon reviewed YTD for ferries. Revenue is slightly up. Traffic decreased a small amount over the quarter. She reviewed the May monthly charts YTD for October – June.
- Discussed how the graphs show the difference in the ferries and where the revenue is derived. Drummond is visitors and tourism, selling more single trip tickets, while Sugar is more commuter sales with the 20-trip tickets; and Neebish is approximately 50% of each type. Discussed the difference in the tickets and comparison of the last five years.

- Finance Director's Report: Discussion; It was moved and carried by unanimous vote:

MOTION: Lynda Garlitz SECOND: Brandon Wheeler	Approve May and June A/P and EFT Transfers, Financial statements, and Finance Director's Report as presented
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XI. Director's Report

- **Drummond Islander V Design**: This project continues to go forward. The hull structure design and calculations are to be submitted for approval soon. Engine cooling sheets and super structure design is expected next week. We do not have any new drawings since the last meeting. The project continues to move along as expected.
- **Neebish Repair** – We had a close call of almost experiencing a marine casualty but thankfully it happened when we were not underway. The primary steering had a malfunction. This happened after the last run of the evening, and the mechanics were able to come in the next morning to fix. We still had backup steering for emergency basis. The symptoms were similar to the symptoms we experienced previously with the Jawstram steering controllers. We were able to have the new equipment overnighted and it was fixed quickly. Sea trials were conducted and USCG approval was obtained.
- **Sugar had a throttle actuator go down** while we were docked and not underway. Mechanics were able to quickly diagnose, pick up the spare at the office and the ferry was running again with little downtime. When this happens, a marine casualty has to be reported directly and immediately to the USCG. Mr. Paramski provided examples of marine casualties; i.e. steering, navigations, propulsion failure, etc. He explained marine causalities and that they may be required to do sea trial. A USCG form 2692 with paperwork has to be completed immediately. The USCG comes and inspects and approves the vessel to be seaworthy. There are various levels of marine casualty. This was at the Sugar Island Ferry Crossing but the Drummond Islander III ferry was in service filling in for the Sugar Islander II.
- **Sugar Islander II Drydock**: Director Paramski informed the board the first USCG walk-through inspection was conducted last Wednesday. The ferry was lifted last Tuesday. They have pulled out a main CAT engine and now are lowering the rebuilt engine back in. The ramps on both ends were original and needed to be completely replaced with newly built ones that MCM fabricated. There are new ramps on front and back with each one having 6 panels. The welders completed the welding on the panels (this was a huge project). The board was able to view a PowerPoint of the project, while Director Paramski discussed each picture and walked the board through what was happening in each of the slides. This week they hope to have the hydro-demolition machine to strip the deck of the old non-skid material and blast and recoat. The painting has not yet begun.

XII. Old Business:

- None

FINISH NEW BUSINESS

- Resolution #102 – Director Paramski reported that Brian Azevedo, Captain at Sugar Island Ferry will be retiring August 31, 2026. Director Paramski read the Resolution for the Board

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler
SECOND: Jeff Middlestead

Approve Resolution #102 Brian Azevedo Retirement Resolution and thank Captain Azevedo for 37 years of service to EUPTA and let this be of public record.

- Discussed the drug policy and the policy we have and the change is changing the name of the medical director. Take one off and add the new name

Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy – Director Paramski discussed the change for this policy and it is a change in the medical director information. The former director retired and we will need to update our policy to reflect this information.

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler
SECOND: Lynda Garlitz

Approve the change in information of the medical director for the Drug and Alcohol Policy 12.00. from Dr. John Budnick to Dr. Kenneth S Johnson

XIII. Board Comment:

- Garlitz

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

MOTION: Brandon Wheeler
SECOND: Jeff Middlestead

Adjourn the meeting at 11:46 AM


Lynda Garlitz, Board Secretary


Bonnie Kaunisto, Recording Secretary

Board Approved: 09/10/2026