



**Board of Directors
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

1:30 p.m.

MTA Directors in Attendance

Jim Tarbell, Vice Chair
Tess Albin-Smith- Interim Chair
Susan Sher
Dan Doyle
George West

MTA Directors Absent

TBD

Staff in Attendance

Jacob King, Executive Director
Luis Martinez, Operations Manager
Dawn White, Mobility Manager
Bret Byrd, Maintenance Manager
Sara Marquez, Assistant Clerk of the Board

Staff Absent

Mark Harvey, CFO

Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20 was revised on June 11, 2021, and Executive Order N-08-21 was revised on June 11, 2021. Under AB 361, members of the MTA Board of Directors will participate in this meeting via teleconference or videoconference.

AGENDA ITEMS

A. CALL TO ORDER– Vice Chair Tarbell called the meeting to order at 1:33 pm

B. PUBLIC COMMENT- A public member Steve Henderson (Gizmo) wanted to give input on transit hub locations.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Minutes of September 25, 2024 Regular Board Meeting
Action: Approve September 25, 2024 Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of Minutes of October 30, 2024 Regular Board Meeting
Action: Approve October 30, 2024 Meeting Minutes
3. Acceptance of Preliminary Unaudited Financial Statements
Action: Approve Preliminary Unaudited Financial Statements
4. Acceptance of Service Performance Report
Action: Approve Service Performance Report

Upon Motion by Director **Albin-Smith** seconded by Director **West**, the Board accepted the Consent Calendar by roll call vote: **AYES:** Albin-Smith, Doyle, Sher, West and Vice Chair Tarbell, **NOES:0 ABSTAIN: 0 ABSENT:0**

D. ACTION & DISCUSSION

1. Election of Interim Chair to Serve from January 29, 2025 to June 30, 2025
Action: Elect an Interim Chair to the Board.

Director West nominated Director Albin-Smith to be Chair of the MTA Board of Directors all the other Directors voted in favor.

Upon Motion Directors voted in favor of Albin Smith to serve as Interim Chair to the Mendocino Transit Board of Directors by roll call vote: **AYES:** Tarbell, Albin-Smith, Doyle, Sher, and West.

NOES:0 ABSTAIN: 0 ABSENT:0

2. Unmet Needs
Action: Solicit Public Input

Director Sher suggests that the board send a card of appreciation to the former chair, acknowledging the long time she served in the role, especially since her departure was somewhat unexpected.

3. Special Events Calendar
Action: Approve Special Events Calendar

The board is reviewing the special events calendar for the year, and while most events are already scheduled, a new event was mentioned in an email this morning. However, it wasn't

on the agenda, so it will be discussed in February if the board chooses.

A concern was raised about the Wine Song event, which had low attendance last year (only six passengers) despite having a driver and vehicle out all day. This raised concerns about whether the event was planned well enough or if it was financially feasible, given the use of taxpayer funds.

Despite this, the board is open to giving Wine Song another try, especially since it's moving back to its traditional venue, the Botanical Gardens, and offering more affordable pricing for locals to increase attendance.

Upon Motion by Director **West** seconded by Director **Tarbell**, the Board approved the Special Events Calendar by roll call vote: **AYES:** Albin-Smith, Doyle, Sher, West and Tarbell, **NOES:0 ABSTAIN: 0 ABSENT:0**

4. 24/25 Revised Operating Budget
Action: Approve Revised Operating Budget

Executive Director King discussed the excess Local Transportation Funds (LTF) received in the year 2022-2023 due to the county's misestimation of the funds. MTA worked with MCOG to develop a formula that would benefit both transit passengers and the agency.

However, staffing challenges, particularly in Fort Bragg, have led to increased labor costs. There has been an exodus of drivers in the area, reducing the staff from ten to five, resulting in increased overtime expenses, which are now the highest labor costs. Benefits have also increased alongside wages.

Additionally, the cost of vehicle parts has significantly risen, often doubling or tripling, due to supply chain issues. This has placed additional strain on the budget, which has had to increase the parts line item to accommodate these higher costs. The aging fleet also requires more repairs, further driving up costs. However, there is hope for relief with the arrival of two new diesel buses and other vehicle repairs.

The budget reflects these challenges, with increased costs for labor and parts.

Upon Motion by Director **Tarbell** seconded by Director **West**, the Board approved the 24/25 Revised Operating Budget by roll call vote: **AYES:** Albin-Smith, Doyle, Sher, West and Tarbell, **NOES:0 ABSTAIN: 0 ABSENT:0**

5. 24/25 Revised Capital Budget
Action: Approve Revised Capital Budget

Executive Director King discussed the progress on the MTA's infrastructure project for electric vehicles (EVs) and solar canopies. The project now totals \$1.5 million, with \$500,000 added. A project manager has been hired, and they are working with PG&E and an architecture firm to design the charging stations, conduits, and solar canopy. The design will also explore the possibility of adding battery backup for the solar system.

Additionally, the MTA planned to purchase four 35-foot Gillig electric buses this year but faces limitations with the available electricity at the Ukiah facility. The current system can only charge two buses at a time, though they can manage with three. The Executive Director is proposing to rescind two of the buses from the order and keep two, which would allow MTA to proceed with its zero-emission goals while staying within capacity.

The uncertainty around federal funding, especially related to a federal loan program for climate change and zero-emission projects, is a concern. The program had set aside \$300 billion, but its future is now in question, which could affect long-term plans for additional buses.

The Executive Director is seeking board approval to rescind two buses from the order and keep two, with the possibility of revisiting the capital budget next month for adjustments. The current budget is solid, but there are uncertainties regarding funding and the future of federal loan programs, which may delay larger projects for the agency.

Upon Motion by Director **Sher** seconded by Director **Tarbell**, the Board approved to amend 24/25 Revised Capital Budget and bring it back next month by roll call vote: **AYES:** Albin-Smith, Doyle, Sher, West and Tarbell, **NOES:0 ABSTAIN: 0 ABSENT:0**

E. DIRECTOR AND MANAGEMENT REPORTS

1. Matters from Management

Bret Byrd, Maintenance Manager, shared that two MTA Freightliners will be arriving on Monday. This year, they also need to conduct inspections for the California Air Resource Board (CARB). Three vehicles will undergo testing this month. Additionally, all vehicles will need to be inspected annually, which will require ongoing work to ensure the fleet stays compliant. Byrd emphasized the importance of staying ahead of these maintenance tasks, as the vehicles are aging and it's crucial to avoid any issues.

Dawn White, Mobility Manager, shared that MTA and the Trolley were proud to participate in the Ukiah Hometown Holiday celebrations, including the Ukiah Light Parade. She expressed gratitude to Katrina from the Greater Ukiah Business and Tourism Alliance for her efforts in bringing back long-time sponsors and securing new ones. The trolley operated from the day after Thanksgiving through Christmas Eve, providing over 1,200 rides to the community, and helping spread holiday joy. Overall, it was another successful year for the event.

Luis Martinez, Operations Manager, Operations Manager Luis Martinez announced that starting next week, MTA will be adjusting its schedule to make connections with Humboldt on Saturdays. This change will align the Saturday schedule with the existing weekday schedule, creating an additional connection with Humboldt.

Executive Director Jacob King shared several updates:

Executive Director King shared exciting news about a new bus stop on Hospital Drive, which has been approved by the engineering department and is awaiting the city council's approval. This new stop will serve southbound buses, with changes to the route that will include a new loop around Main Street, Mason Street, and Perkins, before turning left onto Hospital Drive. This change will benefit both Lake Transit, which also has a bus passing by the hospital, and the future courthouse, as the bus will eventually route by the courthouse. King emphasized that making these improvements now, rather than after the courthouse is built.

King shared excitement about hiring a project manager, the LaFlore Group, for MTA's infrastructure project. The LaFlore Group, which also works with Lake Transit in Lake County, has extensive experience in zero-emission projects, making them well-equipped to help MTA successfully navigate and complete the project.

King highlighted the success of the West Road bus stop, which serves both Route 20 and Route 65. He described it as a great accomplishment.

2. Matters From MCOG.

James Sookne from MCOG explained that they submitted an application to Caltrans for a planning grant to create a vehicle miles travel (VMT) mitigation bank.

3. Matters from Directors

Director West – suggested the idea of writing a letter as a board member to the City of Willits, requesting that Saprina Rodriguez be reinstated as a public member. Director West is willing to take the letter to the City Council meeting in Willits in person.

Tarbell – Director Tarbell expressed appreciation for having a large TV screen but pointed out that it is difficult to identify who is speaking during virtual meetings. He suggested that finding a way to show the speaker's name on the screen would help reduce confusion.

Director Albin- Smith directed staff to work on a letter of support for Saprina Rodriguez to be reinstated into the MTA Board as a public member.

A member of the public thanked Executive director King and MTA Staff for the new West Road Bus Stop.

F. CLOSED SESSION

Closed session pursuant to Government Code 54957: Public Employee Performance Evaluation – Executive Director

G. ANNOUNCEMENT OUT OF CLOSED SESSION

Interim Chair Albin-Smith announced out of closed session that the board has decided to implement a two-year evaluation for the executive director, starting from January 27, the date of the last performance evaluation. The evaluation period will be backdated to reflect a proactive approach, with the next evaluation scheduled for January 2026.

H. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourn at 3:10 p.m.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

Mendocino Transit Authority complies with the AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA). Upon request, MTA will attempt to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities by making meeting material available in appropriate alternate formats under Government Code Section 54953.2 and Section 202 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 12132). Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in the meeting should contact Sara Marquez at Mendocino Transit Authority by calling (707) 234-6456 or by email at sara@mendocinotransit.org at least 72 hours before the meeting.