



Board of Director's Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date/Time: April 21, 2022, 6:30-9:00pm

Members: Eric Mahler (Chair), Mike Allemang (Treasurer), Jesse Miller (Secretary), Rich Chang, Raymond Hess, Ryan Hunter, Kathleen Mozak, Susan Pollay, Kyra Sims

AAATA Staff Attendees: Matt Carpenter, Dina Reed, Forest Yang, Rosa-Maria Njuki, Deborah Holt

Location: Ann Arbor District Library
Virtual attendance available [via Zoom](#)
Passcode: 983308

Chair Eric Mahler called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

Agenda Item

1. OPENING ITEMS

1.1 Approve Agenda

Mr. Mahler opened the meeting with a suggestion to move Item 2.4 Cash and Investments Monitoring Report from the Consent Agenda to Item 4.2 in Policy Monitoring and Development. Ms. Mozak motioned to approve the agenda with the suggested change, seconded by Ms. Pollay.

All in favor of accepting the change to the agenda with no other changes noted:

Mr. Mike Allemang: Yes (attending virtually)
Mr. Rich Chang: Yes
Mr. Raymond Hess: Yes
Mr. Ryan Hunter: Yes
Mr. Jesse Miller: Yes
Ms. Mozak: Yes
Ms. Pollay: Yes
Ms. Sims: Yes
Chairman Mahler: Yes

The vote passed unanimously.

1.2 Public Comment

Robert Pawlowski shared he has attended several public long-range plan presentations. He is encouraged by the economic development impact and growth for the region.

John Newman shared that as an Ypsilanti Township resident and township trustee, he and the Trustees have taken a position against the millage due to the hardship it may cause residents. He felt that the Ypsilanti Township Board and AAATA board members had a productive meeting the week before and requested more time to educate residents.

Brenda Stumbo, Ypsilanti Township resident and township supervisor, shared a brief history of the partnership between the township and AAATA and the impact a millage increase would make upon the residents of the community. She expressed concern that the township wasn't more involved in collaborative decision making with AAATA and requested that more time be given before a millage proposal was finalized and accepted.

Jim Mogensen shared his thoughts on the shortcomings in the millage rate that passed in 2014. He feels that the long-range planning work to be done also needs to address foundational issues in the organization. He also encouraged the board to consider taking more time before introducing a millage.

Tim Hull shared that he would like to see increased services on weekends and holidays, more frequency on local routes and better flex-ride. He understands the concerns regarding a millage increase but his focus is on improving and expanding services.

Michelle Barney thanked staff member Robert Williams who has assisted and helped resolve service issues she has experienced. She expressed concern over the lifting of the federal mask-mandate and how it will impact medically vulnerable riders. She is also concerned about an increase in fees with rising fuel costs and how that might impact riders. Lastly, she shared she is supportive of the millage going on the August ballot.

1.3 General Announcements

No general announcements.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

2.1 Board Meeting Minutes March 17, 2022

2.2 Committee Meeting Summaries

2.3 Treatment of the Traveling Public Monitoring Report (return)

2.4 ~~2.6 Cash and Investments Monitoring Report~~ Moved to Agenda Item 4.2

2.5 Outside Approvals – MERS Signing Delegation to CEO

Mr. Mahler noted items 2.1 – 2.3, 2.5 on the Consent Agenda.

Mr. Chang moved to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Mr. Miller

In support of the motion:

Mr. Mike Allemang: Yes (attending virtually)

Mr. Rich Chang: Yes

Mr. Raymond Hess: Yes

Mr. Ryan Hunter: Yes

Mr. Jesse Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak: Yes

Ms. Pollay: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

The Consent Agenda was accepted as presented.

3. STRATEGY UPDATES: CEO

3.1 Long-Range Plan Update

Mr. Yang shared that the public engagement period had been extended until Friday, April 22, 2022. All public meetings (virtual and in-person) were completed – there were 12 public events, 20 stakeholder presentations. They are receiving online survey, telephone, and email feedback. He thanked the staff and community for their support and feedback as it will be used to finalize the long-range plan.

3.2 Millage Proposal

Mr. Carpenter briefly highlighted the details of the millage proposal that had been initially introduced at the March board meeting and noted that the details of the initial had not changed. He presented a few updates/clarifications that had been requested by board members regarding the impact of including or removing funding major capital projects in the millage. He noted that should it be removed, federal grants would be pursued but those grants are not guaranteed which may have a significant impact on major capital projects. He pointed out that the millage proposal had highlighted rates and dating as they were open to board changes, introduced legal counsel Steven Leidel and opened up the floor for board questions. He also shared that the board packet had been updated to include millage proposal feedback that had been gathered since the March board meeting.

Mr. Mahler reminded the board they had two issues to decide: the millage rate and timing of the election.

Mr. Allemang thanked Mr. Carpenter for his work in explaining and clarifying questions raised at the prior board meeting.

Ms. Mozak asked Mr. Carpenter for further details on the timing of capital projects and service enhancements and if space would be needed for additional buses. Mr. Carpenter explained that the service enhancement plans didn't include the purchase of additional buses but rather, the enhancements would be longer hours of service.

Ms. Pollay asked if running at-will service vans would be an alternative service to reduce costs. Mr. Carpenter responded by outlining at-will services such as Uber and Lyft and that the cost increases for services with low ridership. He discussed the benefit of current flex ride options and spoke to the overall need for mass transit in the community due to constrained parking and high traffic.

Mr. Hunter shared that on behalf of Ypsilanti Township, he thanked members of the board for their involvement in conversations with the township trustees. He also asked for better understanding of specifics of the ballot language around authorized tax revenues from the millage being used for downtown development. Mr. Liedel responded that the language is required by state law and the annual impact is likely to be 5-6 figures annually.

Mr. Hunter also asked about millage exemptions for those who don't use specific services, to which Mr. Carpenter responded a millage is taxed uniformly across a jurisdiction.

Mr. Mahler asked Mr. Liedel about ballot language regarding the inclusion of an estimated projection of the millage levy for the first year. Mr. Liedel responded that language is required on the ballot.

Mr. Liedel confirmed to Mr. Allemang that the ballot language presented meets the requirements under Michigan election law for a local ballot issue.

Mr. Hess shared his support of the ballot proposal presented and that while not always favorable, the primary funding resource provided for the organization is through millages. He feels community support and response shows strong support to move forward with the millage proposal.

Mr. Hunter responded that he feels the surveys do not show the high amount of support that has been portrayed due to the relatively low responses.

Ms. Mozak expressed concern over cutting an item/items from the proposal if a lower millage rate was suggested as it will mean a loss of service or potential staffing shortage that impact the public.

Mr. Miller expressed his support for the proposal and shared that he has spoken with many community members and elected officials and feels that this is the first step to being able to address concerns regarding services. He is strongly in favor of moving forward.

Mr. Hunter expressed concerns over the August election and requested waiting until November.

Ms. Pollay shared her experience with volunteering for the RTA and ballot confusing with younger voters who missed voting on the RTA millage because they didn't turn over ballots. She is in support of the August election as it will be a quieter election, unlike the upcoming November elections.

With discussions complete, Mr. Hess motioned to propose the millage rate at 2.38 as described in the draft resolution in the packet. Mr. Miller seconded the motion.

Mr. Mike Allemang: Yes (attending virtually)

Mr. Rich Chang: Yes

Mr. Raymond Hess: Yes

Mr. Ryan Hunter: No

Mr. Jesse Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak: Yes

Ms. Pollay: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

The vote passed by a vote of (8) Yes and (1) No to propose a millage rate of 2.38.

Mr. Miller motioned to propose the millage proposal be placed on the August 2, 2022 primary election ballot. Ms. Sims seconded the motion.

Mr. Mike Allemang: Yes (attending virtually)

Mr. Rich Chang: Yes

Mr. Raymond Hess: Yes

Mr. Ryan Hunter: No

Mr. Jesse Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak: Yes

Ms. Pollay: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

The vote passed by a vote of (8) Yes and (1) No to propose the millage be placed on the August 2, 2022 primary election ballot.

Mr. Carpenter suggested that the Board have a third vote to approve the Resolution as it was presented.

Ms. Mozak motioned to propose accepting the ballot language within the resolution be accepted as presented. Ms. Sims seconded the motion.

Mr. Mike Allemang: Yes (attending virtually)

Mr. Rich Chang: Yes

Mr. Raymond Hess: Yes

Mr. Ryan Hunter: No

Mr. Jesse Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak: Yes

Ms. Pollay: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

The vote passed by a vote of (8) Yes and (1) No to accept the ballot language within the resolution as presented.

4. POLICY MONITORING & DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Monitoring Improvements

Mr. Allemang updated the board on the work of the monitoring taskforce group and referenced the development of a new monitoring form. He shared that the group will be testing the form and once it has been refined, will bring it before the board.

4.2 2.6 Cash and Investments Monitoring Report (Moved from Agenda Item 2.4)

Ms. Reed referenced the report findings and Mr. Allemang shared that the Finance Committee was recommending it to the Board as (A) in compliance with the addition of a few notations for future improvement for the report.

Mr. Miller thanked the committee for re-addressing the issue of the FDIC insurance as that had been a discussion topic previously.

Mr. Chang motioned to propose accepting Policy 2.6 Cash and Investments Monitoring Report as (A) in compliance. Mr. Allemang seconded the motion.

Mr. Mike Allemang: Yes (attending virtually)

Mr. Rich Chang: Yes

Mr. Raymond Hess: Yes

Mr. Ryan Hunter: Yes

Mr. Jesse Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak: Yes

Ms. Pollay: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

The vote passed unanimously.

5. OPERATIONAL UPDATES

5.4 CEO Report

Mr. Carpenter shared highlights from the CEO Report and discussed the topic of the federal mask mandate being dropped in the past week. He understands there are many who still are concerned about covid transmissions but beyond encouraging masks on buses, they are no

longer required. He also shared with the board a graph of ridership numbers over the past few years. He outlined how AAATA ridership numbers were paralleled by transit systems across the country. His hope is that it will continue to trend upward and that the passage of a millage and new services will assist in that recovery process.

Mr. Allemang asked Ms. Reed about the status of cyber-attack recovery. Ms. Reed responded that IT is still working to bring back all systems back on the premises – the few that aren't do not directly impact customers or staff.

Ms. Mozak thanked the fleet department for retrofitting the Nova busses with ADA pull cords after customer feedback indicated it was needed.

Ms. Sims and Mr. Miller brought up concerns about the end of the mask mandate on public transit and concerns about vulnerable riders and ventilation.

Mr. Carpenter's response was that ongoing simple ventilation and air circulation were being utilized on buses.

5. EMERGENT ITEMS

No emergent items.

6. CLOSING ITEMS

6.1 Topics for Next Meetings

- Millage
- LRP
- 2.9 External Relationships
- 2.10 Communication and Support to the Board
- Monitoring Report
- 3.0-3.8 Governance Process Policies
- Q2 Service Report
- Q2 Finance Report

6.2 Public Comment

Robert Pawlowski commented that he was in agreement with placing the millage ballot in the August primary elections. There is much work to be done in the region and encouraged work and growth with the Ypsilanti Transit Center as a priority.

Jim Mogensen commented that quarterly reports might need more notations included to explain ridership trends. He also requested that purchase / service agreements and partnership agreements be made publicly available on the website. Finally, he commented on the limited space on buses for those with mobility issues and the challenges of ensuring proper services be available to them.

Michelle Barney commented that an August ballot measure would be beneficial as opposed to a crowded November ballot. She also inquired about campaigning for the millage and who would be organizing volunteers. She wants to participate and educate voters on accurate information about the millage.

Debbie Swanson, Ypsilanti Township resident and Township trustee commented that she is disappointed with the Board vote to pass the millage resolution. She has concerns and feels the organization didn't listen to township voters. Her primary concern is the cost and whether

the millage is too large of a request of the community in light of current economic Hardships. She is in support of public transportation but asked that board members visit areas in the community that are struggling so they can better understand the impact of this millage.

6.3 Adjournment

Ms. Mozak motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Pollay.

Meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah Holt

Proposed Resolution (4/2022) with Ballot Language, Date, and Mill Rate

ANN ARBOR AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

Resolution No. 4/2022

Millage Supporting Public Transportation

WHEREAS, at an election held on August 7, 2018, a majority of the registered electors residing in the political subdivisions that comprise the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (the "Authority") voting at that election approved the levy by the Authority through 2023 of a tax of 0.700 mills for public transportation purposes on the taxable property within the political subdivisions that comprise the Authority as authorized by Public Act 55 of 1963, as amended, MCL 124.351 to 124.359 ("Act 55");

WHEREAS, replacing the expiring millage by levying a new millage for public transportation purposes for five years beginning in 2024 at a rate of **2.380** mills as permitted by Act 55 will enable the Authority to advance the needs of communities served by the Authority for social, environmental, and economic sustainability through strategic provision of improved public transit services while remaining careful stewards of the public trust;

WHEREAS, if approved, this proposed millage would replace the expiring 0.700 millage levy, resulting in a net additional levy of **1.68** mills, permitting the maintenance of all existing services provided by the Authority, expanded evening, late night, weekend, and holiday services, and new express services;

WHEREAS, an increased local investment in public transit is projected to magnify outside funding for the Authority, with \$1.40 in transit grants paid to the authority for every \$1 in local tax revenue invested by the Authority;

WHEREAS, Act 55 authorizes the Authority to levy a tax of up to 5 mills for public transportation purposes on all of the taxable property within the political subdivisions that comprise the Authority and permits the Authority to call an election for the purposes of consideration of a proposed levy;

WHEREAS, the board of directors of the Authority wants to levy a tax of **2.38** mills for five years beginning in 2024 for public transportation purposes, subject to voter approval, as authorized by Act 55; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Authority that an election is called and the following question must be submitted to a vote of the registered electors residing in the City of Ann Arbor, the City of Ypsilanti, and the Charter Township of Ypsilanti, being the political subdivisions that compromise the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority, at the regular primary election to be held on Tuesday, August 2, 2022:

**"ANN ARBOR AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
PROPOSAL FOR MILLAGE TO
MAINTAIN AND EXPAND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

The proposal would authorize the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (TheRide) to levy a property tax:

- *to be used for public transportation purposes, including public transit and paratransit services for seniors and persons with disabilities;*

- at a rate of **2.380 mills** (\$2.38 for each \$1,000 in taxable value), replacing a current authorized millage of 0.700 that expires in 2023 and resulting in **1.680** in net new mills;
- for five years beginning in 2024 and continuing through 2028; and
- that may not be increased, renewed, or used for other purposes without voter approval.

If this new additional millage is approved and levied, revenue will be distributed to TheRide. It is estimated that **\$22,110,122.57** will be collected in the first year (2024).

Under current state law, the downtown development authorities of the cities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, the local development finance authorities of the cities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti and of the Charter Township of Ypsilanti, and the Washtenaw County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority may capture and use for authorized purposes tax increment revenues from the millage, if approved.

Should this proposal be approved?

YES
 NO


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the tax, if approved, will be levied and collected on the June tax roll beginning in 2024;


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the preceding question is hereby certified to the Clerk/Register of Deeds of Washtenaw County and, through the Clerk/Register of Washtenaw County, to the Board of Election Commissioners of Washtenaw County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the chief executive officer shall submit a certified copy of this resolution on behalf of the Authority to the clerk of the City of Ann Arbor, the clerk of the City of Ypsilanti, and the clerk of the Charter Township of Ypsilanti not less than 60 days before August 2, 2022.

Secretary's Certification:

I certify that this resolution was adopted by the board of directors of the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority at a properly-noticed open meeting held with a quorum present on April 21, 2022.

By: 
 Jesse Miller
 Secretary

By: 
 Eric Mahler
 Chair of the Board of Directors