

Board of Director’s Meeting Summary
Meeting Date/Time: September 24, 2020, 6:30-9:00pm

Location: Remote

Board Member Attendees: Raymond Hess, Jesse Miller, Kyra Sims, Roger Hewitt, Kathleen Mozak-Betts, Richard Chang, Mike Allemang, Ryan Hunter, Eric Mahler (Chair)

AAATA Staff Attendees: Matt Carpenter (CEO), Bryan Smith, John Metzinger, Forest Yang, LaTasha Thompson

Meeting Chair: Eric Mahler

Chairman Eric Mahler called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

Discussion Items	
1. OPENING ITEMS	
1.1	<p>Approve Agenda Mr. Raymond Hess moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Roger Hewitt. In support of the motion: Mr. Mike Allemang: Yes Mr. Rich Chang: Yes Mr. Hess: Yes Mr. Hewitt: Yes Mr. Ryan Hunter: Yes Mr. Jesse Miller: Yes Ms. Kathleen Mozak-Betts: Yes Ms. Kyra Sims: Yes Chairman Mahler: Yes</p> <p>The motion passed unanimously.</p>
1.2	<p>Public Comment Jim Mogensen described why AAATA has a Local Advisory Committee (LAC). He also reported receiving the following comment: “When I first came to Ann Arbor, I could get around. They have changed it. Next time if they have something where I can vote for it, I’m not going to do that.” He expressed his concern and asked the Board to keep this in mind as they move forward.</p>
1.3	<p>General Announcements None.</p>
1.4	<p>Board Officer Elections Mr. Hewitt nominated Mr. Mahler for Chairman, seconded by Ms. Sims. In support of the motion: Mr. Allemang: Yes Mr. Chang: Yes Mr. Hess: Yes Mr. Hewitt: Yes Mr. Hunter: Yes Mr. Miller: Yes</p>

Discussion Items

Ms. Mozak-Betts: Yes
Ms. Sims: Yes
Chairman Mahler: Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Allemang nominated Ms. Sims for Recording Secretary, seconded by Mr. Chang and Mr. Hewitt.

In support of the motion:

Mr. Allemang: Yes
Mr. Chang: Yes
Mr. Hess: Yes
Mr. Hewitt: Yes
Mr. Hunter: Yes
Mr. Miller: Yes
Ms. Mozak-Betts: Yes
Ms. Sims: Yes
Chairman Mahler: Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

There were no nominations for Treasurer. Chairman Mahler reminded the Board that last year it was discussed that the Treasurer position is problematic for this Board as all of the Treasurer duties are now done by staff. The role will go unfilled and the Board will work to resolve this issue.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

2.1 Minutes, FY 2021 Board Meeting Dates, and Committee Meeting Reports

Ms. Mozak-Betts moved to approve the Consent Agenda, supported by Mr. Allemang.

In support of the motion:

Mr. Allemang: Yes
Mr. Chang: Yes
Mr. Hess: Yes
Mr. Hewitt: Yes
Mr. Hunter: Yes
Mr. Miller: Yes
Ms. Mozak-Betts: Yes
Ms. Sims: Yes
Chairman Mahler: Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

3. 2021 Budget

3.1 Financial Planning / Budgeting (Policy 2.4) (Approval)

Mr. John Metzinger reviewed Policy 2.4 compliance with the Board as a step toward adopting the annual budget. Policy 2.4 lists parameters and expectations for the recommended annual budget. It also addresses the need to make financial plans for the future. Mr. Metzinger explained that the report was presented to the Finance Committee. As stated in their meeting minutes, the Committee recommends the Board accept the monitoring report as compliant.

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Mr. Metzinger went on to describe that Policy 2.4.1 reinforces the importance of policy 2.5, which addresses financial conditions and activities. That policy is monitored at a separate time, to coincide with the presentation of the annual audit. Therefore, the Board's policies bookend the fiscal year; they describe how to budget and plan for the year in advance, how financial activities should be handled during the year, and how they should be reported in the year end audited financials.

Policy 2.4.2, 2.4.3, and 2.4.4 emphasize the requirement for a multi-year plan that considers how the one-year budget fits into the bigger picture. Therefore, the discussion this month is not just about the annual budget itself, but about the context of strategy and planning assumptions that show the operating budget, capital budget, and their impacts within a longer-range budget forecast.

The remaining sub policies set important limitations that require the budget to be balanced, to provide a cushion of reserve funding as a safety net, to fund the Board's work in governing the AAATA, and to prohibit debt and other unfunded obligations.

Board members completing a survey indicated they believe the report to demonstrate compliance. Interesting feedback was provided suggesting that some members would like to see more frequent monitoring of financial policy compliance during times of economic uncertainty. The Finance Committee discussed this, and staff are certainly willing to provide additional reports beyond quarterly financial reporting.

Mr. Chang discussed potential policy to consider around the frequency of reporting and possibly what triggers that frequency. He suggested the following language:

During times of economic uncertainty, such as a pandemic, where daily ridership has fallen below [x% of normal levels], the CEO shall provide a monitoring report every [some time period cadence].

Chairman Mahler discussed the types of reports that the Board might be requiring staff to produce. Mr. Chang expressed liking the format that Mr. Metzinger has been presenting. He suggested that there might be some subset in there though. He noted that the graph showing the effects of different scenarios over time is particularly helpful. He also recommended including the cash flow table. Mr. Metzinger pointed out that there will be a lag in the Finance team's ability and timeliness to be able to close out a month. It is usually about as much as 60 days after the month closes before there is financial clarity due to lagging invoices and other transactions that occur late.

Mr. Chang suggested that the reports could be determined on a case by case basis. Chairman Mahler described a recession scenario where the Board would require ridership data and supplementary budget requests on a weekly or bi-weekly bases for the entire next quarter if there are two consecutive quarters of a 10% dip.

Mr. Hess suggested that AAATA's reserve dipping below two months could be used as a mechanism, at which point the Board would expect monthly reports on the financial situation with balance sheets and cash flow. Mr. Chang warned that financials could be manipulated so that the reserve is not dipped into by taking actions of cuts on the operational side.

Chairman Mahler asked the Board to consider if the proper trigger is financial or a dip in ridership. He described that if AAATA saw two months in a row of consecutive 10% dip

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in ridership year over year compared to February and March of last year, for example, the Board would require some financial reporting.

Mr. Allemang pointed out that there are policies in place about no surprises to the Board. Chairman Mahler described a surprise scenario to be a situation where staff was making material cutbacks in staff and service, or something that materially affected the level of service before notifying the Board. CEO Carpenter described policy 2.11.1.2. If it comes to his attention that there is any anticipated non-compliance with a policy, he is obligated to inform the Board, regardless of what time it is in the monitoring schedule. He expressed that the policy is a little vague on the trigger.

CEO Carpenter also noted that the Board does not need to rationalize why they want to monitor something more frequently. They can just vote to do so at any time.

Mr. Hewitt suggested the trigger of a 20% or 25% dip in ridership to require reporting (at least to the Finance Committee) of the impact caused to the adopted budget.

Ms. Mozak-Betts expressed support for Mr. Chang's proposal. In terms of creating a sustaining structure, Mr. Hunter asked what that would look like. Mr. Chang agreed with Chairman Mahler's suggestion of having the Finance Committee discuss this and then present it to the Service Committee for the wording. Mr. Allemang agreed to add it to the next Finance Committee meeting.

Mr. Allemang motioned to approve the CEO as in compliance with Policy 2.4, seconded by Ms. Sims.

In support of the motion:

Mr. Allemang: Yes

Mr. Chang: Yes

Mr. Hess: Yes

Mr. Hewitt: Yes

Mr. Hunter: Yes

Mr. Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak-Betts: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

The motion was passed unanimously.

3.2 FY 2021 Budget Approval

Mr. Metzinger presented the recommended budget for adoption at this Board meeting as follows:

State law requires adoption of a budget before expenditure in the new fiscal year, which begins October 1st. Staff ask the board to adopt a 12-month budget, recognizing that it is likely to change after the implications from the state budget are fully known. The state budget was adopted late September 23rd.

The pandemic has brought a great time of great uncertainty and chaotic change, in particular with uncertain revenues. In this context, it has been a struggle for TheRide to find the right balance between competing priorities: a strong desire to restore services as quickly and prudently as possible and serving essential needs while

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avoiding crowding on transit vehicles for public health and safety, all while ensuring the financial solvency so TheRide can continue to provide service today and tomorrow.

In spite of the struggles it took for all to get to this point, the recommended budget has sought to find the right balance. Tonight, staff are presenting a balanced budget that:

- Allows for gradual restoration of services over the next year
- Is sustainable
- Offers flexibility in its capacity to expand or contract as needed
- Offers greater confidence about the path forward

2021 Operating and Capital Budget Overview:

Several revisions have been made since last month.

- \$43.2 million in operating expenses (\$2M higher than the first draft budget) allows for a higher level of service
- \$6.5 million in capital projects (focused primarily upon state of good repair for vehicles, facilities, equipment)
- Uses CARES Act funding to support service recovery during and after the pandemic
- Provides a 7-year operating budget forecast and 10-year plan for capital investments.

Below are the revisions made since the draft budget was presented in August:

- Additional expense of \$2.6 million
- Additional \$955K in funding for a new paratransit contract, necessary to open capacity for fixed route expansion
- Additional \$869K in salaries and wages by adding drivers for service recovery, and staff to support additional vehicle/facility cleaning
- Recall of 13 drivers needed to restore fixed route level of service to 2/3 of regular service level. More drivers are needed to restore greater fixed route coverage across the service area
- Addition of 6 service crew positions
- \$629K in federal non-urban pass through funding has been added due to late-arriving budget requests from WAVE in Chelsea, and People's Express. Both operate rural transit in Washtenaw County
- Additional \$132K expense for contracted services and insurance premiums
- Costs are offset by \$1.96 million in additional CARES Act funding and state assistance plus \$629K additional pass through revenue.

Below are the revisions to the draft capital budget (since August):

- Decreased capital budget by \$4.2 million since the August draft. Due to lower mileage, with some fleet going unused, and manufacturing delays due to the pandemic, AAATA has a one-time opportunity to defer the purchase of 8 buses. Typically, they replace 8 old buses each year.
- The new plan is to carryover \$4.2 million in 2021 funding for use in the next five years for another purpose. Staff would like to consider using those funds for a future facility investment such as the YTC, BTC, or garage expansion. It will be required by policy to have further Board authorizations later on for any facility investments.
- Deferral is a one-time opportunity; AAATA will need to return to investing in the fleet in FY2022.

2021 Operation Revenues: \$43,150,941

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The budget relies upon local property taxes (38%) and state operating assistance (25%) to support operations. CARES Act funding is the next highest source at 15%. Passenger fares are budgeted at about half regular fare revenue due to lower demand, covering 8% of costs. As discussed, state operating assistance has been the greatest uncertainty during budget planning. The state budget was adopted yesterday, but details are still to be made clear by MDOT. It looks like operating assistance was cut slightly and capital matching budget maintained. Funding challenges are longer term. The state revenues have been better than expected for 2020. Staff will have more details to share with the Board in the next month or two.

2021 Operating expenses: \$43,150,941

Employee pay and benefits is the greatest expense – 56% of the budget at \$24.3M. Purchased transportation is the second highest expense, at \$7.5 million or 19% of total expenses, but down 34% from the current budget due to operating ARide in-house for most of the new budget year. Other costs include fuel and supplies (11%), contractual services including janitorial and snow removal (8%), and other costs.

2021 Capital Budget:

The capital budget funds investments in capital assets including land, buildings, vehicles, and equipment. It is \$4.2 million lower than the first draft due to deferral of buses.

Staff are often asked by Board members and stakeholders “what is the priority for capital investment?” There are four priorities, listed here in order of importance.

Priority	FY2021
State of Good Repair	\$4,826,000
Expansion	\$1,271,000
Value Added	\$327,880
Research & Development	\$25,000
Total Capital Budget	\$6,449,880

The highest priority is to maintain vehicles, facilities, and equipment in a state of good repair. This is required by Board Policy, specifically 2.8 Asset Protection, and also by FTA and MDOT as a requirement of using grant funding. Secondary priorities are more flexible. Currently, the next highest priority is for expansion of facilities. For FY2021, staff have budgeted funding for the possible acquisition of additional land and to study the need for a new garage, given that the current garage is at its limit and hinders service expansion. Additional priorities are for increasing value, such as improvements to bus stops, and for R&D projects that can bring about innovation. An important note: Capital funding is not available to support operating expenses.

Budgeting Capacity for Service Recovery:

TheRide was at 100% level of service (LOS) in February 2020, before the pandemic onset. It declined to 30% by April before gradually restored to 62% in August, with the ability to expand to 66% (2/3 regular LOS) by November. Before nearly full-service restoration in August 2021, the key milestone is to onboard an ARide contractor. This will allow the redeployment of 50 bus operators to restored fixed route service, an additional 30% of service level restored.

CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, Economic Security Act)

Many have asked about CARES Act funds and why AAATA is not spending more quickly. This has been somewhat controversial because this decision-making has been

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financially conservative, and AAATA is not spending as fast as some may expect them to. The budget document has been revised to provide greater detail on how CARES Act funding is being utilized. CARES Act funding is key to TheRide's service recovery.

In April, TheRide received a \$20.7 million grant award through the CARES Act. Federal funds are available to reimburse eligible expenses (safety barriers on buses, inside facilities; Personal Protective Equipment; additional cleaning and sanitation; mobile ticketing pilot project). AAATA's approach has been to use funding to meet immediate needs, such as those listed, and to support restoration of services through the pandemic and through its economic aftershocks. They have been careful to pay attention to both short- and long-term needs.

The planned timing for use of funds has been added to the budget book on page 23. This will change; AAATA is likely to use funding more quickly than predicted. \$2.5 million will be used this fiscal year, 12% of the CARES Act funds. Half of the funding will be fully utilized by the end of 2021. 83% of funding will be used by the end of 2022. It was decided quite consciously to conserve resources to preserve the organization from great economic uncertainty. AAATA is now in a position because of these decisions to discuss restoring service with the funding they know they have.

If you want to see what the alternative might have looked like, you can look at transit agencies like New York, Denver, and Washington D.C. These agencies did not make difficult decisions early on; they did not reduce spending to meet lower demand. The result is they have burned through all their CARES Act funding and are now facing dire financial consequences. They are predicting catastrophic service cuts, severe layoffs, and facing major risks of financial insolvency. They are waiting for additional federal bail outs which have not materialized.

National benchmarking on CARES Act funding is not available from FTA. However, RTA will be collecting data on funding use in SE Michigan, and staff can share that later on. What staff are hearing in talking directly to industry colleagues is that most peer agencies are following a similar conservative path as AAATA. That is certainly the case in this region. DTC, M1Rail, and RTA are not operating and are still executing grant awards for CARES Act funding. SMART and DDOT are operating reduced schedules and using CARES Act funds to support a longer-term approach. These are entirely local decisions; there is no right or wrong way to go.

As has been mentioned previously, staff are likely to continue work on the budget into next year, especially after gaining greater clarity from the state budget, and can come back with amendments, as necessary.

Mr. Metzinger assured the Board and our community that AAATA has done the very best it can do with their pandemic recovery plan, focusing upon public health and safety, service recovery, and long-term sustainability.

Considering the state budget adopted earlier this week, Chairman Mahler asked at to what level of service this budget might allow AAATA to restore service, and how soon it could do so. CEO Carpenter responded that the transit operating cuts of the state budget are about 1.5% – 2%, which gives AAATA more confidence going forward that an amendment can be presented in the next couple of months to begin accelerating service restoration. He did note that it appears the state used its own CARES Act funding and drew down several of its reserves to back fill any other parts of their budget; they used one-time money to maintain operating spending. Whether or not

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they can continue to do that in FY2022 and FY2023 remains to be seen. Staff wants to fully unpack what is actually in the state budget before beginning to answer the questions of how much and how fast service can be restored, but it looks promising.

Mr. Mozak-Betts asked for further explanation of D2A2 and AirRide included in the budget. Mr. Metzinger explained that D2A2 is a service that is funding entirely from pass through funding by RTA. AAATA is not using local dollars for that project, so that has no bearing upon the fixed route service. AirRide is similar in the sense that it is a public/private partnership with Michigan Flyer. Generally speaking, before the pandemic, it was a profit generating operation for AAATA, so they did not lose money on that service. It is hard to know what would happen with ridership on that route where there may be some costs related to that.

CEO Carpenter noted that RTA will make the decision about when and whether to restart funding for the D2A2 service. AAATA has expressed to RTA that they are ready to start it now. The RTA Board has asked their staff to conduct some additional survey work. With AirRide, it is a private service in a lot of ways upon which AAATA piggy backs. As air traffic has collapsed, the market for AirRide service has also. Like many things, air traffic is very contingent on how safe people feel flying. Generally, AAATA's budget is budget neutral to those two services as they kind of pay for themselves and are mostly paid for by others.

Mr. Hess thanked staff for the preparation of this budget in these unprecedented times. He noted that he has been lovingly nudging staff to figure out ways to restore service as soon as possible. He expressed seeing a lot of positive signs from tonight's report – the addition of going from 60% to 66% and that the news coming from the state is not quite as dire as had been anticipated allowing for further restoration of service. He shared that he is happy to support this budget tonight but will continue to beat the drum for additional service restoration where possible.

Ms. Mozak-Betts motioned to move Resolution 7/2020 into the record, supported by Mr. Allemang.

In support of the motion:

Mr. Allemang: Yes

Mr. Chang: Yes

Mr. Hess: Yes

Mr. Hewitt: Yes

Mr. Hunter: Yes

Mr. Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak-Betts: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

4. POLICY MONITORING & DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Committee Meeting Discussion
None.

4.2 Monitoring Reports

4.2.1 Policy 3.0 and 4.0

Chairman Mahler shared that the feedback on the Board's performance was positive.

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Mr. Allemang noted that Policy 3.0 was discussed in particular by the Finance Committee. He expressed not seeing how purpose is a way to assess performance.

Chairman Mahler pointed out that Policies 3.0 and 4.0 are really general statements, like headlines for an article; compliance is more so determined via the sub policies that go a long with those.

Chairman Mahler suggested not needing to vote on the heading policies, but to otherwise vote on the sub policies, supported by Ms. Sims. Chairman Mahler made the executive decision not to vote on Policy 3.0 and 4.0 going forward.

4.3 LAC

Ms. Mozak-Betts reported that she, CEO Carpenter, and Rose Mercier have had a discussion centered on the function of the LAC and options for how to move forward. CEO Carpenter has a draft issue brief that will be solidified and then presented first to the Governance Committee, followed by the Finance and Service Committees before it goes to the full Board.

4.4 Board Retreat

Chairman Mahler asked the Board if there was an appetite for exploring a Board retreat and offered that the Governance Committee could do some benchmarking on other virtual retreats. In the past, the Board retreats have made progress on changing Ends, brainstorming, and strategic vision.

Mr. Hewitt offered support for a virtual retreat focusing on long-term strategic planning, especially in light of the pandemic. Mr. Allemang agreed and suggested doing a half day rather than a full day. Ms. Sims supported a retreat focused on the long-range plan and Board education. Mr. Miller supported having a retreat and suggested breaking it up over a couple of days. Mr. Hunter offered his support for a retreat and breaking it up over a couple of days, if need be. Ms. Mozak-Betts also shared her support of half day retreats.

The Governance Committee will discuss some ideas for the retreat and its timing at their next meeting.

5. STRATEGY & OPERATIONAL UPDATES: CEO

5.1 Covid-19 Recovery Plan Updates

CEO Carpenter expressed his hope to start bringing the Board some blueprints for faster service restoration. He noted that staff at the operational facilities are well settled into their new routines; the fleet will probably never be cleaner. He described going into the main office and being automatically scanned by an infrared thermometer. Staff and customers are safe, which is of great importance. He also announced that the permanent barriers for the bus driver areas have arrived with the first one being installed today.

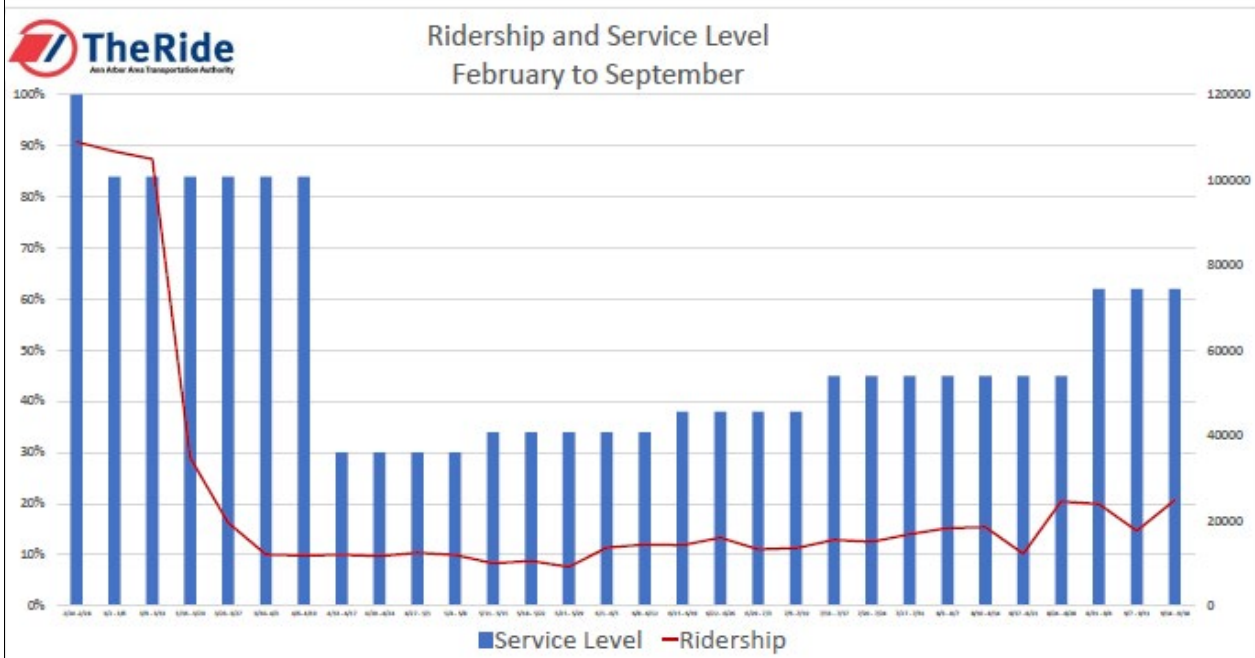
5.2 August Service Restoration & Public Feedback

Mr. Smith introduced the newest member of the AAATA Senior Management Team, Mr. Brian Marshall, who has taken over from Mr. Reggie Whitlow who was the Acting Manager of Bus Operations. He thanked Mr. Whitlow for keeping everything flowing smoothly.

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Mr. Marshall joins AAATA most recently from California where he was working in Stamford with their campus transit. Prior to that, he was in Baton Rouge and also spent many years with the CTA in Chicago. Mr. Marshall expressed being impressed by seeing bus drivers of 30 and 35 years with the organization. This gives him hope, a sense that employees are really committed, which is a big thing in the transit industry. He noted that Mr. Smith and CEO Carpenter exemplify and encourage a real commitment, which encourages him to make an even greater commitment to leverage all of the resources of the rest of the staff.

Mr. Smith shared the below chart comparing the ridership numbers with the levels of service over the course of February to September 2020.



AAATA initially dropped down to about 84% of service and then in April dropped down to Sunday Plus Service. It took several weeks of the pandemic (each blue bar in the chart is a week of time) to drop down to 30% of service, but ridership had dropped several weeks before that. AAATA had several bids during the summer; normally there are 4 bids a year, but there were 4 within a very short period of time during the onset of the pandemic. In May, some frequency was added. In June, some park-and-ride shuttles were added. In July, additional service of buses in between were added to avoid crowding. AAATA is now standing at 62% level of service. The ridership has slowly started to build back up as service has been added. There are plans for additional service restoration this November. Mr. Smith made note that AAATA did not just drop down to a 30% level of service and stayed there. AAATA was always adding and tweaking and trying to figure out what is the next thing, and they will continue to do that.

Mr. Forest Yang reported that right now planning is working on adding service in November 2020, continuing in January 2021 and April 2021. As soon as the state budget is clear, staff will start to communicate what services will be added back in.

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Ms. Mozak-Betts asked where AAATA is at with paratransit in terms of level of service. She assumes that there was a giant dip in needs and requests. She asked if there is an increase now and what is that doing to the budget? Mr. Smith reported a similar drop off in ridership in paratransit. One of the items that AAATA did not change was the footprint of where they would go for paratransit. Even though the fixed route system had shrunk back, AAATA has kept the same geographic footprint for paratransit in order to make sure the riders with some of the greatest need are able to get where they need to go. There has been a slow increase in paratransit rides and requests for trips: however, this population tends to be some of the most vulnerable to COVID-19, so there has been a reluctance to ride in that regard. The number of people on the vehicles is still limited. Mr. Smith pointed out that the biggest change is when AAATA took the paratransit service in house August, they no longer did same-day paratransit. That is a big change, but it is temporary. The same-day paratransit was a large part of the expense because it is harder to plan for demand that is maybe not there or is there. For doctor's appointments only, there is a will call system; when patients are finished with their appointment, a vehicle is sent out for them. Mr. Smith also reminded the Board of the temporary suspension of GoldRide. Any senior that was in a situation where the fixed route does not run near their home anymore and is not within walking distance, AAATA has been able to grant those seniors as ADA eligible.

Mr. Allemang asked staff to describe the general process of how they decide what service and/or frequency is added. CEO Carpenter described that in the big picture, there is the budget envelope; what can AAATA afford? AAATA is lucky that they have most of their CARES Act funding still whole so there can be a conversation about restoring services just as people are starting to come back, but we are still not out of the public health crisis. AAATA has made several executive decisions about extending services to hospitals. Staff have never restored service from a pandemic before, but a lot of the process is driven by trying to get back the service coverage area that AAATA had before. At the same time, there is a need to maintain social distancing, which requires the addition of buses to try and reduce crowding as needed. What AAATA is trying to do is rebuild ridership and be there as people begin to travel again, to be available and an option that people are comfortable using. Staff will speak more about the logic behind how things are being restored in the next couple of months, but coverage, social distancing, and ridership are the key factors wrapped up in the budget envelope.

Mr. Hewitt pointed out that the number of university employees has been dramatically reduced and there are not many people going to work in central Ann Arbor right now. Mr. Smith noted that if people can work from home, they work from home. He does not see the ridership on the campus routes that one would expect given this time of year; travel patterns really may change substantially as remote work has proven to be possible and may become part of the new norm. He also mentioned that AAATA's trend line has followed the Governor's orders. Mr. Yang described using the information from both pre-pandemic and what is currently being observed. He indicated that during this pandemic there is a great opportunity for AAATA to understand the market and understand who really depends on transit. People who have other options are probably going to drive and may continue to drive for a while. Those who continue to use AAATA's service during the pandemic may not have other options. Observing all of this information will enable AAATA to make the most informed decisions.

Mr. Hess asked for periodic updates to the ridership / service level chart, possibly every other month or so. He expressed being surprised that there was no discernable uptick at the beginning of the school year for the university between faculty, staff, and

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students. He noted that in the traditional sense, the level of service provided really determines the ridership level, but in these times, that is not at all true as demonstrated by the chart. Even though AAATA has been stepping up service, there has only been marginal gains in ridership. He described that this underscores the need for the Board to have a retreat and start thinking about long-term planning and ask if there will be a new normal; if so, what does AAATA do as an agency to prepare for that? Graphs like this challenge the traditional formula.

Mr. Hewitt reported a similar pattern in his own business, hours of service verses patrons.

Chairman Mahler expressed that the chart results support AAATA's strategy of being very conservative with their CARES Act funding, spending incrementally and as needed.

Mr. Miller expressed his curiosity in if the ridership is system-wide or an average; are there certain routes experiencing a higher increase in ridership than others. He agreed that there is an opportunity here to see who really needs transit, and the numbers being received now have a potential to inform decisions for years to come.

5.3 CEO Report

CEO Carpenter reported on the Staff Survey which closed yesterday. He was happy to report that participation was at an all-time high with over 50% of the staff responding to that survey. The results will not be in for another few days, but he is very eager to see what staff have to say in this extraordinary year.

CEO Carpenter reported on an announcement recently made by the state pertaining to a corridor between Detroit & Ann Arbor for autonomous vehicles. This is an emerging project with which AAATA is involved. CEO Carpenter and Mr. Yang have attended a couple of briefings from the state personnel overseeing the project. There is another briefing coming up from the project company called Cavnue. They will learn more about it and report back to the Board what it looks like. CEO Carpenter shared that it is primarily focused between Detroit and the American Center for Mobility in Ypsilanti, but there is aspiration to continue into the northeast side of the City of Ann Arbor. It is unclear if it is infrastructure or a dedicated lane. Information can be found on the Cavnue [website](#). It appears to be a private company interested in monetizing the public rights of way, somehow turning it into a profit center for investors. That should raise some questions as to who is using the public rights of way and for what purpose

Mr. Metzinger announced the launch of the EZFare Mobile Ticketing project that will go live on September 30th. Mobile ticket fares will be available for fixed route and paratransit riders. They will be able to buy single rides, day passes, monthly passes, as well as single rides and companion fares for ARide. There will be some marketing and media coming out shortly after the September 30th launch, but this [introduction clip](#) was shared at the Board meeting.

6. EMERGENT BUSINESS

None

7. CLOSING ITEMS

- 7.1 Topics for Next Meeting:
Communications & Support to the Board
(Policy 2.11)

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External Relationship (Policy 2.10)
Board Retreat
Recommendation from Finance Committee on adjusted language for Policy 2.4
Phoenix & Quantum Studies

7.2 Public Comment

Mr. Mogensen pointed out that when Winter comes, transit patterns can change for people who have difficulty getting to and using the fixed route service. He also shared his observation that buses are not set up to deal with walkers, and as the ADA restrictions change, it could leave a subset of the community in an odd and awkward situation. He expressed thinking he understands how AirRide works, thinking they perhaps use interurban subsidy to make that happen. He asks AAATA to make it as clear as possible about how these financing things work. He suggested that extending some of the financial statements would be helpful.

Ms. Michelle Barney asked if the LAC has begun meeting again. She expressed that the ramp that comes out on some of the new paratransit vehicles is extremely down; she has to ask the driver to hold it. She would also like to know what the AAATA policy is should there be protests in the streets along which buses or the ARides travel. Lastly, she described that the recent mailing that lists all the bus routes that are staying in place for now does not say which half hour the frequency is on. She asked for sheets to be put in the bus terminals, one route to a sheet, so that people can take the ones they need.

Ms. Althea McGlory wrote an e-mail received just after the Board had adjourned:

From: Althea McGlory
Sent: Thursday, September 24, 2020 8:39 PM
To: Keith Book <KBook@theride.org>
Subject: Call back

I would like to Thank the board for approving the budget to bring back 13 drivers at this point. I'm Also happy for AAATA Executive Board adding more service for the public. I too am hopeful to bring service back to full by the end of the year.

7.3 [Board Assessment of Meeting \(Electronic\)](#)

7.4 Adjournment

Mr. Hewitt moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Mozak-Betts.

In support of the motion:

Mr. Allemang: Yes

Mr. Chang: Yes

Mr. Hess: Yes

Mr. Hewitt: Yes

Mr. Hunter: Yes

Mr. Miller: Yes

Ms. Mozak-Betts: Yes

Ms. Sims: Yes

Chairman Mahler: Yes

Chairman Mahler adjourned the meeting at 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Keith Everett Book

Approved October 22, 2020