

## **BATA Local Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, January 13, 2026**

**12:00–1:00 p.m.**

**Location:** BATA Hall Street Transfer Station

**Address:** 115 Hall St, Traverse City, MI 49684

**Virtual:** Via Teams

**Bill Clark** began the meeting at **12:01 p.m.**

---

### **Council Members in Attendance**

- **Linda Joppich:** Community Representative, Chair
- **Mandy Joppich:** Community Representative
- **Matt Moritz:** Community Representative
- **Lana Payne:** Commission on Aging
- **Lena Vander Meulen:** Leelanau County Senior Services (virtual)
- **Demarie Jones:** Disability Network Northern Michigan (virtual)
- **Mitch Treadwell:** Traverse City Commissioner
- **Caleb Lindgren:** Goodwill Northern Michigan (Virtual)
- **Lacey Edgecomb:** Senior Center Network
- **Melissa Shea:** The Area Agency on Aging

### **BATA Staff in Attendance**

- Eric Lingaur, Communications Director
  - Bill Clark, Outreach Coordinator and Planner
  - Tracy Melville, Administrative Assistant
  - Keir Rasmussen, Technology
- 

## **1 & 2. Welcome and Introductions**

Bill Clark welcomed everyone to the January meeting and everyone in attendance introduced themselves to the group.

## **3. Designate the LAC Chair for 2026**

- Linda Joppich will remain the LAC Chair for 2026.

## **4. 2026 Vehicle Accessibility Plan**

- The indoor parking at BATA allows for the use of a more diverse mixed-use fleet, instead of having to designate buses for specific routes, like in the past. All of the

buses have been outfitted with VIA technology, which increases our demand fleet from 34 to 72 this year.

- Bus breakdown of BATA's current fleet shows that BATA has 68 ADA vehicles. These include a mix of buses from vans to multiple-sized cutaway style buses. 88% of the current fleet is ADA accessible.

## 5. BATA Rolls from 2025 to 2026

### Review of Service Levels

- **Bill Clark** gave an overview of the service changes that were implemented last year. Some of these changes were made due to construction and a new route was added (Route 5) and a few routes were changed to make them more accessible to riders and to help keep buses on time. Bill explained the changes that were made to Route 7 and Route 5, and now all routes are using either the Hall St or LaFranier Transfer Stations.
- **Linda Joppich** asked if the ski n ride bus was going to Crystal Mountain.
  - **Bill Clark** responded that BATA does not go directly to Crystal Mountain, BATA does provide transportation to get kids to Hickory Hills and take kids to a location where kids can be transported to Crystal Mountain by a charter bus on Wednesdays.
- **Lana Payne** asked if all vehicles end at BATA headquarters at night.
  - **Eric Lingaur** responded that yes, they all end up at headquarters and get parked inside the barn.
- **Linda Joppich** asked if the Bayline was still split into two routes.
  - **Bill Clark** responded that yes, they are still operating on East and West routes.
  - **Eric Lingaur** explained that the route was split into two due to all the construction. The route will be looked at to see if the route should continue as a split route or go back to one route.
  - **Mitch Treadwell commented** that if it was not a continual route that he would simply walk from Hall Street to the Commons area.
- **Lana Payne** asked about Route 5 and Parkview Apartments, if the residents can get on there
  - **Bill Clark** responded yes, the residents and employees can get on Route 5 and that Route 5 is evolving. NMC reached out to BATA to see how the route could work for them as well.
- **Matt Moritz** asked if Route 2 still goes to the Salvation Army.

- **Bill Clark** responded that yes Route 2 still goes to the Salvation Army and Route 7 goes there as well.
- **Mitch Treadwell** asked what the route changes will look like for Route 12
  - **Bill Clark** responded that last time we followed the construction detour. BATA will discuss whether to follow the detour or reroute for the next phase of construction.

### **Review of Fare System**

- **Bill Clark** talked about BATA's current fare system. The different types of payment options and the prices for the services. The current fare structure has not changed in over 10 years.

### **2025 Ridership**

- **Bill Clark** shared with everyone that BATA reached over 500,000 rides in 2025!
- **Fixed Routes** ridership for 2025 had a total increase of almost 100,000 from 2024. Link Services remained fairly constant.
- **FY26 Q1** gave almost 20,000 more rides than in FY25 Q1
- **Total** rides given in FY26 Q1 is 116,477

### **Tentative Major Plans for 2026**

**BATA Website** – BATA is looking to update its website this year. Make it more user-friendly and streamlined. Bill Clark asked what kind of features you would like to see on BATA's new website

- **Demarie Jones** shared that people have told her that the website is a bit overwhelming, especially for people who are on the spectrum or have ADHD. Is there a more ADA friendly way to display information?
  - **Bill Clark** responded that we have received that feedback as well. Bill Clark and Eric Lingaur attended an ADA website seminar and got some ideas from that to give to the website design team.
- **Eric Lingaur** asked if anyone had experience with using AI Chat Bots on any websites?
  - **Caleb Lindgren** responded that he does use them all the time. Immediately thought of a Google map version built in with a BATA map version. Rider resources and community resources. For example, rider resources could be someone needing to know what route they need to take to a certain location. The Chat Bot would be able to assist with that.
- **Demarie Jones** asked how it might work for someone that is sight impaired.

- **Bill Clark** responded that we do currently have a screen reader, but it does need to be updated.
- **Eric Lingaur** mentioned that the goal is to potentially have a new version of BATA.net by late summer to be available.

## **2026 Fare Structure/System**

**Bata Fare System** – BATA will be updating its fare system to EZ Fare in late 2026. Riders will still be able to utilize their current fare payment types for the first months of the new system, and the fare to ride the buses will currently stay the same. Some changes include:

- The refurbished reloadable fare cards (previously Zoom, Zip, Commuter) will consolidate and become more versatile for all services.
- A modern fare box/tablet will be used.
- Mobile ticketing will be available for all buses.
- Fare capping per day/week/month on fixed routes.
- Account based cards. Riders will be able to add money to their accounts remotely or at community businesses.

A good amount of education will need to happen to prepare our riders, drivers and staff. Bill and Eric will be out in the community helping educate our riders. It will probably take around 9-12 months to get everything rolled out.

- **Mitch Treadwell** asked if you will be able to transfer money from old fare cards over to new fare cards.
  - **Eric Lingaur** answered, yes you will be able to transfer any funds from your old passes to the new ones/account. It will be able to track how many times you ride, and what you are riding. It will know the difference between fixed route and link and charge the correct amount.
- **Demarie Jones** asked if this is for people with smartphones.
  - **Eric Lingaur** answered that people will be able to use a smartphone or a physical card.
- **Demarie Jones** asked about the reduced fare cards and if we will still need those.
  - **Eric Lingaur** answered that we will no longer need to have a reduced fare card, because it will be on their account and charge the correct price.

## **6. Discussion (no new topics, but carried over from fare change discussion)**

- **Caleb Lindgren** asked if there would be a charge to replace a missing fare card and how much will it cost?
  - **Eric Lingaur** answered that there has not been a price set.

- **Caleb Lindgren** asked if the wallet app will be available for a payment option.
  - **Eric Lingaur** answered that riders would be able to use digital wallets. Eric said that riders will still want to have an account in order to receive the ride benefits, such as on a fixed route it will calculate to go towards the amount of rides you have taken for the fare capping benefit. One card linked to the rider account.
- **Lana Payne** asked what the timing/start date of the new fare system is to begin.
  - **Eric Lingaur** answered in the next 9-12 months. By the end of this year. The transition period after that will be about 6 months.
- **Caleb Lindgren** asked if the fare system will take cryptocurrency.
  - **Eric Lingaur** answered no, the new system will not be taking cryptocurrency.

**Meeting adjourned at 1:14 p.m.**

**2026 Local Advisory Council Membership**

- **Linda Joppich:** Chair / Community Representative
- **Matt Morritz:** Community Representative
- **Dan Buron:** Goodwill Northern Michigan
- **Lana Payne:** Commission on Aging
- **Mandy Joppich:** Community Representative
- **Lena Vander Meulen:** Leelanau County Senior Services
- **Amanda Molski:** Area Agency on Aging
- **Demarie Jones:** Disability Network Northern Michigan
- **Susan Odgers:** Community Representative
- **Lacey Edgecomb:** Senior Center Network
- **Mitch Treadwell:** Traverse City Commissioner

**CC:** Alex Simonetti (MDOT), Chris Davis (BATA), Eric Lingaur (BATA), Bill Clark (BATA)

Approved on \_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

**Linda Joppich (BATA Local Advisory Council Chair)** \_\_\_\_\_