Bay Area Transportation Authority
Board of Directors

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 13, 2026
1:00 PM
Hall Street Transfer Station - Conference Room
115 Hall Street, Traverse City, MI 49684

Draft meeting minutes for approval on September 24, 2026

1. **Call to Order**
   The meeting was called to order by Chair Wayne Schmidt at 1:22 PM.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence**
   Chair Wayne Schmidt extended the Board's condolences to Eric Lingaur on the recent passing of his wife and to Executive Director Patrick Preusser on the recent passing of his father.

3. **Roll Call**
   - John Sommavilla – PRESENT
   - Gwenne Allgaier – PRESENT
   - Sarah Bye – PRESENT
   - Janice Wyant – PRESENT
   - Fern Spence – PRESENT
   - Lance Boehmer – PRESENT
   - Wayne Schmdit – PRESENT

4. **Public Comment – Agenda Items**
   None offered.

5. **Approval of Agenda / Conflict of Interest**
   Motion by Fern Spence, supported by Sarah Bye, to approve the August 13, 2026, Regular Meeting as presented.
   - **Ayes: 7**
   - **Nays: 0**
   - **Motion Carries: 7-0**

6. **Consent Calendar**
   The purpose of the Consent Calendar is to expedite business by grouping non-controversial items together to be dealt with in one Board motion without discussion. Any member of the Board, staff, or the public may ask that any item on the Consent Calendar be removed and placed elsewhere on the agenda for full discussion. Such requests will be automatically respected. If an item is not removed from the Consent Calendar, the action noted in parentheses on the agenda is approved by a single Board action adopting the Consent Calendar.

a. Approval of the Regular Board Meeting Minutes for June 25, 2026

b. Acceptance of the following reports

   1. FY26 Q3 Ridership Report
   2. FY26 Q3 Turnover Report
   3. Correspondence/Staff Compliments
   4. BATA Board Tracker

Motion by Lance Boehmer, supported by Fern Spence, to approve the August 13, 2026, Consent Calendar as presented.

- **Ayes: 7**
- **Nays: 0**
- **Motion Carries: 7-0**

7. Consent Calendar Items Removed
No items were removed from the Consent Calendar.

8. Executive Director's Report
Patrick Preusser expressed appreciation for the time that Board members, staff, and community stakeholders have taken to meet with him and provide feedback about BATA. Mr. Preusser provided an overview of his report that was included in the Board packet, touching on strategic priorities, the finance department transition, community and regional partnerships, organizational highlights, and employee recognition. Upcoming milestones include completing the Finance Director transition, continuing public education efforts related to the November millage renewal, preparing for the launch of the EZfare system, finalizing the September service change, continuing stakeholder engagement, and strengthening organizational relationships.

9. Chairman's Report
No report at this time.

10. Guest Presentation

a. **Suttons Bay Housing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Update**
Susan Leithauser presented information on a proposed affordable housing development in Suttons Bay. She represents Peninsula Housing, a nonprofit housing organization, that recently purchased approximately 11 acres on Herman Road with plans to develop 38 affordable workforce housing units. The estimated project cost is slightly more than $10 million, with an approximately $4 million funding gap that the organization is seeking to address through Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Ms. Leithauser asked the Board to consider whether BATA could accommodate the additional demand for service associated with 38 homes without receiving the tax revenue that would otherwise be generated by the development. Under the proposed TIF structure, incremental tax revenues would be distributed to the developer to reimburse eligible project expenses over a 30-year period, like a Brownfield TIF Plan. Referring to Appendix A in the Board packet, she noted that the estimated tax revenue is somewhat high. She stated that based on a hypothetical scenario in which the development was constructed without a TIF, BATA would receive approximately $1,500 annually in tax revenue at full build-out, anticipated in 2030.

Peninsula Housing is currently consulting with all entities that would be impacted by the proposed tax distribution. As a stretch goal, the organization requested that BATA consider signing a letter of support for the project within the next month. A sample

letter was included in the Board's packet. The Board agreed to consider and discuss a proposed letter of support at its regular meeting on September 24, 2026.

11. Financial Update

a. Executive Director Patrick Preusser provided an update on why the financial statements are not included in this month's packet. Staff members are working with government accounting professionals to close out the financial statements for May, June, and July within the next few weeks, and we plan to present that information at the September 24, 2026, Board meeting. We're also prioritizing other essential responsibilities, including the federal grant dollar drawdowns, year-end reporting, and preparing for the annual independent financial audit. We identified accounting activities that still need to be completed and validated. No financial problems have been identified. Patrick is managing the work with staff who have stepped up willing to help in the transition.

   The Finance Director job description has been finalized and posted locally and on national transit organization sites. The first review of applications will take place on August 21, 2026.

12. Discussion Items

a. **Millage Education Efforts**
   Executive Director Patrick Preusser provided an overview of the millage renewal that will be on the November 3,2026 ballot, and communication efforts that are underway. The proposal requests 0.4589 mill, compared with the 0.4788 mill approved by voters in 2022. Sarah Bye recommended staff work on video interviews with students who ride BATA to share their experience and then share that information on social media. Mr. Preusser will forward to the Board the exact millage language that will be on the ballot.

b. **Farebox System Update**
   Paul Clausen provided an overview of the work done to date preparing for the launch of EZfare. Hardware installation in BATA's entire fleet is complete. Ticket vending machines will be at the BATA Park-n-Ride on LaFranier and at the Hall Street Transfer Station, both available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Online access will also be available. Staff training on the new system is underway. BATA has been sharing information with and educating employees and a test group. The proposed launch timeline is as follows: Week of August 24 – Staff Testing & Select Riders; Week of August 31 – Soft Launch; Week of September 7 – Start rolling out after Labor Day; and Week of September 14 – System is live and there is a campaign to get riders signed up. Mr. Clausen described the ease of access including the phone app and use of QR codes, and EZfare printable tickets.

   Sarah Bye asked that BATA provides a reminder to drivers on kindness and patience with riders with disabilities or struggling with technology and change; John Sommavilla suggested a professional script be shared with drivers, so they know how to respond to questions. Bill Clark and Eric Lingaur are working on a FAQ for riders and drivers.

   Chairman Wayne Schmidt requested a Study Session be scheduled so the Board can have a hands-on look at EZfare. Recording Secretary Kelly Walter will send the Board a meeting poll to identify the best time and time for the majority.

c. **Cherry Festival Service Recap**
Erik Falcon provided the recap of BATA's services during the National Cherry, noting that ridership was the second highest ridership in BATA history. Mr. Falcon said this year's Cherry Festival operations were successful with staff managing the increased service demands well. BATA provided staff ambassadors at Hall Street, which proved to be successful. It was a positive experience for riders. BATA is in discussions with the National Cherry Festival on how to better promote the Orchard Tours. Sarah Bye recommended both organizations involve MSU Extension in marketing the tours to increase ridership.

13. Action Items
There were no action items.

14. Public Comment – General Matters*
None offered.

15. Closed Session
There was no closed session. Vice Chair Lance Boehmer requested a closed session to be scheduled for the September 24, 2026, meeting. He will provide the subject to Executive Director Patrick Preusser.

16. Other Business
None offered.

17. Next meeting
Thursday, September 24, 2026
1:00 p.m.
Suttons Bay Library
416 N. Front Street, Suttons Bay, MI 4968

18. Adjourn
The meeting adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

Meeting Minutes Submitted by: *Kelly Walter* ____________________

Meeting Minutes Approved on: ____________________

Gwenne Allgaier, Secretary: ____________________