



Bay Area Transportation Authority Board of Directors

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 19, 2026

1:00 PM

Hall Street Transfer Station

115 Hall Street, Traverse City, MI 49684

Draft Minutes for approval at December 10, 2026, Regular Board Meeting.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Wayne Schmidt at 1:00 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

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

No public comment was offered.

5. Approval of Agenda / Conflict of Interest

Fern Spence and Gwenne Allgaier disclosed conflicts regarding Agenda Item 15 (Closed Session) and recused themselves from consideration of that matter.

Motion by Fern Spence, supported by Gwenne Allgaier, to approve the October 19, 2026, Regular Meeting Agenda 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 September 24, 2026
- b. Acceptance of the following reports
 1. Employee Turnover Update – Fourt Quarter FY2026
 2. BATA Board Tracker

Motion by Gwenne Allgaier, supported by Fern Spence, to approve the October 19, 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 presented his Executive Director's report, highlighting FY2026 ridership of nearly 496,000 rides, a 2.8% increase; driver recruitment and training progress; and the staffing needed to restore Bayline frequency reliably. He also reported on Director of Finance recruitment, year-end financial activities, fare system preparations, the arrival of three propane-powered buses, winter readiness, and knowledge transfer ahead of the Fleet and Facilities Manager's retirement. He discussed development of the FY2028–2034 Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Operations Analysis, emphasizing employee, Board, and stakeholder input and alignment with available resources. He thanked employees and community partners and recognized Doris Morgan's 20 years of service and upcoming retirement. Ms. Morgan was unable to attend and will be invited to the December meeting for recognition.

9. Chairman's Report

Chair Wayne Schmidt thanked everyone for attending the Board meeting.

10. Guest Presentation

Fern Spence provided a summary of the intention of inviting Mr. Aaron Harris from HarrisXR LLC to provide a fleet tracking product demonstration and rider information concept for BATA's consideration. Mr. Harris was not present at the time of the planned presentation but joined the Board later in the meeting (after the Action Items) and apologized for the confusion with the time of the presentation.

Mr. Harris provided a presentation overview of the HarrisXR product that was created to provide a more user-friendly experience for the rider, comparing it to apps such as Uber and Lyft. Mr. Harris stated that the software launch cost is \$100,000 and \$120 per month per each tracked vehicle. There is a live demo available at harris.com/BATA.

Eric Lingaur provided an overview of BATA's current system. Board member Janice Wyant suggested that BATA speak with the current vendor used for bus tracking to see if adjustments can be made to create a more accurate and user-friendly bus tracking

product. Board members thanked Mr. Harris and suggested that staff further evaluate the product and compare its capabilities and costs with BATA's current system.

11. Financial Update

Executive Director Patrick Preusser reported on September and FY2026 year-end close activities as of the October 14 reporting cutoff. August remained the latest completed financial reporting period and did not represent BATA's full-year position. Bank and cash reconciliations were complete, recurring journal entries were largely complete, and staff and Rehmann were addressing outstanding invoices, accruals, account reconciliations, operating assistance reporting, and other accounting matters.

Completed and reviewed September and FY2026 year-end financial statements are planned for presentation at the December Board meeting. The statements will be unaudited and subject to audit adjustments. Mr. Preusser will notify the Board before that meeting if material financial issues arise, reporting deadlines are at risk, or the presentation schedule changes.

Second-round interviews for the Director of Finance position were completed, and the recruitment process remains underway.

12. Discussion Items

a. Winter Tire Performance and Driver Feedback

Patrick Preusser presented the preliminary winter-handling safety risk assessment requested by the Board on September 24, 2026. An anonymous survey received 36 responses, with 28 answering detailed performance questions. Feedback was mixed and identified concerns involving traction, stopping, steering, tire condition, and vehicle-specific performance. Mr. Preusser explained that the survey documented driver experiences but did not establish incident frequency or causation.

Staff will compare driver feedback with incident, road-call, tire, and maintenance records by October 23. By October 30, staff will confirm tire specifications, winter suitability, and replacement criteria; evaluate refresher-training needs; and update the risk assessment and recommended actions. Existing inspections and reporting will continue, with specific safety concerns addressed promptly. Vehicles with unresolved safety defects are not to be operated. No additional spending or Board action was requested.

Mr. Preusser thanked participating drivers and recognized Kurt Braun, Erik Falcon, and Eric Lingaur for their work. Mr. Braun described Fleet and Facilities' proactive tire-management practices and recognized Zach Lentz for overseeing the tire program. Board members thanked staff for taking the concerns seriously and conducting a thorough review.

13. Action Items

a. FY2027 Proposed Capital Budget

Patrick Preusser presented the proposed FY2027 Capital Budget totaling \$2,638,217, unchanged from the amount presented September 24, 2026. In response to Board feedback, the proposal defers the storage building and reallocates funding toward financial management, data, and dispatch technology. Passenger counting and real-time passenger display investments remain in the plan with reduced initial allocations and phased implementation. Continuing projects include \$1.2 million for seven replacement buses.

The proposed budget consists of:

- i. Ongoing and continuing projects: \$1,502,338
- ii. New projects: \$896,040
- iii. Contingency: \$239,839
- iv. Total: \$2,638,217

Funding is expected primarily from the Capital Reserve Fund, with eligible state and federal funding pursued where available. Mr. Preusser clarified that project allocations are funding allowances, subject to refined requirements, validated costs, operating-cost review, and funding confirmation. Purchases and contracts remain subject to procurement requirements and applicable Board approval thresholds.

The Board discussed the proposed allocations, the upcoming millage request, and potential service improvements in Leelanau County.

Motion by Lance Boehmer, supported by Sarah Bye, to approve the Fiscal Year 2027 Proposed Capital Budget as presented.

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

14. Public Comment – General Matters*

No public comments were made.

15. Closed Session

The Closed Session was called pursuant to MCL 15.268(1)(h) to consider a written attorney-client privileged legal opinion concerning Bay Area Transportation Authority v. County of Grand Traverse and County of Leelanau, which is exempt from disclosure under MCL 15.243(1)(g).

Motion by Lance Boehmer, supported by Sarah Bye, for the BATA Board of Directors to go into closed session at 2:00 p.m. Board members Fern Spence and Gwenne Allgaier recused themselves from the Closed Session and left the meeting.

Roll Call Vote

- **Ayes:** John Somnavilla, Sarah Bye, Janice Wyant, Lance Boehmer, Wayne Schmidt
- **Nays: 0**
- **Motion Carries: 5-0**

Motion by Lance Boehmer, supported by Sarah Bye, for the BATA Board of Directors to adjourn Closed Session and reopen the Regular Meeting at 2:17 p.m.

Roll Call Vote

- **Ayes:** John Sommovilla, Sarah Bye, Janice Wyant, Lance Boehmer, Wayne Schmidt
- **Nays:** 0
- **Motion Carries:** 5-0

Motion by Lance Boehmer, supported by Sarah Bye, that the BATA Board of Directors instructs legal counsel to dismiss the lawsuit against Grand Traverse County and Leelanau County as discussed. Legal counsel, Richard Cherry, in attendance virtually, confirmed the motion to be sufficient to move to dismiss the case.

Roll Call Vote

- **Ayes:** John Sommovilla, Sarah Bye, Janice Wyant, Lance Boehmer, Wayne Schmidt
- **Nays:** 0
- **Motion Carries:** 5-0

Staff will prepare a media release announcing the Board's decision to seek dismissal of the lawsuit without prejudice and emphasizing BATA's commitment to regional partnerships.

16. Other Business

None cited.

17. Next meeting

Thursday, December 10, 2026
1:00 p.m.
Hall Street Transfer Station - Conference Room
115 Hall Street, Traverse City, MI 49684

18. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Meeting Minutes Submitted by: Kelly Walter

Meeting Minutes Approved on: _____

Gwenne Allgaier, Secretary: _____