

**MINUTES OF THE  
EAGLE VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
October 11, 2023**

A meeting of the Eagle Valley Transportation Authority (“Authority”) Board of Directors (“Board”) was held on October 11, 2023, at 12:30 p.m. The meeting was held in person at the Avon Council Chambers located at 100 Mikaela Way, Town of Avon, Colorado, 81620, and on zoom. Notice of the meeting was posted on October 6, 2023, and included agenda items, location and time, as well as the teleconference information needed to participate in the public portion of the meeting. The Notice of Board of Directors Meeting dated October 6, 2023, and the certification of posting are attached hereto.

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**ATTENDANCE**

**Directors in Attendance:**

Director Amy Phillips, Mayor and Councilor, Town of Avon

Director Dave Eickholt, Beaver Creek Metro District

Director Jeanne McQueeney, Commissioner, Eagle County

Director Barry Davis, Councilor, Town of Vail (via Zoom)

Director Earle Bidez, Mayor, Town of Minturn

Director Nick Sunday, Councilor, Town of Eagle.

Director Dana Veljacic, Member of the Board of Trustees of the Town of Red Cliff

**Directors Absent:**

All Directors were present for this meeting.

**Also in Attendance:**

Tanya Allen, Executive Director, EVTA

Larry Tennenholz, Acting Director, ECO Transit

Jeff Wetzel, Operations Manager, ECO Transit

Greg Barret, Safety & Training Supervisor, ECO Transit

Jessie Cooper, Fleet Asset Supervisor, ECO Transit

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Vanesa Duarte, Admin/Fiscal Tech, ECO Transit  
Dayana Herr, Admin Supervisor, ECO Transit  
Jodi Doney, Terminal Operations Manager, EGE airport  
Chris Romer, President and CEO, Vail Valley Partnership  
Jordan Winters, Operations Manager, Town of Vail  
Tim McMahon, Community Member  
Kristen Hartel, Palmer Fund  
Laura Hartman, Palmer Fund  
Teri Ross, Community Member  
Bryan Woods, Community Member

**Attendance Via Zoom**

Geoff Grimmer, Town of Eagle  
Joanna Kerwin, Community Member, Edwards Metro District  
Todd Williams, Community Member  
Clay Williams, Community Member

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**APPROVAL OF THE  
AGENDA**

Director Phillips presented the agenda for the meeting. Director Bidez motioned to approve the Agenda. Director Sunday seconded this motion, which passed with a unanimous 7-0 vote through a roll call.

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES  
AND FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS**

Director Phillips presented the Minutes dated September 13, 2023 for approval and asked if any other Directors had any questions or requests for corrections. Hearing none, Director Sunday moved to approve the minutes and financial statements. Director Eickholt seconded the motion, which passed with a unanimous 7-0 vote through a roll call.

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**PUBLIC COMMENT**

During the public comment section, Director Sunday mentioned that he is up for reelection in his jurisdiction in

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November. He wanted to deliver a message to the board in the event that he is not reelected. He shared his belief that the EVTA Board should focus on the individuals who generate tax revenue for the project. He pointed out that 72% of Eagle's community members commute up Valley to work, which in turn supports the Vail, Avon, and Beaver Creek communities. He further explained that by increasing public transit services to Down Valley residents, they could save up to a thousand dollars in car expenses, thereby making housing in the valley more affordable for them.

Tim McMahan, a community member, said that a noon meeting on a Wednesday is not a suitable time for community members who rely on the bus to attend these board meetings. He believes that the Vail-Beaver Creek Express primarily benefits Vail Resorts and tourists and does not truly benefit the local community. Additionally, he stated that cheaper flights do not have a significant positive impact on the locals but instead benefit the tourists once again. Mr. McMahan also expressed concerns about EVTA contracting with SP Plus for winter service, focusing on their hiring and housing practices. He suggested gathering community input through surveys, which could be facilitated via the ECO Transit app.

Kristen Hartel, a community member from the Town of Eagle, thanked the Board Members for their time and emphasized that the purpose of the EVTA was to help address climate needs, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. She advocated for Eagle to receive an equitable share of services and benefits for its contributions to the EVTA and noted the positive climate impacts of providing more reliable and cost effective public transportation options for Eagle.

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## **AGENDA ITEMS**

### **5. EGE Air Alliance Update – 2024 Minimum Revenue Guarantee Opportunities**

Chris Romer, the President and CEO of Vail Valley Partnership and Director of the EGE Air Alliance, and Jodi Doney, Terminal Operations Manager of the EGE airport, presented updates related to Eagle County Regional Airport operations and flight prospects for the coming year.

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Romer explained that the Air Alliance works to maintain existing flights and secure new ones, thereby increasing the number of destinations that can be reached from the EGE airport. This is accomplished through a program called Minimum Revenue Guarantees, or MRGs, which provide airlines with financial incentives to offer new routes to the airport.

Ms. Doney shared updates regarding the winter schedule totaling 12 non-stop destinations, including new Delta non-stop flights to LA and increased American Airlines service to both Miami and LA.

Mr. Romer explained that the Air Alliance is currently working to bridge the gaps in their destinations map, particularly in the Pacific Northwest, Seattle, and international destinations, such as Mexico City, Monterrey, and Toronto. One of their primary objectives is to cater to the local market by introducing low-cost carriers and additional services during the summer months.

Mr. Romer discussed the upcoming capital projects, one of which is the design of an international terminal. Upon completion, EGE airport will be the only mountain resort airport in Colorado with an international connection.

Turning to Minimum Revenue Guarantees, Mr. Romer explained the nature of the program, adding that traditionally users of the program graduate to the free market within three years. Funds needed for summer service would be identified and requested from EVTA by January or February, and funds for winter service by mid-July or August. \$800,000 was being requested for the 2024 budget based on current prospects.

Director McQueeney inquired about the status of the MRG program usage by airlines at EGE airport. Mr. Romer replied that, currently, no airlines are using the program.

Director Eickholt asked for financial data from the EGE Air Alliance, specifically what portion of their revenue would be coming from the EVTA. Mr. Romer said he would follow up and share this data with the Board.

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## **5.1 Public Comment**

Mr. Tim McMahon, a community member, asked how much money Vail Resorts contributed towards MRGs. He also asked about what happened to unused MRG funds.

Ms. Joanna Kerwin, a community member of the Edwards Metro District, encouraged the Board to share information about the allocation of funds from the airport with the community.

Peter Dann, the Chairman of Air Alliance, expressed his excitement about the new service, stating that they are currently in the best shape they have ever been, including its new relationship with the EVTA. He emphasized that their ability to attract new routes was subject to the airlines' planning horizon which often spanned several seasons.

## **6. ECO Transit Winter 2023-2024 Season Update**

ECO Transit's Acting Director, Larry Tennenholz, updated the Board on winter hiring trends and progress on maintenance and PM compliance.

Executive Director Allen highlighted the improvements made to the Winter Service, including the addition of 30 minute service in the evenings on Highway 6 and the fare-free Vail-Beaver Creek Express with enhanced service. She added that the SP Plus contract was finalized and highlighted the service and organizational benefits this service would provide, including experience with contract management, better connections between high-volume stops, and increased capacity on Highway 6.

Director Eickholt inquired about the target number of full-time employees (FTEs) required for the Winter Season and where ECO stood. Mr. Tennenholz said they had 41 of the required 42 operators, with a goal of having 45 on board to allow for additional flexibility.

Executive Director Allen presented additional information regarding the proposed 25% regular fare reduction discussed at the September meeting. This included analysis of ridership impacts that confirmed the increase in demand would remain

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manageable with a 25% fare reduction but begin to strain the system at higher reductions.

### **6.1 Public comment**

Mr. Tim McMahon, a member of the community, inquired about the current status of the Proterra electric vehicles. He expressed his opinion that the free service provided during the Winter Season only benefits Vail Resort employees and guests and said that has personally experienced difficulties trying to ride the bus due to its high demand in the early morning. He also inquired about the benefits that Valley workers would receive from this project, as they are the ones paying taxes and fares to ride the bus.

Ms. Kristen Hartel, a member of the community, inquired about a comment she had heard regarding the 50% fare reduction proposal. The comment suggested that such a reduction would result in a significant increase in ridership, which would be unsustainable for the transit service. Ms. Hartel emphasized the need for EVTA to focus on improving infrastructure and services for public transit in the Downvalley area. She stated that finding ways to fulfill this need should be the primary goal for EVTA.

Executive Director Allen acknowledged the need for additional service, adding that the EVTA was working on increasing staff and equipment to meet both existing demand and the increased demand expected when a larger portion of the system transitions to fare-free.

### **6.2 Seasonal Fare Discussion**

Executive Director Allen presented the proposed fare schedule and clarified that the proposed 25% fare reduction will only impact Regular Fares and not any discounted fares, such as Youth or Senior Fares, or Premium Fares on the Leadville route.

Director Eickholt moved to approve the proposed Fare Schedule for Winter 23-24 effective November 26, 2023. Director McQueeney seconded the motion, which passed with a unanimous 7-0 vote through a roll call.

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## **7. 2024 Initial Budget Presentation**

Executive Director Allen presented a draft of the 2024 EVTA budget, noting that it was developed in collaboration with Eagle County and incorporated shared expectations surrounding the ECO Transit transition. This included an expectation of sales tax levels consistent with 2023 and a transfer of operational responsibilities at approximately mid-year.

Combined revenue for 2024, including both the new EVTA and the existing portion of the ECO Transit tax that will be assigned to EVTA, totaled over \$24 million, with \$17 million in projected expenditures. The bulk of the \$17 million was for purchased transportation, which includes Eagle County's cost of operating ECO Transit for the first half of the year and \$1.2 million is for the operating contract with SP Plus.

Approximately \$1.7 million in 2024 revenues would be allocated to a Transit Capital Fund, to be used for new and replacement vehicles, transit facilities, and equipment. \$800,000 was requested for the Air Fund and \$1 million for the Housing Fund. The expectation was that EVTA would assume responsibility for at least some of the housing currently leased by ECO Transit during 2024.

### **7.1 Public Comment**

Mr. Tim McMahon, a member of the community said that in his opinion the Board should be focusing on buying houses to have more staff as opposed to hiring contractors.

Ms. Joanna Kerwin, a community member from Edwards Metro District said that she believes there should be an updated strategic plan before January to communicate with the public.

## **8. Communications Update**

Mr. Ray updated the Board on recent press coverage and outreach activities.

## **10. Executive Director's Updates/Future Topics**

Executive Director Allen said that on the Agenda for the November meeting, there might be another review of the 2024 budget, as well as a deeper dive into the ECO Transit

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performance and metrics. Other planned subjects included housing strategy, health insurance, and retirement benefit options.

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**NEXT MEETING**

November 08, 2023.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:14 PM

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