

## Rural Transportation Committee Notes for informal meeting

November 20, 2013

*Committee* Alissa Dozier, Andrea Shaffer, Gary Minich, Marilyn Piasecki, Diane Drew,  
*Members Present:* Leslie Stanberry

*Others Present:* Outgoing member - Paul Rosenberger, Bruce Bird – County Engineer

*Committee* Mark Wicklund, Emily Dobson  
*Members Absent:*

*Next meeting:* December 18, 2013, 3:30 p.m. in Room 514 County Board Room,  
County Office Building

---

Alissa Dozier called the meeting to order.

Approval of August 21 minutes: Paul Rosenberger moved the minutes be accepted.

Public Comments: none

Old Business: Showbus Report - Laura Dick was not present. Paul Rosenberger said that there was an area agency conference call this a.m. for Board members and the Advisory Council, but this would not have affected Laura. Alissa will check to see if she got the notification.

HSTP Report – Eileen Sierra emailed members stating she had the flu and is unable to attend, but that she had no updates for the committee at this time. There is going to be an HSTP meeting in December at Easter Seals.

Mark Wicklund Report – No updates at this time.

New Business: None

Gary Minich asked if anyone had any feedback as to whether the bus service was working. Every time Laura is present, she says that ridership is increasing. Leslie Stanberry said that she is hearing good things from their participants that come to the Senior Center. Marilyn Piasecki said that at Starting Point, they also have people that are using it especially for out of town appointments. Judy Gibbs, the person that works with WIC, are trying to work with them to see if they can get it so that new mothers with infants in critical care at St. John's or Champaign can use Showbus to go over and visit with their new babies.

Paul Rosenberger said his thoughts are that it depends on word of mouth to be the advertising for the Showbus. Spreading the word is the key.

Gary Minich said that the last time they had met with Eileen, one of the topics was publicity. The feedback from the service participants was that there was no consensus on how to pursue

publicity. Eileen is working a lot with the smaller communities who have weekly newspapers because they are easier to work with and always looking for content to include.

Marilyn Piasecki said that she thought that the ridership in many of the smaller towns like Macon, Argenta, etc... is increasing because she is seeing a lot of their clients using it more. Once you get someone in the community starting to use it, they talk to more people in the community and then suddenly the ridership goes up.

Gary Minich said that last time Laura had reported that they were doing pretty good with ridership in the north parts of the county, but not too well in the southern parts.

Leslie Stanberry voiced agreement that word of mouth was good advertising, especially since it is free. Just seeing the vehicle out and about helps too. They've been around the Senior Center quite a bit.

Paul Rosenberger said it isn't free, but there is a small fee. It is very small when compared to driving your car.

Diane Drew added that it is especially good if they don't have a car. Gary Minich added that some do not have a driver's license either. Marilyn Piasecki stated that that is why Judy Gibbs was worried about the new mothers. Some of them are 16 or 17 years old and they are not able to drive. If their parent can't take them over, they need a way to go over and see their new babies.

Leslie Stanberry said that she thought there may be some opportunity for some growth next year. Number 1, St. Mary's isn't doing their transportation service. Lakeshore Connections is terminating their services. That is something Showbus should be able to step into. There have been many complaints about the discontinuation of the Lakeshore Connections service. It would be interesting to talk to Laura about whether they saw an increase when St. Mary's eliminated it this summer. Paul Rosenberger added that this is not entirely in the gray area, but a lot of it is and it's an opportunity. Leslie Stanberry said it has affected a lot of the seniors that come to the Senior Center. That did not get into the Area Agency's report as one of the unmet needs in Macon County. Diane Drew said that the discontinuation of the service was not really publicized. They sent letters out to the participants. Leslie Stanberry asked if the Showbus was operating in the gray area? Paul Rosenberger said they operate just about anywhere that is not served by Decatur Public Transit service.

Diane Drew said that advertising is something they all struggle with. How do you advertise when advertising dollars are scarce and it is very expensive that is not an allowable expense. Andrea Shaffer suggested they could email information if there was a directory of services the clients use such as doctor's offices, hospitals, etc... She said she wasn't sure what the policy was and whether they would push it out or not. Paul Rosenberger said that there is the DOVE newsletter that would cover a lot of the same people. It was suggested that they would probably put it in there if someone would write it and send it to them. Diane Drew asked Leslie Stanberry if she usually put it in her newsletter and said that DOVE is doing a really great job with theirs because they usually email theirs out. Marilyn Piasecki said that when people call them for rides that they can't do, they always refer them to Showbus. Leslie Stanberry said that a lot of it is just seeing the bus around town. There was discussion as to whether the phone number is on the side of the bus. Bruce Bird looked it up and showed a picture that it is on there.

They all agreed that it just takes time like with anything new. They compared it to DeWitt County and how long it took there. Those people said they'd never use it and once they started using it, now the kids use it for the school. DeWitt had a history of a transportation program there that the Area Agency funded for years, so they had an idea of how it would work. Macon County has never had anything in the rural areas. Forsyth and Maroa have seen the bus more often so their ridership is increasing. Southern areas like Blue Mound and Macon are now beginning to use it a little more and an increase should be coming for that area.

Leslie Stanberry asked if Laura had been going to HSAC a lot. There was discussion that most of the committee members had not been there for a while. Gary Minich reported that there were 40 there last week and about 33 a couple of months ago at the General Meeting. The Senior Division will be meeting again in January. Diane Drew said she had gone last week for the first time in a long time.

Diane Drew said that she was recently in Kmart and came across a man from Macon at the service desk who was asking about a ride. He was trying to find the number for Showbus. They had dropped him off there and he wanted to tell them to pick him up at Burger King. He said he rides it quite often and it is very convenient for him to come in from Macon. Kmart had no idea who Showbus was. I called the Office and got the number for him. Paul Rosenberger said that there were tri-folds available at the beginning. There was discussion as to whether the retailers would keep the brochures available. Marilyn Piasecki added that if they have the maps and bus route schedules for the City, it would be nice if they had that for Showbus. Paul Rosenberger asked about the possibility of asking Decatur Transit to include a statement at the bottom indicating for Rural Transportation, call this number. Everyone agreed that that might be a good idea but they weren't sure of conflict of interest. It was agreed that someone should approach the City on that.

#### Committee Chair Report –

Bruce Bird said that on the issue of who was going to be the PCOM for Showbus. At one time, it was thought that every county was supposed to have one, but it has turned out that it is only the county that the funds pass through, which is McLean County. The assistant to the County Engineer of McLean County is the PCOM for McLean County, so in essence that person is the PCOM for Showbus for all the other counties. It just means he is the person who has to sign off on all the paperwork for the system.

He said he hopes that the compromise, whatever they came up with, is enough that we don't have to go and do this dance with IDOT again at the end of the fiscal year because of bookkeeping or something. The Feds are mandating that certain steps have to be met and IDOT cannot meet them, so they are trying to give that to us. It seems like right now all of that stuff should be taken care of. Whatever billings Laura is sending in, she should be getting paid on the state side now. We can find out next month when Eileen can be here.

#### Miscellaneous Business –

Alissa Dozier made a motion to have Jeannie Durham be the non-member secretary for the committee as provided for in the by-laws, seconded by Marilyn Piasecki, and motion passed.

Alissa announced that the next meeting was scheduled for December 18 and dismissed the group.