

## **Rural Transit Advisory Group**

*February 26, 2014*

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

*Others Present:* Laura Dick, Joselyn Stewart, Paul McChancey, Bruce Bird

*Committee Members Absent:* Mark Wicklund

*Next meeting:* March 26, 2014, 2:30 p.m. in Room 514 County Board Room, County Office Building

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Emily Dobson called the meeting to order.

Marilyn Piasecki made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 22, 2014 meeting, seconded by Gary Minich and the motion carried 7-0.

There were no Public Comments.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

UPDATE FROM SHOWBUS – Laura Dick reported that again, the weather has negatively impacted ridership. She said that they have run every day, but they warn people that it is really cold. They do not encourage them to postpone their trips unless the lift is needed. If it is below zero, it is very difficult to do that safely. It has been an extremely challenging winter.

Laura said that she received a phone call telling her that there are going to be more government offices closing in Decatur. Gary Minich said that the unemployment office closed and Marilyn confirmed that they have already moved to Springfield. Lesley Stanberry said DHS moved to the former unemployment office location on Pershing Road from where they were on Wood St. Emily said she thought another business that handles nursing homes has moved into the DHS building on Wood Street. Laura said her message came from an advocacy group asking if Showbus would be able to transport to Bloomington or Springfield from Decatur. Laura said their emphasis is on rural transportation, but if there were significant need and the committee addressed it, they would look at it.

The hospital contract is still pending and being reviewed by legal.

Laura said they are still being told the buses will be coming in May and they are trying to keep their buses up and running. It's been a challenge, especially with the flooding this past week and the expected snowstorm for this weekend.

Laura distributed graphs. She was asked if they had run the day of the ice storm. She said yes, but they were not able to get everywhere. She said the drivers were instructed not to go where they can't. She said if a road is completely ice crusted and a driver does not feel that it is safe,

they call and say they can't make it. People were driving out to meet the bus. After a while, people just have to get out and that makes it hard to stop running and just say stay home.

#### UPDATES FROM HSTP (via email from Eileen)

Training for PCOMs was held yesterday. An extra copy of the packet and documents that were provided will be posted on the HSTP website. The next required training for PCOMs is April 1-3. At that one, there will be a training to cover Capital Asset Procurement Requirements such as regulations for when you buy or bid facilities under FAT funding for PCOMs and then a training day for operators, with the rest of the regular RTAC Conference following afterwards.

Tomorrow, there is an HSTP meeting being held in Champaign from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Anyone is welcome.

They are expecting the CBP application to come out at any time.

Some of the strategies and barriers will be discussed. The southern group is interested in disaster and emergency preparedness while the group here is more interested in health care and transportation.

Based on PCOM training information, it looks like there will be a new round of intercity bus applications coming out soon from DIPIT.

For vehicle delivery information, there is a website and a person named Mike Healy where information about the delivery schedule for vehicles posted. Easter Seals should be getting their vehicle fairly soon.

All of Macon County's 5310 triennial reviews have been completed and are being processed. IDOT and DIPIT will be going through their triennial reviews during the summer and fall of 2015.

On Saturday, there was a training for drivers in Urbana that was very successful. There were about 45 drivers being trained. They did all three of the required training in one day and people were able to be certified in one day.

On March 20, there will be a southern sub-regional meeting. The region is divided by the North and South. The north region has the urbanized areas with the bigger population areas and the south is the area south of Hwy 36. They are focusing on emergency and disaster preparedness.

Meetings with Lakeland College about training mechanics to work on the equipment have started. There is also follow up with Richland being done to see if they have interest in that type of training.

#### OTHER UPDATES

Lesley Stanberry said they are working on updating the Senior Services Directory. It has been 10 years since the last update. The booklet was 37 pages and was primarily for the other agencies. They also did a 4 page booklet that was given to seniors. She said they are doing both. The one for the seniors should be done by Senior RAMA to give out. Several agencies are working together and monies are coming from ASAC and United Way.

## NEW BUSINESS

Paul McChancey reported that IDOT has just sent out the application materials for FY15. He said that they had been talking about covering the grey areas for some time and now would be the appropriate time to make a proposal to IDOT on how this can be done. The City is willing to act as the flow through for funding. He said they would not be handling the contract, but would need from this group how much money they want, what they are proposing for the next fiscal year and how it is going to be handled. Laura asked when it had been released and Paul said about two days ago. Marilyn asked when the application was due. Paul said April 1<sup>st</sup> but in past years they accepted applications later. He wasn't sure how firm the April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline was. Marilyn asked what the gray areas were. Bruce said it is the areas inside the urban area defined by Federal Transit and the US Census Bureau that is not in the Decatur Public Transit service area or served by rural transportation. The fringe areas around the outside that Showbus has been handling some of on an incidental pass by basis up to this point. Paul said they would continue to do that as there is no reason to stop. Bruce said this is a different pot of money. There would be a second operator that would handle just those individuals. Paul explained that at the current time, there are two operators. One is a delivery company, Alpha & Omega and the other is a new taxi company called Decatur City Taxi & Delivery. Paul explained that this is a county function and not something that the city would be managing. Laura said IDOT hired a firm called RLS to come through and do compliance reviews on the rurals to make certain that when IDOT gets its FTA Triennial, they pass it. One question that keeps getting asked is if there is any linkage with urban and the answer now is no, except incidentally. Laura said she was going to ask questions because IDOT keeps changing how they view it. She said her understanding was that if Showbus ever participated in something that was urban, a different fleet would be needed. It could be Showbus titled, but it could not be a 5311 fleet because 5311 is rural. The money would also have to be separate. There is legislation pending that would not allow the use of DOAP in adjacent geographic areas. DOAP is the downstate state money which you used to be able to use surplus down state money in any area as long as it was adjacent to your area as long as you were not stepping on the toes of another provider. It could be rural & urban if the urban approved it. Or, it could be rural & rural if there was no other rural provider. That may be changing so the money won't be able to be used in an adjacent area. That would also impact our ability. Marilyn asked how many people are in the gray areas in Macon County. Bruce asked if there was record of which ones had been picked up and which ones that had not. Laura said they had not turned anyone down and they don't actively advertise. Bruce asked if she could separate that out so they'd have an idea of how many people in the gray area have been accessing Showbus service. Laura said yes and referenced her graphs, stating that a little of Mt. Zion would be rural and the same with Forsyth. Paul added that most of Forsyth is covered. In order to be urbanized, it has to be a highly populated area. So, you have some rural subdivisions that have a lot of population in them, but they are outside of the city limits and so fall into the gray area. Laura said that some folks give the home city of Decatur, but that is a very general term because it may be a Decatur address, but still be outside the operating area. Bruce asked if that would be Long Creek, because Long Creek addresses are Decatur. Marilyn added Harristown. Bruce asked if the totals on the graphs for January would be mainly Decatur. Laura agreed and said that because of the donut shape, they go through the gray area. Emily asked how they should proceed. Paul McChancey said that at this point, they did not need to set up a contract, but they did need to figure out what type of contract they were going to have and they need to make an estimate of how much DOAP money would be needed to reimburse. He said they would be eligible for 65% reimbursement and it would be on the State fiscal year basis. He said he already had the maps of the gray areas, so he wouldn't need that, but they need to take a stab out at how many rides would be served through this additional program. You will still be running Showbus through the

donut. Marilyn said they need to be careful about hurting one to help another. Paul said that they may find out it is cheaper to run through a separate contract rather than to provide your own rides. He said that was something they would have to take a look at themselves. Sometimes, it is cheaper to hire taxis or livery companies than to pay your own drivers to do it. It was agreed that the biggest challenge would be the 35% match. Paul said he would need to know where the 35% match would come from because IDOT will ask that question.

Bruce said that to get an idea cost wise, it might be a good idea to ask Eileen if she knows of any places that have one of those in place that we could model ours off of. You could make a comparison of what the overall urban area size is to get a general idea about how much you could potentially expect to have. The idea of, if there is one out there, you can ask where they get their 35% match from. Marilyn said that another thing she thought would be affected would be the MAAI's coming in with the managed health care and the two agencies developing or having their own transportation systems or contracting with their own transportation people coming in. That will affect the gray areas too. Laura said that another struggle is that you used to be able to use public aid as the match. Now, as Molina & Health Alliance have moved in, both of those companies are for profit, which means that it cannot be used. That is also a strong impact. Paul said that Champaign / Urbana runs some sort of rural transportation system and they may have some useful statistics. Laura said they run between Rantoul and Champaign and do not serve a donut area. Emily said she would be seeing Eileen the next day and would speak to her about it, but the committee would probably need to put their heads together prior to the next meeting and maybe sit down with Paul to look at the information that is needed. She said she thought they should let the county board know that this is being looked at and said she would email Jay Dunn. Bruce agreed that she should let Jay know because anything that goes through will be under the auspices of the county and it will have to be run through and approved. She requested that everyone start thinking creatively how they can make this happen for the people that need rides. Paul said he could supply the latest fares that are being charged by these companies.

Emily thanked Paul for the information and said the committee has a lot to look into. She said this is a really good opportunity to make sure the county is totally covered. She said she would also inform Mark Wicklund, chair of the committee.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.