

Rural Transit Advisory Group

April 23, 2014

Committee Members Present: Mark Wicklund, Emily Dobson, Marilyn Piasecki, Gary Minich, Andrea Shaffer, Leslie Stanberry, Alissa Dozier (arrived at 2:55 p.m.)

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

Committee Members Absent: Diane Drew

Next meeting: May 28, 2014, 2:30 p.m. in Room 514 County Board Room, County Office Building. Mark said this date is close to the Memorial Day Holiday and may need to be changed. Notice will be sent out if it is.

Chair Mark Wicklund called the meeting to order.

Emily Dobson made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 27, 2014 meeting, seconded by Gary Minich and the motion carried 6-0.

There were no Public Comments.

SHOW BUS UPDATE

Laura Dick reported that the St. Mary's contract is signed on the Showbus side and has gone back to their corporate for approval.

The first round of buses were supposed to be delivered in May. Unfortunately, Laura said she has not received any VINs which is not a good sign at this point. It will start July 1 however we have to do it.

The vehicle application is in process. It won't go through Region 8, but will go through Region 6 because there are six replacement vehicles on that application plus another one for Kankakee.

Just last week another call was received for vehicle applications under another federal funding pool, 5339, with a very short turn around. The same vehicles were used on that one as were used on the 5311. The reason for that is that it would be a surprise if all six were received on the 5311, but since it is on the 5339 too, it gives a little more of a boost. Eileen Sierra asked what the 5339 name was. Paul McChancey said it had changed from 5309 and is a discretionary bus fund. This was for para-transit and is rolling stock capital vehicles. Laura went on to say that the advantage is that with the same vehicles being used, it gives two pools to pull from.

The buses are a waiting game that has become extremely critical. The IDOT contracted party compliance review has been gone through and again, our critical shortcoming was lack of vehicles.

The next round of East Central Illinois Agency on Aging meeting is tomorrow at the Senior Center at 10 a.m. Laura said her position is that she is thrilled that it looks like the hot meals are going to

stay hot, but getting transportation money back is not going to happen. Pushing that too much would probably be a loss of political good will for no good reason.

Laura, who was unable to attend last month's meeting, said that in reading through the minutes, she realized that a lot of it had to do with the gray area. The shed came up. A couple of things with the shed is that even to look at the shed, there has to be enough buses to put enough of them in the shed so we have a surplus so that if one doesn't start in the morning, it won't hurt anything. We tend to integrate local staff into the Showbus staff one at a time to make sure they are integrated and understand the training. She repeated that it is all pretty critical and revolves around when these buses are delivered and she would feel better if they had gotten the VINs, but they haven't, which causes the assumption that they have not been built yet. Usually the VINs are gotten 3 to 4 weeks ahead of time. This is school bus season and school buses always take priority over para-transit. They are a bigger money maker. It's a very slow process to build para-transit buses. She repeated that she was nervous, but said the contract has been signed and they will abide by the contract and somehow make it work.

There is not a final list of St. Mary riders and it's amazing how much that population moves. The whole reason for doing it is in hopes that the number will go up as we encourage that service to be used in rural areas.

With summer coming back the numbers are getting a bit better. Charts and graphs were distributed to members. Mark Wicklund asked what is pushing the numbers in Macon. Marilyn said she thought it was word of mouth because they have clients that come out of it and they talk about it. Laura agreed and said they would start another round of dropping brochures to small community libraries.

Update from HSTP

Eileen Sierra said that the Southern Regional meeting was held last month. Macon County is considered northern, but in that meeting, the Veterans Directory was distributed. It compiles lists and times for the Danville VA shuttle. The pickups here are at the Kmart parking lot. Currently they do not take oxygen, but that may have changed and will need to be updated. Currently it is in draft form, but will have it sent out to everyone. Eileen requested everyone skim over it to see if there is anything they'd like to have added. She explained that VFW's and their volunteer programs could be listed, but many of the programs are intermittent and not reliable. So, these are not the best transportation source. She said she would go with Showbus first and then if they can't provide it, then the DAV Van (Danville Area Veterans). They go to Bloomington & Peoria too. All those major shuttles are included.

Emergency transportation for countywide natural disasters was also discussed at the meeting, specifically the need for the EMA people to include people with disabilities when they have county wide drills. We need to talk to the centers that have those about practicing getting out of the building and knowing where to take them next. Many of the buildings being used as shelters are not ADA compliant, but there are mobility tools and tricks that can on hand that will make a difference for any natural disaster. A list of resources is being compiled and will be distributed to members (through Jeannie) when ready. Eileen said they would like to have a drill with Macon County working with vulnerable populations. They have to do it once every 2 years to stay certified as Disaster Ready. Eileen asked Bruce Bird to assist her in contacting Jim Root to discuss. One finding talked about is that a lot of people are relying so much solely on the Public Transit providers or school buses that if there ever was a county wide disaster, we would not

have the capacity to transport. You might have to go into priorities of where you move vehicles. Capacity and demand have to be considered. A lot of times, all major facilities are relying on one source or themselves to do and they don't actually have enough capacity.

The next meeting is May 15 in Tuscola. It is the CVP grant application endorsement meeting.

Other UPDATES:

Bruce Bird stated that at previous meetings, Paul McChancey had mentioned that he was putting together his budget and he needed numbers for the gray areas. Between the two of us, we came up with a budget amount. That budget amount does not obligate us to it, but works as a place holder so we can get started with this fiscal year and it is sitting there and ready to go. Bruce said he felt pretty confident about the number. The next step would be to determine what to do with it from there. He asked if the County Board should be approached. There are a couple of ways it can go. The possibility exists, but we would have to sit down with the City to discuss, but we could contract with the city to be the dispatcher for the service. Again, we would have to see what this group and what the County Board wants. Gary asked how the numbers for the gray area were established. Bruce said you have to take a guess. He said he had contacted Eileen to see if there was an example. Eileen explained that there is none, except Peoria who is doing it right now. The way they are doing it is that the 5311 operator is taking it on. It is not the County itself, just using the gray area money. They are choosing to go the intermingling route of tracking 5311 and urbanized for the gray. Theirs is a very different model. There are two great aspects to it though. IDOT says they are willing to look at funding taxi vans to be accessible if purchased through CVP - if you guys go for purchase of service for taxis. There are also Van Pools which are more job related. This is like an adult car pool for random hour shift jobs. We could talk about creative ways to make the match such as providing gas, a metered wash bay if we could figure out what the water costs. The Decatur Park Foundation, which is not for profit, has a shed where they could store the vehicles and they have a maintenance group that are very strong. If they were willing to kick in some gas from the County, that can be used as local money. You can use Federal and State money to match in this grant money. Mark asked Paul if there was an idea of where the city would stand budget wise and if it had already been presented and approved. Paul said that there had not been discussion about it because it is a County responsibility and just pass through of State grant money for the City. That was approved a year ago by an intergovernmental agreement. This has no effect on the City Budget and so did not need any approval from the City Council. It has been submitted to IDOT as part of the grant and it went in just before April 1. There have been questions from IDOT on the budget, but nothing to do with the gray area funding. That will be coming up later. Marilyn asked what the ballpark of the budget was. Paul said about \$20,000. Emily asked if they were looking at purchase of service from the taxi companies. Paul said that is what the estimate was based on @ \$15 a ride. Bruce said that they had extrapolated the numbers, but that it is more of a placeholder. An agreement with the City or with the County would have to be put together to get it off the ground, but we haven't gotten that far yet. The Transportation Committee meeting is in about 2 hours and Bruce said he was planning to bring it up as a discussion item and question those committee members what their ideas and thoughts are. There will be a few more conversations at the County level before it moves forward. Eileen asked about the \$20,000 and if it was based on the number of rides that are anticipated to be provided or the actual amount of money that is available in that grant. Paul said no, there is plenty more money available. This is based on an estimated number of rides and a 20% overhead charge. Mark requested that Bruce tell the Transportation Committee members to contact him with questions.

Eileen asked about an RFP that was being worked on during the primer process. Emily said it never got sent out. Mark said he would like to see where we go and move forward with this before we get back into that process. This committee seems to be moving in the right direction so let's try to keep that going. We'll see what Transportation has to say, and then Mark said he would talk with Jay Dunn to let him know what is going on.

Emily asked if the taxi capacity is available in Decatur at this time. Mark said there is a brand new cab service in town. He said he had talked with them at the St. Patrick's Day Parade. ADA wise, they are really limited except for the Party Bus. It is unsure what is going on with A-OK. Alpha & Omega has been seen around town quite a bit.

Paul McChancey reported that he had gotten an email a short time ago from Alpha & Omega that they had 2 new rear entry wheelchair accessible vans. He said he knew they had 2 other wheelchair accessible vans, so it might bring them up to 4. It's getting to be a large fleet of wheelchair accessible vehicles. Mark said he had also gotten that email. Eileen asked what sort of vehicles they were. Paul thought mini vans and sounded like they were the purpose built MV. Mark said he was familiar with the MV1's and they are not very popular except in Chicago. It is basically a 40's / 50's checkered cab on steroids. They are out of Florida with Ford chassis and drive trains. They are nice and the price is nice too. They go for about \$31,000 as opposed to a van base starting at \$36,000, but you are limited with occupancy. You might get 2 adults in chairs at a time.

Eileen Sierra pointed out an error where she misspoke in the last minutes. She said she was quoting a light duty price and it's actually closer to \$37,500 for mini vans right now through the CVP. These are the Braun mini vans. She said they are so nice. You have a front passenger that you can have a tie down, auto close doors and key fobs.

Meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.