

Rural Transit Advisory Group

May 28, 2014

Committee Members Present: Mark Wicklund, Marilyn Piasecki, Gary Minich, Diane Drew, Andrea Shaffer, Leslie Stanberry

Others Present: Joselyn Stewart, Laura Dick, Bruce Bird, IDOT Representative, Jay Dunn

Committee Members Absent: Emily Dobson, Alissa Dozier

Next meeting: June 25, 2014, 2:30 p.m. in Room 514 County Board Room, County Office Building.

The meeting was called to order by Mark Wicklund.

Minutes from the April 23, 2014 meeting were approved by motion by Gary Minich, second by Marilyn Piasecki and motion carried 5-0.

UPDATE FROM SHOWBUS

Laura Dick reported that the St. Mary's contract is completely signed and is ready to go July 1st. No word on the buses. They've been delayed again. They are now looking at maybe late June. Laura said she has talked to IDOT about the bus that was wrecked in December that they were not allowed to fix because the insurance company believed it had to be marked as totaled. It is now a salvaged vehicle and cannot be insured. She said they have asked for that money to be released so that they can buy a few engines to rebuild some older buses. They haven't decided what they are going to do about that. CTA surplus buses should be coming, but there's been no word on it for weeks. Specs for the low rider have been submitted to IDOT. That is the kneeler bus for rural transit. They are working in conjunction with Springfield Mass Transit and are getting some dialogue from IDOT on that. The problem will be that Springfield wants to move quickly and they have federal approval for it. We can't piggyback without IDOT approval. It's a matter of seeing if we can get it done on time. The biggest immediate concern is busses. The legislation regarding changes to downstate did not move forward, so, as far as we know, none of that legislation will go into effect. It may mean that we remain where we are in funding. It may mean that we revert back to the old funding formula. No one really knows. It looks like we will have to start over again next year. Mark asked if there was a reason given for why the busses will not be here until late June. Laura said that most of our busses are super medium duties and they cannot pass inspection. We did send our mechanic with another social service agency picking up a medium duty a couple of weeks ago and that agency would like to lease that bus to us. It looks like a very nice bus. That is stuck in legal to determine whether we can lease it. Medium duty busses are being released, but the super mediums are not because they cannot pass.

Mark asked if Laura had any new flyers. Laura said she would mail them to the County Board Office.

UPDATE FROM HSTP

None.

OTHER UPDATES

Bruce Bird commented on an email from Paul McChancey in regard to the gray area. He said that initially they were looking at being able to provide dispatching services for the gray area. Upon further review they don't think they would be able to provide a good enough level of service with their existing personnel. They are bowing out of the possibility of being the dispatcher for the gray area for the County. Mark asked if it was just the dispatch part they are looking at. Bruce said they would have been dispatching a taxi service. He said Paul indicated that whoever was in the gray area would call in to dispatch, they would have to pay a nominal fee for the service which would probably make up the 35% match and the administrative fees would be covered by the grant monies. So, it's back to the drawing board. Marilyn asked if there would be enough traffic to warrant hiring a person. Bruce said that from Paul's response, no. The numbers we were looking at were partial numbers from Laura. There are clearly some pick up locales shown that are in the gray area. We added 10% to 20% on top of that to come up with an average number of riders so we could come up with a budget amount he could put in. He has the budgeted amount in there, but the question that comes up is how do we do it now?

Bruce asked if the committee wanted to try to get some input from some of the other social service agencies. Marilyn said that they had talked about Easter Seals and Macon Resources at the last meeting. Mark said that the issue would probably be the dispatch part. Bruce said it is set up in the grant application through IDOT to have administrative expenses reimbursed. It is all at 65% State money. You'd have to find some way to fashion it and find the 35% match from local funds. Bruce said that when he had met with Paul, he found out that they have their match with the fare. It covers a little above that, but they have their administrative expenses covered by tax dollars. If you find someone who would be interested in doing it, you'd have to come to an agreement of how they would cover those matching expenses. Mark said another problem with Easter Seals or other local agencies is whether they would have someone who would answer the phones 24 hours a day. He asked what the SHOWBUS hours were. Laura said they have someone monitor the phone from 3:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and actively answering from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. There is a time between 6:00 p.m. & 3:30 a.m. when the phones are not answered, but messages are listened to prior to opening. Andrea asked if there was criteria as to what would be expected as far as hours, setup, & standards. Bruce said not to his knowledge. He didn't think Decatur Public Transit has anyone answering phones 24 hours. He said he thought if someone would replicate what they do, that is what the community is accustomed to. The other possibility is to continue to serve that gray area population using the incidental transportation through SHOWBUS. The numbers we looked at were the numbers drawn off of what Laura had collected. She is handling it right now using the rural buses, but it is an incidental pick up. If they can pick up someone from the rural area if they are driving past, ok. The numbers we were counting were the incidentals being serviced by SHOWBUS already, even though they are in the grey area. Laura said the disadvantage is that they don't advertise in the grey area. It is by word of mouth, has to be incidental, and sometimes you create hard feelings because we can't go out of our way or design routes in the grey area. When St. Mary's starts and our service goes up, then we can add more to the grey area and again, as word gets out, demand may increase.

Mark said there are 2 other options. If we would not be able to find a social agency interested in picking it up, we could 1) go back to the beginning and start looking at some of the taxi services in town. There have been some changes. Another taxi service has been added and one has gone to shuttle service or 2) we can just leave it the way it is, but it depends on how long SHOWBUS is willing to continue to provide that service. We don't want them to go out of their way. We don't

want to cross those lines. Marilyn added that it will make a big difference when St. Mary's kicks in and we see how much more business comes then. Mark asked if St. Mary's would be picking up and dropping off or just utilizing the SHOWBUS service for pick-ups and drop offs. Laura said the contract reads to bring them in to the center and bring them home at night or when they want to go. So, it is two trips a day. She said she did not know if it would expand to include other trips within the City. Lesley asked if the service was just for the Day Center and not for the hospital itself. Laura said at this point, it is just the center, but usually with contracts, after a while, they start expanding out. Lesley said that Lake Shore Connection is getting back into the trip business. They just sent a letter out. Laura said that when they started this in another facility, it took off the burden and allowed others to be freer to take them on day trips and make their programs a little more exciting because they were not burdened down with having to provide day in / day out transportation. It kind of changes the whole program.

Mark asked Bruce if the two of them could sit down with Paul and look at the numbers he came up to get an idea of what the match would look like. Bruce said he could send Mark emails to give him an idea to start with. Mark said that if they are going to look at RFPing this out to the taxi services, he'd like to know what they're looking at financial wise considering the match and everything. That's going to be a hard sell to the board, but if we have some good numbers to give, it might be a little easier. He asked the members if everyone was comfortable leaving it the way it is for now until some numbers could be gotten together and they can reach out to Easter Seals and Macon Resources to see if we can get them more involved. He asked if First Student was qualified for this type of grant services. No one knew. Laura said that they can respond to RFPs. Mark said that might be an option to question them and it may be a beneficial option with bus storage. He said he would reach out to them to see what their thoughts on it were.

Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m. by motion by Gary Minich, seconded by Marilyn Piasecki and motion carried 5-0.