

Rural Transit Advisory Group

October 22, 2014

Committee Members Present: Gary Minich, Alissa Dozier, Emily Dobson, Diane Drew, Mark Wicklund, Marilyn Piasecki, Andrea Shaffer

Others Present: Laura Dick, Eileen Sierra

Committee Members Absent: Leslie Stanberry

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 19, 2014 at 2:30 p.m. in Room 514 County Board Room, County Office Building.

Mark Wicklund called the meeting to order.

Gary Minich made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 24th meeting, seconded by Marilyn Piasecki and motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Eileen Sierra brought information about a grant opportunity put out by the National Center for Senior Transportation. The deadline to apply is November 7th. It is a timely, short, small, short-term grant for \$20,000. No match is required. They prefer agencies that are located in the community, however, in the grant application, they're encouraging public transportation and/ or senior organizations within the community to collaborate on doing mobility counseling. Mobility counseling is a mobility management tool that any counselor can take on doing or delivering. The scope is to encourage seniors to start using public transportation, whether it is urban or rural. It is a good opportunity, but it is a national grant so it is very competitive and it only lasts from December 22 thru May 31, 2015. Eileen offered to provide assistance in writing, drafting and submitting. She said she thought the members of the committee have really strong agencies that could do this, especially there are agencies from both the urban and the rural area, which is one of the requirements they have - to have a coordinator plan in place. Mark Wicklund asked if the money was to be used for advertisement & promotion. Eileen said it was more for reaching out to seniors who really need public transportation. You could do advertising as there is a line item for that in the budget, but they do have some requirements as far as mobility counseling. It can't be just advertising. Marilyn suggested it might be someone as a counselor, going in to the high rises, etc... giving motivational speeches to get them to ride the buses, etc... Andrea Shaffer asked about the requirements for the counseling and whether it needed to be someone specific to an agency or just a committee member. Eileen said it just says there has to be one hour of individual mobility counseling involved for each person that signs up for the program. They don't specify that it has to be a certified counselor. They want to have at least 2 supporting agencies besides the applicant and they specify that they would like to have public transportation support of it. Agencies they would like to see involved include care transition organizations, chronic disease self-management programs, Housing service programs for the Elderly, retirement communities, long term services, etc... It just has to be an existing program and it has to have sustainability. Laura Dick said it sounded to her that this committee could not apply. It would have to be an agency that is a 501C3 or governmental entity. Eileen agreed the committee itself could not apply. She said that her agency could possibly apply and then allocate it to the

committee, but that would not be preferable. That would cause delays and it would be better for the payments to be made directly to the agency doing the counseling. All the committee members agreed that each of them would be interested in applying, but all had concerns such as about hours. Andrea asked if there were requests for transportation outside of their hours, could they be referred to SHOWBUS. Eileen said that would be a possibility because they do stress the collaboration aspect. She said the County could apply, but that would again mean passing thru the funding and it is not encouraged. Mark Wicklund said they had some great agencies as part of the committee that he felt could use this. He asked again if the funds were solely for counseling, outreach and promotion for them to use the public transportation and not to provide rides. Eileen said it does not exclude funding of transportation, but it is only \$20,000 and it is not what the grant is designed for. Andrea added that since it has to sustain after it is up and running, that would not be feasible. Laura Dick asked if both urban and rural were in the pool. Eileen said yes, but you don't have to do urban. Since rural is new, you could just concentrate on that and say you're going to use it to get the word out and focus on getting seniors to use it. Laura asked if SHOWBUS were the lead agency, but whoever else was interested would be the ones providing it, that would work. Eileen agreed. All of the members agreed that they were interested. Eileen Sierra said she had been talking to the grant monitor and said she may be able to tell them, based on the scoring criteria, whether she recommends a particular agency being the lead. Chair Wicklund said it sounded like a good plan.

HSTP Update:

Eileen Sierra said she had recently sent the bi-week updates via email to all stakeholders and told members if they did not want them to let her know.

The State came back with the CVP application scores and Region 8 did very well. She said she hoped the awards would be coming out very soon for the individual agencies. They noted that, in our area, there are lapse policy and maintenance plans for ADA equipment throughout all applicants. That is something for the future and is somewhere we can strengthen the applications.

The next meeting is December 11th in Champaign at the DSC, Development Service Center.

At the last meeting, the effort to get another regional maintenance center was discussed. More community college programs and maintenance tec intern programs were also discussed. They are doing one at Parkland, but it was hopeful that one might be started at Richland and Lakeland. She asked for maintenance records for services such as oil changes, tires, repairs, who is being used, difficulties in finding services, etc... for specialized vehicles be emailed to her for her database. She said she was looking for a contact name at Richland for the automotive department since they are building a new facility and it would be a good time to see if they'd be willing. IDOT has encouraged submittal of a proposal for each community college to get special diagnostic software and tools so if they would be willing to take on these programs, they would be ready to provide that training and service. If it does come to be, hopefully they would open it up to operators in the region to use their centers. That means you are letting students learn on your vehicles, but they'd be supervised and they are much more affordable.

UPDATE FROM SHOWBUS

Laura Dick reported that even though they had thought that the CTA low rider was dead in the water, she had received an email saying they would be released in November and to be ready to accept them. She said she asked if they accept them if they would be responsible for getting

them to the life expectancy that FTA requires and CTA is saying they've gotten the buses excused by the FTA from the standards. They will not be in running condition. We will get "parts" buses along with the "possibly able to be run buses". This is because Optima went out of business. Gary Minich asked how many buses are expected. Laura said she thought there could be 3 that might run and 4 that will probably act as parts. It will be a big commitment just getting the buses here from Chicago. They probably won't even have tires, so will have to be flat-bedded. It is going to be costly just getting them here. That is why it was important to determine that the standards would not have to be met causing thousands and thousands of more dollars in expenditures.

St. Marys continues to be terrific to work with. The huge advantage is getting more visibility for our buses. The phone volume is going up.

Motion to adjourn was made by Andrea Shaffer, seconded by Gary Minich and the meeting adjourned @ 3:15 p.m.