

Rural Transit Advisory Group

March 23, 2016

Committee Members Present: Gary Minich, Andrea Shaffer, Diane Drew, Jay Dunn, Leslie Stanberry, Emily Dobson (arrived @ 2:35 p.m.), Becky Gillen

Others Present: SHOWBUS Representative – Laura Dick, Joselyn Stewart & John Williams – City of Decatur, Theresa Churchill – Herald & Review

Committee Members Absent: Alissa Dozier

Next meeting: Wednesday, June 22,, 2016 at 2:30 p.m. in Room 514 County Board Room, County Office Building.

Ms. Shaffer made a motion to approve the minutes from the prior meeting (12/16/15), seconded by Ms. Stanberry and the motion carried 6-0.

Public Comments: None

Old Business: None

SHOWBUS Update –

Ms. Dick reported that she had some good news. They finally received word that the Super Medium Duties have been built. They are in process of IDOT final inspections and then they will be released for each agency to check them. That creates a cascade of changes. One is that with taking some of the older buses out of service, hopefully the maintenance costs will go down. For Macon County, that has been the sticking point to opening the southern shed. Opening that southern shed has now been bumped up in priority. She said they are actively looking. The type of facility being sought is somewhat flexible. They have been looking for a covered area with electricity, but could deal with a lot less than that. They would prefer to stay in the rural area and are projecting that this southern shed would serve DeWitt and Macon Counties. She asked that anyone with any leads at all to contact them as they have not been having much luck on their own working with local realtors for some sort of leased facility. She said they are not in position at this point to look at purchasing and it would have to be a lease until it is seen what is happening with the capital on the state front. That is a real plus. She said they have continued to interview here and even going to Clinton is somewhat of a negative. Part of the problem has been that there has not been a physical presence. Even the presence in Clinton is just a parking lot with one or two buses parked there. She said she is not quite sure when the SMD's (super medium duties) would be coming in. The final IDOT inspection has already been delayed a week so it is not this week, but possibly next week. If they pass, the transition to the agencies should be by mid – April. There are 14 of them coming.

John Williams introduced himself as being with the City of Decatur taking Paul McChancey's place. He asked Ms. Dick about the vehicles and what they would do with the retired vehicles. She responded that they may put them in a reserved fleet or they are looking at the managed care rollout and that will take transportation so they may be looking at a 2nd fleet. She said they are not sure at this point and asked if he would be interested in them. They will talk at a later time.

Mr. Dunn asked for specs on what Ms. Dick was looking for in a shed. She said, in a perfect world, they would have a covered shed with a roll up electric door and with outlets to plug in diesel, but it could be trimmed down to a parking space with the potential of plug ins or even further down to just a fairly secure parking area where only gasers and no diesel would be parked. It is open to options. Mr. Dunn asked how many vehicles were being talked about. Ms. Dick said it would be a minimum of 4 and possibly up to 8 depending on the impact on the ability to recruit local drivers. She stressed that they really need to be able to recruit local drivers. He asked how tall & how wide the openings would need to be if an enclosed shed were located. Ms. Dick said she would send specs and if they were able to get a facility with electricity, they would look at bringing down the SMD's which are 33' (she thought). She will send the specs and said it also depends on the efficiency of the space. Mr. Dunn said he thought the Road Commissioners could possibly help if they had the information because they know a lot of people. Ms. Dick will send the info and it will be forwarded out to all the members. She said there are 2 priorities. They have not been able to move too far away from the main shed because the fleet was so old and a mechanic was needed available on short notice. Now, with new vehicles, the next priority is to get local drivers that they have just not been able to recruit. She said they believe a lot of that is due to not being able to point them to a physical place. Also, being able to develop a relationship with local garages is another priority because they like to have that for a lot of maintenance. The maintenance shed does a lot of complicated repairs and the P.M.'s and questionable things are sent out. She said they like to support the local maintenance facilities and garages. Mr. Dunn asked that contact info for Robyn McCoy from Workforce Investment Solutions be sent to Ms. Dick. He said he felt that her organization would be very helpful in finding drivers. Ms. Stanberry offered to let interviews be held at the Senior Center. Ms. Dick said they are looking for someone with a CDL, a perfect driving record, 3 years experience, a clean criminal record, and who is good with people. She said they are really expecting a lot.

Another extremely positive thing is that after years and years, in conjunction with Springfield Mass Transit, the low ramp specs have been released. That is the one that sinks down and the ramp comes out. The vender meeting where venders had an opportunity to ask questions has been held and they are now in process of looking at the deviations they want from the specs. Responses to the request for bids should be in by the end of the month. Hopefully, by mid-summer they will have the low ramp that will float between counties depending on need by folks who cannot use the lift.

More good news is that a lot of the capital money was zeroed out, but they have moved into a new facility a little sooner than expected. She said they got flooded out at the old facility and the new one is only about 3 miles from the old one. There is no rehab money so it is being done on the cheap, but because it is a good solid facility, it has been going very well. It also gives more visibility because it is right by I55. There are a lot more walk ins.

The application for FY2017 has been received, but we do not know what FY2017 will bring and are still in the same boat with 2016 not knowing how it will end up. She said that she has been hearing that a budget will not be passed until January. This is a terrible position because the apps went out late. There have been a lot of changes at IDOT with folks who used to facilitate as much as they could are now gone. 2017 is being submitted and they have been told to follow the legislation as it is now written and then waiting to see what happens.

HSTP Update –

Mr. Minich reported on the Region 8 meeting saying that they had broken up into committees and spent most of it looking at plans and discussing updates. He said that process will continue through June.

Ms. Dobson also reported that they have been working on the new 3 year plan. She said that a lot of the things in the old plan are no longer valid because either the goals have been met or are not possible due to lack of funding or falling by the wayside, etc... There is a lot of updating that needs to be done in actual terms of goals for improvement of service and increasing service, making the vehicle procurement process easier and all those sorts of things. A really good plan is necessary because with all the changes at IDOT, you don't know who will look at it or who will help our region improve rural transportation. The biggest things being talked about are increasing ridership, increasing service, improving hours of operation, etc... and it all hinges on funding and on the things that were just talked about. The new plan will be ready in June and it will be sent out to everyone.

Chair Dunn took a moment to ask the members to introduce themselves to Mr. Williams and why they are on this committee.

OTHER UPDATES – none

NEW BUSINESS – none

Chair Dunn announced that the next meeting will be June 22

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Minich, seconded by Ms. Dobson, motion carried 7-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m. Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham.