

## **Rural Transit Advisory Group**

*September 28, 2016*

*Committee Members* Diane Drew, Jay Dunn, Becky Edwards, Alissa Dozier, Emily Dobson  
*Present:*

*Others Present:* SHOWBUS Representative – Henry Dick

*Committee Members* Gary Minich, Leslie Stanberry  
*Absent:*

*Next meeting:* Wednesday, December 28, 2016 at 2:30 p.m. in Room 514 County Board Room, County Office Building.

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Diane Drew made a motion to approve the minutes from the prior meeting (6/28/16), seconded by Emily Dobson and the motion carried 5-0.

Public Comments: None

Old Business: None

NEW BUSINESS:

SHOWBUS Update –

Henry Dick distributed the unit report and said that everything is running pretty much as it always does. He said they are having the same issues as everyone else that is dealing with the State is having right now. The budget is “kind of” settled, but they are still working on getting their application approved.

All of the Super Medium Duties that were scheduled have been received. There have been quite a lot of maintenance issues. The issues are just a lot of little build issues. He said they are working out the kinks and have had a few roadside issues which have been very frustrating. The vender is pretty backed up trying to deal with warranty related things. He said they are working with them trying to get them on the road and comfortable. Ms. Drew asked if they had roadside issues with people aboard. Mr. Dick said there had only been one of those issues and there were a few people on the bus in Ford County and there was a vehicle close by that was able to stop and pick them up. Maintenance then went out and brought the bus in. He explained that the kinks are being worked out and it is starting to stabilize now. Mostly the issues are hose clamps that are not properly tightened, door bolts, plugs, etc.... Things that should have been double checked at the factory.

He reminded the group that they are dealing with issues around the fact that Health Alliance pulling out of this area, so for their clients, in terms of transportation, there are rumors that Meridian may potentially move in. He said they are seeing what that means for them and how to arrange that. From what Health Alliance has said, it should be a smooth transition. Most of the clients will get bumped to the state and then will have the option to choose. Emily Dobson asked if Meridian has their own system like Health Alliance does. Mr. Dick said he thinks not. They normally work with an organization called MTM. He said he was not sure how or how well they

do that. Diane Drew said that since Health Alliance had quit the MM/Al clients, it probably cut down considerably. Mr. Dick agreed and said he was curious about whether they will have to end up providing for a lot of unpaid rides as people transition and they don't know what their numbers are, but they still need transportation. Emily Dobson asked if they still go through First Transit. Mr. Dick said as far as he understands, they will be dealing directly with First Transit again like they did before. He said he heard from Health Alliance that there was an option for another company to come in and just take all of their clients, but based on their books, no company wanted it. They couldn't make the numbers work to make a profit. He said that makes him wonder how Meridian will figure into it and make it work. Emily said they may decide not to do it because she understood that Health Alliance was not profitable, in fact it was a very large losing venture. Nobody goes into business with the idea of losing money. They may all revert to regular Medicaid. Mr. Dick said he had been to a meeting where one representative had said that this is the least healthy area that they serve. Emily said there is information out about a huge amount of obesity and diabetes is rampant in this area. There are a lot of health issues people have in this area. Diane Drew added that Macon County had ranked badly and it is one of the more unhealthy areas. Mr. Dick said another issue is that a lot of the people that could use the services don't because of the stigma. They don't want services because they don't want to be thought of as a Medicaid client. He said SHOWBUS deals with that a lot. There are people who don't want services because they don't want the stigma that goes along with it. Diane said people don't understand what Medicaid is all about.

Mr. Dick commented about the closing of the DeWitt Human Resources closing. They are still trying to figure out what they are doing and how that is going to work out. He said SHOWBUS is kind of on hold trying to determine where they sit in making sure their clients have transportation services. He said they are doing what they can to advocate as far as services staying in their town, but if it goes outside, SHOWBUS is there to help out if they can. That makes SHOWBUS want to be in a little more of a holding pattern in terms of hiring or moving buses down here because if that service is lost, it is unknown what will happen. Right now, they are a little heavy on drivers without that company operating. Progress is being made on a shed in Macon County. They have been in communication with Macon County Board member, Kevin Bird and he has been fantastic. They toured a facility with him.

Emily Dobson asked how GATA affects SHOWBUS. Is it competitive among providers or just to reaffirm what you already receive? Mr. Dick said it mostly has to do with how IDOT processes applications. That means that all of the applications and contracts have been on hold. Most rural publics and probably most urbans have the same problem where IDOT is so far behind and nobody is getting paid. He said they are on the last of their reserves and are waiting to get money. The way they write the contract has changed, so they are basically renegotiating. Ms. Dobson said she was wondering about that because SHOWBUS has all these agreements with all these counties to serve them. Mr. Dick said that as far as he knows, it has not been an issue for any of the rural public transportation providers in the state until now. Ms. Dobson commented on the changes made to contracts. Mr. Henry said they are still negotiating a few things and it is very frustrating especially when IDOT was in the process of moving at the end of the fiscal year as well.

HSTP Update –

Ms. Dobson said there had been a meeting on 9/15 and she, Alissa Dozier and Gary Minich had all attended. They divided into sub-committees based on types of service. She said she had been in the group that provides services to the developmentally disabled population. She said

she had also heard a lot of complaining about the vehicles. Most of them spent a lot of time talking about, now that everyone has service in their area, how can it be improved, offer more, assure coordination between providers, etc. That seems to be the next step that Rural Transportation will be taking. The Statewide Council on Independent Living also completed their plan for the next three years and one of their primary goals is to ensure that people in both rural and urban areas can get transportation to help them remain independent. Everybody is now starting to talk about service improvement.

The next meeting is December 8. More information about location will be forwarded when available. The March meeting will be held in Decatur.

OTHER UPDATES – none

NEW BUSINESS – none

Chair Dunn announced that the next Rural Transit Advisory Group meeting will be December 28, 2016. Ms. Dobson asked if they would be sticking to that date because a lot of the offices and human service groups are closed that week or working with limited staff. It was agreed to move it to December 14 at 2:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m. Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham.