

TRANSIT COMMISSION MINUTES

Date and Time: The Transit Commission met on Thursday, February 20, 2014, at 1:15 P.M. at the Metro Ride Office, 420 Plumer Street, in Wausau

Members Present: Sherry Abitz, Keith Draheim, Daniel Guild, Keene Winters, Robert Mielke and Txang Hue Yang

Members Excused: George Peterson and Joan Joss

Also Present: Greg Seubert, Mary Foss

In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and sent to the Wausau Daily Herald in the proper manner. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Abitz after noting a quorum was present.

Public Comment on Matters Appearing on the Agenda

No comments were made.

Txang Hue Yang arrived at 1:20 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Mielke moved to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2013 meeting. Winters seconded. Motion carried.

Seubert requested that item six be moved up on the agenda. There were no objections.

Asset Control Policy

Seubert stated that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recently conducted their Triennial Review. He said he was pleased to report that there were no significant findings, just two minor issues that must be addressed. The first is the development of a written asset control policy and update of asset inventory records. Seubert presented an asset control policy and stated that it has been tentatively accepted by the reviewer, pending Transit Commission approval. Guild moved to approve the policy. Mielke seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Seubert stated that other issue requiring action is our drug/alcohol testing policy. A revised policy will be presented for consideration at a future meeting.

Transit Commission Meeting Location

Seubert explained that a minor remodeling project in the Metro Ride office was not conducted in compliance with ADA requirements. Adjoining restrooms should have been considered as part project and modified to meet ADA standards. The Metro Ride building is now out of compliance with the ADA and there is an escalated risk of receiving ADA accessibility complaints should the transit commission continue to meet there. Seubert recommended that future Transit Commission meetings be held at an alternative location.

Abitz suggested moving meetings to the Park Department building on River Drive. Seubert indicated that transit access to that location was not the best. Guild suggested the Wausau Branch of the Marathon County Public Library. Mielke said that there were parking issues there. Draheim added that he thought the library didn't allow regularly scheduled meetings. Seubert said that City Hall is ADA accessible and on a bus-line. He said that the Mayor would be pleased to have meetings moved to there. Mielke stated that parking is an issue at City Hall. Pagryzinski suggested the Public Safety Building. Seubert said he would investigate that location. Guild moved to direct Seubert to select a location. Mielke seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mielke left the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

2013 Ridership Report

Seubert presented a 2013 year-end ridership and revenue summary. He stated that we finished the year with ridership increase of about six percent compared to last year. Passenger revenue was \$10,300 higher than last year. He noted that some of the ridership gained was that result of restoring Route K in 2013.

Route K carried 14,230 rides in 2013 or about 56 rides per day. Seubert pointed out that Route K operates a minimal schedule, with just seven trips per day. Guild said that he recognizes that the route operates on an irregular schedule. The Village of Weston is considering how to handle transit services in the future.

The final page of the report was a 2013 summary of paratransit ridership. Seubert explained that ridership had been as high as 25,000 annually, but after reducing service levels in 2003 to the minimum required by law, ridership has declined dramatically. Total ridership in 2013 totaled 3,388.

No action was taken.

United Way Life Report

Seubert presented sections of the United Way Life Report relating to public transit. He said that in prior years the report merely identified transportation service available, but this report serves as an assessment of unmet transportation needs. Seubert was pleased with the substantive discussion of public transit needs and the impact that demographics will have on future transit demand. Abitz questioned how it can be that 25% of the millennial generation doesn't have a driver's licenses when school parking lots are full. She is expressed concern that there is such controversy at the state level on transportation. Draheim stated that there is a lot of money put toward highway repair and feels this is due to corporate influence. Seubert said he hopes that both state and federal elected officials see this report and prioritize the needs for public transportation. He said he intended to use the report in Washington D.C. and Madison in the coming weeks to initiate a discussion.

No action was taken.

Regional Community Transportation Coalition

Seubert said that NAOMI would like to expand their coalition in support of Public Transportation. They are planning to invite agencies/groups/individuals to participate in a forum. Points of discussion might include the basics of public transportation; how it is funded; who uses it; where the gaps are; and who should be involved in support of it. Winters stated that the City is moving forward with a Transit and Parking study for downtown and suggested that transit be considered in that effort. Abitz asked how we get businesses more involved. She said that the whole perspective on taking the bus verses taking a car needed to change. No action was taken.

The Future of Transit Services in Rothschild/Schofield/Weston

The Village of Weston will have fulfilled its referendum obligations and may choose to discontinue the provision of public transportation services after December 31, 2014. Seubert was asked by Guild to consider a route scenario in which mileage and related cost would be reduced for the Village of Weston. Guild said he was speaking only for himself when he asked for this. Seubert presented a route design that offered a dramatic reduction in bus miles and cost. He explained that it would result in a smaller paratransit service for Weston as well. Guild explained that this is just an experiment and after he takes a look at it, he will present it to his trustees and go from there. No action was taken.

Transit Director's Report

Seubert said that the Fox City's RTA bill was approved by the full State senate and he hopes to see action on it in the Assembly. Assembly speaker Robin Vos told the Journal Sentinel that he has consistently opposed local transit authorities and preferred to find a statewide solution for funding public transportation. Seubert stated that he was skeptical that the bill would make to the Assembly floor for a vote. He said Senator Petrowski was helpful in pushing for a vote on the bill in the Senate.

Seubert will be going to Washington D.C. in March with the Wisconsin Urban and Rural Transit Association (WURTA). One of the most important issues to be discussed is the reauthorization of the federal surface transportation act which will expire at the end of September.

Seubert said there will not be a meeting in March unless he has items for the agenda. He will inform members in advance. Guild asked if meetings could be moved to 1:30 p.m. Abitz said that the commission would consider meeting times after the upcoming election. Guild requested that wireless internet access be available at the new meeting place location.

Mack stated that the Regional Planning Commission will be seeking input regarding transportation needs for elderly and disabled in Marathon County. Meetings should be set up later in March or the beginning of April.

Winters moved to adjourn the meeting. Guild seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abitz, Chairperson

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