

TRANSIT COMMISSION MINUTES

Date and Time: The Transit Commission met on Thursday, February 21, 2013, at 1:00 P.M. at Wausau City Hall, 407 Grant Street – Board Room (2nd floor)

Members Present: Sherry Abitz, Keene Winters, Robert Mielke, Keith Draheim, Daniel Guild and George Peterson

Members Excused: Joan Joss

Also Present: Greg Seubert, Mary Foss and Ken Fabel

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.

Approval of Minutes

Mielke moved to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2012 meeting. Abitz seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment on Matters Appearing on the Agenda

A member from the audience Kathy Zoern announced that Mandy Wright will be riding Route A & K on March 15, 2013, at 10:30 a.m.

Meeting Dates, Times and Location

Seubert stated that with the addition of new members, it may be a logical time to consider when and where the Transit Commission meets. He indicated that he had no particular preference in mind. Abitz suggested meetings take place at Metro Ride. She said that Seubert would have better access to materials during the meeting and there is a staffing issue when meetings take place off-site. She also stated that new furniture has been acquired for the break room and previous concerns about noise from overhead speakers have been addressed. After brief discussion, the consensus was to continue meeting on the third Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m., but change the meeting location to the Metro Ride offices at 420 Plumer Street. No formal action was taken.

Financial Report/Budget

Seubert presented a 2012 year-end Revenue and Expense Summary. He explained that some significant changes occurred after the City of Wausau adopted its budget and as consequence, actual revenues and expenses vary considerably from those budgeted. Among the changes were the loss of service to Weston, Schofield and Rothschild; the elimination of contracted paratransit services and the establishment of in-house paratransit services; and the loss of a revenue sharing agreement with Marathon County. Seubert stated that the City's books are not yet closed and some minor adjustments may still occur. Despite substantial service cuts and passenger fares increases, the year was completed with expenses below budget and revenues above budget. No action was taken.

Transportation Development Plan (TDP)

Seubert stated that a TDP must be completed every 5 years, pursuant to federal requirement. This plan was prepared by AECOM. It includes an evaluation of our operations, a peer group analysis, a summary of public input received and recommendations for improvement. Seubert stated these plans are not very helpful for improving system effectiveness in times of severe budget cuts, because budget limitations prevent recommended improvements. The plan indicates that transit-dependent users are an increasing segment of our ridership and choice users are riding less. The plan recommends the initiation of service to Rib Mountain in 2015 and the restoration of service to Schofield, Weston and Rothschild. It also identifies the need for transportation to Globe University and Rasmussen College. Seubert indicated that we have had successive plans prepared by the same contractor and it may be wise to seek a different perspective the next time around. No action was taken.

Wisconsin Commission on Transportation Finance and Policy Final Report

The Governor appointed a commission to consider policies and finance mechanisms for Wisconsin's transportation system. Seubert was pleased with the recommendations contained in the Commission's final report, which include the restoration of transit funding cut in the last budget; retaining public transit in the segregated transportation fund; and legislation that would enable local municipalities to create regional transit authorities (RTAs).

Seubert pointed out that none of the Commission's recommendations were contained in Governor's recently released budget. He said that additional funding cuts will create more uncertainty and without RTA's, local mechanisms to generate additional operating revenue just don't exist. He pointed out that Wisconsin is the only state in the Midwest that does not permit the creation RTA's. He suggested that now may be the time to weigh in, rather than waiting for an RTA bill to be introduced. Guild suggested that local municipalities seek the services of a lobbyist to push our legislature with our issues. Winters suggested a meeting with Senator Petrowski to discuss the possible extension of services to Rib Mountain and Cedar Creek. No action was taken.

Transit Director's Report

Seubert handed out a summary of ridership on Route K, which included a breakdown for Schofield, Weston and Rothschild. He stated that average ridership was 45-50 passengers per day. He stated that telephone inquiries about the route have increased dramatically since the route began. These calls tend to be lengthy, because callers are confused about the complex schedule. Some callers have expressed displeasure after being stranded when they failed to understand the schedule.

Seubert stated that paratransit ridership has been slow to materialize in January in the Schofield/Rothschild/Weston area. However, Kennedy Park Rehabilitation Center just submitted 75-100 applications, so rides may increase in the near future.

Seubert stated that Jeff Cloninger's term on the Transit Commission has expired and he has decided not to continue. He also stated that Joan Joss will be the new representative for the City of Schofield.

The next regularly scheduled meeting would be March 21, 2013 at Metro Ride.

Mielke moved to adjourn the meeting. Draheim seconded. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abitz, Chairperson

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