

TRANSIT COMMISSION MINUTES

Date and Time: The Transit Commission met on Thursday, September 26, 2013, at 1:09 P.M. at the Metro Ride Office, 420 Plumer Street, in Wausau

Members Present: Sherry Abitz, Keith Draheim, Txang Hue Yang, George Peterson and Daniel Guild

Members Excused: Keene Winters, Joan Joss and Robert Mielke

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.

Approval of Minutes

Peterson moved to approve the minutes of the June 27, 2013 meeting. Yang seconded. Motion carried.

Public Comment on Matters Appearing on the Agenda

Zoern asked if there was any new information on the Rothschild, Schofield and Weston Contracts for 2014. She also inquired about an RTA bill introduced in the legislature and the privatization of Milwaukee County Transit. Seubert said he would discuss most of those issues during the meeting.

Financial Report/Budget

Seubert provided documents containing a budget summary and local share cost distribution. He stated that software and accounting issues have delayed the preparation of the budget. Among the assumptions included in the budget are the following: existing levels of service and passenger fares to remain unchanged; bus ridership to increase 3%; 20 daily paratransit rides (current average is 14 rides); State/Federal contribution of 55% of expense (55.06% for 2013); and \$3.35 per gallon diesel fuel cost (current average is \$3.18 per gallon).

Seubert presented a ridership and revenue summary which shows an increase in ridership of 6.25% and an increase in revenue of 4.5% compared to last year. Seubert asked Peterson and Guild when they expected decisions to be made regarding transit services for 2014. Peterson indicated that Rothschild has not yet conducted its first budget session. Guild indicated that the Weston budget will include an amount similar to 2013. Seubert stated that he will not know actual State/Federal contributions until at least the end of the first quarter of next year. He noted that the City of Wausau may still direct him to modify the budget, but the impact to Rothschild, Schofield and Weston will likely be modest. He noted that any proposed changes to fares or services would be presented to Transit Commission and public hearings would be required.

No action was taken.

Transit Funding Proposal

The local funding proposal put forth by Winters and Guild was considered by the City of Wausau Common Council. A resolution in support of the proposal was sent to Representative Mandy Wright, Representative John Spiros and Senator Jerry Petrowski. All three officials attended the NAOMI transit forum and each indicated they would not support the proposal. Seubert asked for suggestions as to what the next steps might be.

Abitz suggested that the proposal be advanced to the state level. Seubert stated that the only way the proposal could move forward at the state level is for a state legislator to sponsor a bill. However, none of the Wausau area legislators support the proposal.

Seubert indicated that the Wisconsin Urban and Rural Transit Association (WURTA) is working on legislation that will incorporate recommendations put forward by the Wisconsin Commission on Transportation Finance and Policy. Among the recommendations is enabling the creation of Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) anywhere in the state.

Another RTA bill has been introduced, but it is applicable to the Fox Cities area only. Seubert stated that all RTA bills to date would enable the use of sales tax to fund the local share of transit expenses. Pagryzinski asked if something could be brought forward at the next WURTA meeting. Seubert said it will be a topic of discussion at an upcoming fall WURTA conference.

Draheim suggested that we provide legislators with additional information to address their concerns with our proposal. The real issue is finding a source of additional local funds for public transportation.

Guild said he thinks that this proposal is the only way to go if we are to get something done in a timely matter.

Abitz expressed concern that legislators and the general public may not appreciate what transit service offers the community or realize its value until they personally need it.

No action was taken.

Bus Route to Northern Valley Workshop

Seubert wanted everyone to be aware that that Community Care of Central Wisconsin (CCCW) will soon assume financial responsibility for a Metro Ride bus route that serves the Northern Valley Workshop. Metro Ride has operated the route for many years and the service itself will not change.

No action was taken.

Transit Director's Report

Seubert stated that system-wide ridership is up and so it ridership on Route K.

Bike Racks have been installed on all busses and brochures promoting that racks are available on the bus and on the Metro Ride webpage. Feedback on the racks has been positive. Guild suggested that we coordinate with the Wausau MPO Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee. Seubert stated that information has been provided to Dave Mack who staffs the committee. Pagryzinski indicated that bike rack usage is increasing.

Guild moved to adjourn the meeting. Peterson seconded. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abitz, Chairperson

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