

# TRANSIT COMMISSION MINUTES

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Date and Time: The Transit Commission met on Thursday August 18, 2016 at 1:30 P.M. at the Metro Ride Offices, 420 Plumer St., Wausau, WI.

Members Present: Sherry Abitz, Pat Peckham, Becky McElhaney, and Kathi Zoern

Also Present: Greg Seubert and Pam Finch

Members Excused: Keith Draheim

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**

Christopher Weems spoke about using the city bus for Art in the Park and the Balloon Rally. Abitz noted this was an agenda item we would be discussing later in the meeting.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Peckham moved to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2016 meeting. Zoern seconded. Motion carried.

## **Consider Change of Times, Dates, and Location for Transit Commission Meetings**

Seubert stated that several possible meeting locations were considered previously and City Hall was the obvious choice. The location offers video capabilities for televising the meeting, close proximity to a bus route, and ADA accessibility.

McElhaney and Abitz stated a preference for meeting at 1:00 PM due to schedule conflicts.

Mayor Mielke said he is trying to get all meetings recorded by Public Access, in the interest of being open and transparent and that is possible at City Hall.

The consensus of the group was to meet in the City Hall Board Room on the third Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m. No action was taken.

## **Consider Transit Service for Community Events**

Seubert explained that Metro Ride used to provide services for community events, but collecting revenue from a third party to help pay for it is now prohibited by Federal charter regulations. He stated that such service could be provided if the City covers the cost. He presented an exhibit showing what the labor and fuel costs would be to provide bus service for the Balloon Rally and Chalkfest. He noted that labor resources could be diverted from other activities to reduce the overall cost.

Chris Weems spoke up about the lack of wheelchair accessible busses at this year's event. Mayor Mielke stated that there were additional complaints made on this subject and that there will be changes made by next year. He said that since this is a private event, he feels it causes conflicts and legal issues for the city to use their bus fleet.

Peckham said it would be a great way to expose more people to the city bus.

McElhaney questioned how the city could provide this to a private event as a free service and she expressed concern that other events may desire similar service.

Seubert said that other city departments are already providing assistance at the city's cost to assist community events, such as setting up barricades, making electrical hook-ups or providing increased police presence. Metro Ride would be another city department that would be offering a service.

Peckham feels that it is an investment in the bus service and he would like to see the Commission move forward. Seubert said that people question the usefulness of the transit system and this is the perfect opportunity to show what we do and give back to taxpayers.

Peckham moved to have Seubert include the cost of providing service for the Chalkfest/Balloon Rally in his 2017 operating budget. Zoern seconded. Motion Carried.

**Discuss Community Transit Planning and Outreach**

Seubert presented a Stakeholder Engagement Plan that he prepared for a recent meeting organized by the Abitz. The purpose of the plan is to raise awareness of the challenges facing Metro Ride, identify transportation gaps in the community, gauge stakeholder support and gain support from stakeholders for possible solutions. The plan identifies community stakeholders, suggests methods to engage them, and identifies possible outcomes.

Dave Mack said that he would like to see the Metropolitan Planning Organization be involved in these meetings with community members. The MPO policy committee is comprised of members representing all local municipalities. He said that Weston is working on a new development and it is being pursued with a transit component built in. He stated that the Rib Mountain administrator would like to see transit put into the recommendation section of the MPO's long range plan. Mack thinks this is critical to the area, and would like to see it happen.

The Mayor shared his plan to speak at the County Board Meeting that evening. He said he would be asking the county to share \$650,000 of the wheel tax they would be collecting. The money would be used for road repairs and transit. He said that local municipalities have been paying into the State for years and not getting any of it back and he would like the County Board to share wheel tax money so city residents don't have to pay double.

Peckham stated that plans are being made for a City Council bus ride on Sept 13, at 3:55 PM. They will be departing from City Hall and the media will be invited.

Seubert stated that Metro Ride will have a bus in the Labor Day Parade. Zoern said that anyone who wants to participate should meet at 2:45 PM at the Metro Ride garage.

The next regular meeting date is September 15, 2016 at 1:00 p.m.

Peckham moved to adjourn the meeting. McElhaney seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abitz, Chairperson