

**** All present are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the City's Core Values ****



OFFICIAL NOTICE AND AGENDA

of a meeting of a City Board, Commission, Department, Committee, Agency, Corporation, Quasi-Municipal Corporation or sub-unit thereof.

Meeting of the: **TRANSIT COMMISSION**
Date/Time: Thursday, February 16, 2017 @1:00 p.m.
Location: City Hall Board Room (2nd floor), 407 Grant Street, Wausau
Members: Sherry Abitz(C), Pat Peckham, Becky McElhaney, Kathi Zoern, Keith Draheim

AGENDA ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION (All items listed may be acted upon)

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment on Matters Appearing on the Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes – January 19, 2017
4. Discuss Financial Report and Operating Budget
5. Discuss Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Outreach
6. Discuss Transit Planning and Stakeholder Outreach
 - Vision, Goals and Objectives – Dave Mack
7. Transit Director's Report
 - Farebox Fairness Proposal
8. Adjourn

Next Regular Meeting Date – March 16, 2017

THIS NOTICE FAXED TO THE WAUSAU DAILY HERALD AND CITY PAGES:

Date: 2/10/2017 TIME: 2:58 PM BY: Greg Seubert, Transit Director

Meeting facilities are accessible to the disabled. Please note that upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through appropriate aids and services. For information or to request this service, contact the City Clerk at 715-261-6620.

Interpreter services are available free of charge upon reasonable notice.

Pab txhais lus yog muaj dawb xwb raws li qhov tsim nyog daim ntawv ceeb toom.

Telephone: 715-842-9287 • Facsimile: 715-842-1541 • TDD: 715-843-6827 • Email: metrорide@ci.wausau.wi.us

TRANSIT COMMISSION MINUTES

Date and Time: The Transit Commission met on Thursday, January 19, 2017 at 1:00 P.M. at Wausau City Hall, 407 Grant St., Wausau, WI.

Members Present: Sherry Abitz, Pat Peckham, Kathi Zoern

Also Present: Greg Seubert (Metro Ride), Misty Jepsen (Metro Ride), Dave Mack (Wausau MPO), Andrew Lynch (Wausau MPO)

Members Excused: Becky McElhaney, 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

Chris Weems spoke in favor of proposed outreach initiatives and the possible restoration of transit services in surrounding municipalities.

Approval of Minutes

Peckham suggested the correction of a typographical error in the minutes.

Peckham moved to approve the corrected minutes of the October 20, 2016 meeting. Zoern seconded. Motion carried.

Financial Report and Budget Update

Seubert presented a revenue and expense summary for the period ending November 30, 2016. He noted that both expenses and revenues are below budget. He expressed concern regarding the parts expense line item which is at 135% of budget. He stated that the acquisition of used buses and an aging fleet will cause continued escalation of parts cost.

Abitz asked about the disposal of obsolete parts. Seubert stated that offers are sought from other transit systems first. They are then offered for sale on an auction site. The last option is to sell them to a salvage yard for scrap value. Revenue from the sale would be recorded as a contra-expense to offset parts expense.

Abitz asked about the need for new tires for the bus acquired from Duluth. Seubert stated that new tires are needed, but the expense will occur in January 2017.

No action was taken.

Title VI Plan

Seubert explained that a Title VI plan was approved by Transit Commission and submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in May. The FTA responded by requesting a number of modifications. The draft plan presented today incorporates those modifications. It was submitted to the FTA for review in early December, but no response has been received. Seubert stated that a final plan, along with minutes documenting Transit Commission approval must be submitted to the FTA by January 30th. Seubert provided an explanation of modifications made.

Zoern asked why language accommodations were not being made for a growing Spanish population. Seubert explained that census data is used to identify populations of limited English speakers. LEP populations exceeding 5% of the overall population or more than 1,000 individuals, meet a "safe harbor" threshold for LEP assistance. The only LEP population to exceed the safe harbor threshold is the Hmong community.

Seubert indicated that key documents identified in the Title VI plan have been translated into Hmong, including a rider's guide, civil rights notice and complaint procedures. Those documents are now posted on the City website. Notice of the availability of language assistance has also been added to the bottom of the meeting

agenda in Hmong language format. Seubert stated that the City of Wausau has incorporated Google Translate into its website, which enables site content to be translated into any of a number of languages, including Hmong.

Peckham asked how the color coded language assistance card works. Seubert explained that the card lists our bus routes and each is represented by a color and letter designation matching those shown on our route map and schedule brochure. When the driver encounters a language barrier the card helps the passenger to identify the route to which they would like to transfer. Peckham suggested that a card be developed in Hmong language format that describes how the transfer process works. Seubert said that the new Hmong riders guide brochure provides that instruction.

Zoern suggested that more outreach activity be conducted with the Hmong community. Seubert said that he and Abitz have discussed this. Abitz said that she has talked with the Boys and Girls Club about this and suggested a ride-along and in-person instruction. Peckham requested that Hmong outreach be placed on the next agenda.

Motion by Peckham to approve the Title VI Plan as presented. Seconded by Zoern. Motion Carried.

Adoption WisDOT Vehicle Disposal Guidance

Seubert stated that WisDOT has recommended that transit systems adopt the vehicle disposal guidelines provided by WisDOT or develop their own. The guidelines apply to federally funded vehicles that are disposed prior to the federally defined minimum useful life shown on page 2 of the document.

Abitz ask if the policy pertained to the buses acquired from the Duluth. Seubert stated that the Duluth buses have exceed the federally defined minimum useful life and the City of Wausau did not use federal funds for their purchase, so the policy did not apply to them.

Motion by Zoern to approve the WisDOT Vehicle Disposal Guidelines. Second by Peckham. Motion carried.

Community Transit Planning and Outreach

Dave Mack explained that the Wausau Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) provides transportation planning services for the fourteen municipalities in the Wausau urban area, as required by state and federal statutes and regulations. He said that the MPO will be preparing a Transit Development Plan (TDP) for the area in 2017, with the assistance of the Wisconsin DOT and Metro Ride. Mack distributed a plan outline and explained each element, including the purpose of the plan; vision and goals; overview of the existing system; public and stakeholder engagement; recommendations; and planning timeline. He stated that the plan will address the needs of the entire urban area, not just Wausau, and explore opportunities that may exist.

Mack stated that the stakeholder engagement section will focus on how transit will move forward into the future, not how we got here. The outreach process will provide information about the benefits of transit and what it can do for the community. The objective is a gain consensus among stakeholders that transit is important and beneficial. Mack said that the public engagement model to be used was developed by the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS) and a professor from UW Stevens Point.

It is expected that informed and engaged stakeholders will become advocates for enhanced transit services. The City of Wausau and the Transit Commission will participate in the engagement process but will not lead the effort. Individuals in the community will be engaged through surveys, both in-person and online, and through traditional media, including social media.

Mack stated that key origins and destinations will be identified throughout the urban area and the feasibility of providing service to those locations will be evaluated. The type of service that may be provided and estimates of cost will be discussed after stakeholders have been engaged. Seubert stated that although fixed-route bus service is the norm currently, other types of service should be considered.

Mack referenced the project timeline and stated that the plan itself should be completed in 2017 with approval from the Transit Commission and the MPO. Public engagement will occur during the planning process and

continue after plan completion. Commitment type work involving surrounding communities will take place in 2018, with the idea that new service would be initiated in 2019.

Peckham stated that the planner's task is to provide the metropolitan area with the best possible transit plan and the Transit Commission's interest is in getting more people on board. He wondered how the two interests intersect. Mack stated that he thought the interests were the same. He noted that the Transit Commission is a regional body, but currently lacks participation from surrounding municipalities. Putting a plan in place to provide the best possible transit service in the metro area will bring new members to the Transit Commission.

Peckham suggested that the project timeline be accelerated so that information is available for surrounding communities as they make budget decisions for 2018. Lynch stated that the timeline for public engagement is longer than you would find in most plans, but he thinks it is needed. Gaining consensus regarding the value and need for public transit will occur in 2017. Getting other municipalities on board and planning for implementation will occur in 2018, with new service initiated in 2019.

Peckham asked if the start date for new service had to be on January 1. Seubert stated that new service would have to be considered as part of annual budget process and meet State and Federal grant submission deadlines, but it would not have to start on January 1. He noted that new service must be included in the TDP and approved by WisDOT in order to be eligible for State and Federal funding. The acquisition of vehicles would take place after commitments are in place.

No action was taken.

Transit Director's Report - Ridership Report

Seubert presented a 2016 year-end ridership summary for both fixed-route bus and paratransit. He noted that bus ridership was down about 8% in 2016 compared to 2015 and revenue was down about 4%. Paratransit ridership is increasing somewhat.

Peckham referenced the paratransit ridership graph in the report and noted the loss of about 5,000 rides in 2012 when service was discontinued in Rothschild, Schofield and Weston. He asked if we knew whether or not rides were provided and by whom. Seubert said he had no idea. Mack stated that ridership did not increase on the County program during that timeframe.

No action was taken.

Transit Director's Report - Fleet Update

Seubert stated that he initiated a lease/purchase agreement in December with Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) for the acquisition of one bus. Three payments will be made in 2017, after which we will take ownership. The total cost is \$5,000.

Peckham asked if vehicles are vetted before they are purchased. Seubert said that we have had great success with buses leased or purchased in the past from DTA and he and his maintenance supervisor have become familiar with their maintenance program and staff. Seubert said that buses are usually inspected and we have chosen not to acquire them from other systems as a result. The most recent DTA bus is identical to those inspected and purchased in early 2016 and it is in great condition.

No action was taken.

Motion by Zoern to adjourn the meeting. Second by Peckham. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abitz, Chairperson

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SCOTT ALLEN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 97TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Co-Sponsorship Memorandum

To: All Legislators

From: Representative Scott Allen

Date: January 18, 2017

RE: LRB – 1383/1 – Fare box Fairness: Relating to the percentage of mass transit system operating expenses recovered as passenger fares.

Contact: Rep. Allen's office (6-8580, or e-mail Rep.Allen@legis.wisconsin.gov).

DEADLINE: NOON on Monday February 6, 2017.

Wisconsin has realized significant economic advantages in subsidizing public transit systems. With shifting demographical patterns, it is imperative for legislators to insure those systems are (1) sustainable in the long term and (2) do not pose an unnecessary burden on those who pay vehicle registration fees and purchase gasoline.

Urban transit systems around Wisconsin are subsidized through a combination of federal, state, and local contributions. Some transit systems rely more heavily on state and federal contributions than others. A review of Legislative Fiscal Bureau tables suggest a significant disparity between some communities in the percentage of fare box revenue applied to transit costs. For instance, in 2016, users in some transit systems contributed 36.7% of expenses, while users of other transit systems contributed just 8.5%.

Any transit system is quasi-business public entity which provides services to customers but operates at a financial loss. What amount of a loss is appropriate? What percentage of subsidy is fair for the state, federal, and local government to pay? The proposed bill suggests there ought to be a maximum public subsidy of 75% of the total expenses for any public transit system. This would mean in any system which receives state transportation dollars, the minimum amount of fare box revenue would need to be 25% of total expenses. In other words, users of the system would need to support at least 25% of the system's total operating cost.



SCOTT ALLEN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 97TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

The bill progressively implements higher minimum fare box revenue contribution percentages over the next several years. This will provide public transit systems time to analyze business models and reorganize operations as needed to get in compliance. The schedule for contribution requirements is as follows:

2018 – 18%

2019 – 20%

2020 – 22%

2021 and thereafter – 25%

Public transit systems need to be sustainable. Demographic shifts mean we must adjust transportation funding models to fit new realities. Attached, please find the past three (3) years of Fiscal Bureau Reports to assist you in deciding whether to co-sponsor this timely and prudent bill.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill requires urban mass transit systems to recover a minimum percentage of system operating expenses from passenger fares as a condition of receiving state aid. Under current law, the Department of Transportation provides state aid payments to local public bodies in urban areas served by mass transit systems to assist the local public bodies with the expenses of operating those systems. This bill requires that an applicant for state aid recover the following minimum percentage of system operating expenses from passenger fares as a condition of receiving state aid: 18 percent in 2018; 20 percent in 2019; 22 percent in 2020; and 25 percent in 2021 and thereafter.

For further information see the *state and local* fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

If you are interested in co-sponsoring LRB - 1383/1, please respond to this email or call Rep. Allen's office (6-8580) before **NOON on Monday February 6, 2017.**



2017 BILL

1 **AN ACT** *to create* 85.20 (4m) (c) of the statutes; **relating to:** the percentage of
2 mass transit system operating expenses recovered as passenger fares.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill requires urban mass transit systems to recover a minimum percentage of system operating expenses from passenger fares as a condition of receiving state aid.

Under current law, the Department of Transportation provides state aid payments to local public bodies in urban areas served by mass transit systems to assist the local public bodies with the expenses of operating those systems. This bill requires that an applicant for state aid recover the following minimum percentage of system operating expenses from passenger fares as a condition of receiving state aid: 18 percent in 2018; 20 percent in 2019; 22 percent in 2020; and 25 percent in 2021 and thereafter.

For further information see the *state and local* fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

3 **SECTION 1.** 85.20 (4m) (c) of the statutes is created to read:

