

MINUTES
NORTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE

Wednesday, July 13, 2011
East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
400 Ahnaip Street, Suite 100, Menasha

MEETING ATTENDEES: Jeffrey Agee-Aguayo (Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission)
Pam Busch (Door County Transportation Consortium)
Dale Deterding (Sheboygan County Aging and Disability Resource Center)
Linda Grider (Manitowoc County Mobility Manager)
Rhonda Hannemann (United Way Fox Cities)
Jason Kakatsch (East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission)
Holly Keenan (Lutheran Social Services/Making the Ride Happen)
Dale McAllister (Calumet County Aging and Disability Resource Center)
Sue Pomplun (Advocap)
Carrie Porter (Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources)
Judy Rank (Manitowoc County Aging and Disability Resource Center)
Katie Scheffen (NEWTC/NEWCAP)
Dave Vickman (Oshkosh Transit)
Deborah Wetter (Valley Transit)

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Dennis Bohn (Marquette County Department of Health and Human Services/Commission on Aging)
Nathanael Brown (Waushara County Dept. of Aging)
Lisa Conard (Brown County Planning Commission)
Ron McDonald (Shoreline Metro)
Valerie Mellon (City of Manitowoc Public Works Dept./Maritime Metro Transit System)
Derek Muench (City of Manitowoc – Maritime Metro Transit System)
Sylvia Phillis (Marquette County Department of Health and Human Services/Commission on Aging)
Sandy Popp (Options for Independent Living)
Traci Robinson (Shoreline Metro Connection)
Mark Weisensel (Winnebago County Aging and Disability Resource Center)

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions

Jason Kakatsch called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. Jason Kakatsch welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made for the benefit of everyone in attendance.

Jeffrey Agee-Aguayo and others in attendance noted everyone who had asked to be excused from this meeting.

2. Agenda Review, Repair and Approval

Moved by Judy Rank and seconded by Dale Deterding to approve the agenda for the July 13, 2011, meeting. Motion carried, with all voting aye on a voice vote.

3. Review and Approval of the April 6, 2011, Northeastern Wisconsin Regional Access to Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes

Jeffrey Agee-Aguayo distributed the full set of minutes (complete with two handouts distributed and reviewed by Carrie Porter at that meeting) to everyone in attendance. The minutes without these handouts were e-mailed to all committee members prior to the meeting.

Moved by Pam Busch and seconded by Dave Vickman to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2011, Northeastern Wisconsin Regional Access to Transportation Committee meeting as prepared with no changes. Motion carried, with all voting aye on a voice vote.

4. Update on the 2011 – 2013 State Biennial Budget: Impacts on Transit and Other Public Services

Deborah Wetter started the discussion under this agenda item by stating that WisDOT has not yet disclosed significant information regarding impacts of the state biennial budget on Wisconsin's transit operations to date. Deborah Wetter noted that transit operations are supposed to be impacted by a 10 percent cut in state operating aid, but also indicated that the state biennial budget included \$2.5 million for paratransit services provided by fixed-route transit operators; Deborah Wetter added that the urban transit operations in Milwaukee and Madison are likely to utilize most of this \$2.5 million.

Dave Vickman discussed what he thought would be impacts of the state biennial budget for Oshkosh Transit, noting that he was assuming that there would be about a \$140,000 cut in revenues from 2011 to 2012.

Jason Kakatsch commented that the transit operations in Manitowoc and Stevens Point could move into Tier B among the state's transit systems, thereby diluting funding availability for transit operations in that tier even further.

Deborah Wetter noted that staff from the WisDOT Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads and Harbors told her and other transit operators to assume a combined federal and state share of 57.5 percent for 2011.

Discussion then turned to the impact that decreases in state shared revenue to municipalities might have on the budgets of transit operations. Deborah Wetter stated that she was still trying to figure out the impacts of shared revenue reductions on Valley Transit. Dave Vickman commented that the city manager for the City of Oshkosh indicated that there would be about \$1 million less in shared revenue in that community.

In discussion regarding transit unions and collective bargaining, Dave Vickman noted that transit employees were now part of the Department of Public Works (DPW) employees' union in Oshkosh. Deborah Wetter stated that the transit drivers still have a separate union at Valley Transit.

Deborah Wetter commented that a 30 percent reduction in transit funding may be possible at the federal level, but added that there is currently uncertainty as to which programs are being targeted for cuts.

Finally, Carrie Porter, Judy Rank, Dale Deterding and other committee members discussed impacts of the state biennial budget on Family Care. Carrie Porter also discussed asset limits that now need to be met in order to qualify for Family Care.

5. Update on Medical Assistance Transportation Management

Carrie Porter started the discussion by stating that LogistiCare started handling Medical Assistance (MA) transportation management on July 1, 2011.

Many problems have been reported in various Wisconsin counties to date in July; this includes a lack of adequate transportation leading to the missing of medical appointments on the part of several individuals. There have been issues with inadequate training, and there has also been a lack of competence.

Deborah Wetter discussed her issues in dealing with LogistiCare staff.

Carrie Porter noted that it was fairly clear that LogistiCare did not want to work with existing, reputable local providers of transportation, and prefers to bring in out-of-state providers that may be inexpensive, but have issues with quality and/or safety. There have been horror stories in regard to LogistiCare in other states.

Rhonda Hannemann wondered who could be held accountable in this situation. Jason Kakatsch responded that apparently no one was being held accountable – the state Department of Health Services (DHS) staff (who implemented this change) has been arrogant even with state legislators. Deborah Wetter noted that LogistiCare has a huge

profit motive. Dave Vickman, Deborah Wetter and Rhonda Hannemann commented that if things did not improve soon, the news media will need to be contacted in regard to the problems associated with this transition.

Carrie Porter stated that the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR) will work with coalitions on aging in regard to advocacy in this area. Deborah Wetter suggested getting faith-based justice advocacy groups (like ESTHER, JOSHUA and WISDOM) involved in discussing these issues.

Deborah Wetter noted that Valley Transit has a legislative strategist (through September) to help with working through these issues. Carrie Porter indicated that she wants to get the Wisconsin Urban and Rural Transit Association (WURTA) and other similar organizations involved with these issues.

Carrie Porter stated that LogistiCare has also had some transportation services sign “out-of-network provider” agreements, but added that these agreements are not being publicized to any great extent.

Since July 1, 2011, there has been high demand coupled with poor logging of calls for service at LogistiCare’s call center, leading to poor dispatch situations across the state. In addition, transportation providers have been getting penalized for “providing poor service” on trips that they are not capable of providing (often due to geography – one example cited was a service provider in Stevens Point called to provide an MA trip with both trip ends in the Fox Valley).

Carrie Porter indicated that LogistiCare does have an ombudsman who is supposed to resolve these issues. Dave Vickman stated that a lot of these problems can be attributed to the Wisconsin DHS. Deborah Wetter noted that listening sessions may be proposed in the near future, but added that they may not do much to resolve the issues at hand. Deborah Wetter added that a lobbyist for WURTA (Gary Goyke) has been trying to work on resolving some of these issues on behalf of transit operators.

Jason Kakatsch discussed his frustration in dealing with the DHS/LogistiCare “wall of resistance” when citizens bring up flaws in the design of this program. Sue Pomplun stated that considerable arrogance has been displayed in these situations; Pam Busch also discussed this matter. Jason Kakatsch stated that several DHS and LogistiCare “faces at the meeting” need some training in basic human empathy.

Carrie Porter commented that testimonials of riders in the news media would be effective. Pam Busch added that perhaps testimonials from health professionals would be effective as well (in terms of discussing their patients’ missed appointments). Carrie Porter stated that she has been trying to educate the state nursing home association regarding these issues as well.

Jason Kakatsch had a question regarding the LogistiCare provider list which Carrie Porter answered.

Dave Vickman and Deborah Wetter discussed the number of monthly passes that their respective transit operations have sold to LogistiCare. Valley Transit has sold no monthly passes to LogistiCare, while Oshkosh Transit has sold about 15 monthly passes to LogistiCare.

Carrie Porter and other committee members noted that frustration with LogistiCare has led to increased usage of the Section 85.21 program in several Wisconsin counties. Carrie Porter commented that it would be nice if there were a national clearinghouse that could discuss the past performance of contractors who manage MA transportation in other states. Carrie Porter indicated that GWAAR will attempt to formulate a strategy to resolve these issues.

Judy Rank commented that there was a need to closely examine LogistiCare's initial invoices and progress reports to DHS when they are released.

6. Updates on Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) and Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)

Jason Kakatsch and Deborah Wetter started discussion under this agenda item by stating that RTAs are no longer in existence anywhere in Wisconsin because of recent legislative action (at least for now).

Jason Kakatsch and Deborah Wetter noted that Appleton Mayor Tim Hanna has been working with state legislators to try to get an RTA authorization bill introduced. Under such legislation, RTA boards would be elected, but several committee members thought that elections for RTA boards would have low turnout. A new RTA authorization bill might involve municipal-level participation in the RTA (as opposed to having the RTA formed at the county level).

Jason Kakatsch again discussed the loss of federal transit operating assistance for TMAs. Jason Kakatsch noted that Rep. Mica's transportation reauthorization bill did not address this issue or the issue of increasing the population threshold for MPOs.

Deborah Wetter commented that Rep. Reid Ribble appeared to agree that smaller transit operations serving TMAs should continue to receive federal funding for their operations. Deborah Wetter discussed situations in which the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has been more flexible with federal funding of existing smaller transit operations serving new TMAs. Jason Kakatsch wondered if the rejected high speed rail funding could be diverted to help transit operations.

7. Task Force Update

There was no activity involving the task force since the last meeting.

8. Committee Member/Program Updates

Committee members offered updates on programs and activities in which they have been involved. The following updates were offered:

- Dave Vickman noted that Oshkosh Transit's "Try Transit Day" would take place on August 27, 2011. Dave Vickman commented that IRIS had not yet paid Oshkosh Transit for transportation services provided to clients; this generated some discussion regarding IRIS passengers and reimbursements. There was also discussion regarding Family Care related transportation reimbursements; Judy Rank discussed the amounts paid per trip by the Lakeland Care District in Manitowoc County for different types of trips (medical transportation gets paid the highest amount); Carrie Porter also discussed these issues.
- Judy Rank discussed volunteer transportation in Manitowoc County. Judy Rank stated that she would meet with the managers of various care facilities in the county on July 14, 2011, to explain MA transportation changes.
- Holly Keenan indicated that she would be meeting with ESTHER on July 20, 2011, to discuss MA transportation changes and issues. Holly Keenan added that Making the Ride Happen has had volunteer driver services since May 1, 2011, and noted that Valley Transit will be assisting her with route match software in the near future.
- Rhonda Hannemann stated that transit was still a priority for the United Way Fox Cities.
- Dale Deterding discussed agency rates set by Metro Connection for paratransit. Dale Deterding added that only nine of 80 regular clients utilize MA transportation, and noted that he would be informing these clients about the transition to LogistiCare and its possible effects on them. Dale Deterding also discussed Sheboygan County's volunteer driver program.
- Deborah Wetter discussed ridership increases in May (and year-to-date) at Valley Transit. Deborah Wetter added that the threat of lost services can mobilize people to consider other funding mechanisms (such as a local option sales tax). Deborah Wetter also discussed possible service cuts that may be coming up at Valley Transit.
- Carrie Porter commented that transporting people to obtain an identification card (for voting purposes) is considered a legitimate expense under the Section 85.21 program. Carrie Porter also discussed advocating for Family Care transportation.
- Katie Scheffen stated that her staff at NEWCAP continues to translate the *Northeast Wisconsin Transportation Resource Guide* into Hmong, and added that NEWCAP staff is also working on a WETAP grant. Katie Scheffen commented that New Freedom grants will continue with existing grantees.
- Sue Pomplun stated that Advocap was also working on a WETAP grant.
- Pam Busch noted that Door-Tran is now a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and added that Door-Tran would be hosting an open house of their new facility on July 27, 2011. Pam Busch commented that the shared ride taxi/van service in Door County is doing quite well. Pam Busch also commented that she was working on a WETAP grant.

- Jason Kakatsch noted that the Oshkosh Transit Development Program (TDP) was scheduled to be adopted by the Oshkosh Common Council at its July 13, 2011, meeting. Jason Kakatsch stated that the Oshkosh TDP involves route restructuring. When asked about how Oshkosh Transit accounted for reductions in state funding of transit, Jason Kakatsch indicated that the Oshkosh TDP involved more of a prioritization list of critical services that should be maintained.
- Jeffrey Agee-Aguayo stated that he was working with Shoreline Metro (Sheboygan Transit) to evaluate service options with likely reductions in federal, state and local governmental funding of transit services as part of the alternatives analysis for the Sheboygan TDP. Jeffrey Agee-Aguayo added that he was also assisting Shoreline Metro with smaller tasks, including a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) quarterly report, as well as a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Four Factor Analysis and Language Assistance Plan prepared as part of Shoreline Metro's Title VI program.

9. Other Issues

Jason Kakatsch asked if committee members had any other issues that they wanted to discuss; no other issues were raised.

10. Next Meeting Date and General Location

The next meeting was scheduled for **Wednesday, October 12, 2011, at 9:30 a.m.** In the event that too many conflicts take place, a backup date and time of **Wednesday, October 19, 2011, at 9:30 a.m.** was selected. This meeting was tentatively scheduled to be held at the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 439 South Jackson Street, Green Bay.

Dave Vickman suggested that discussion of concealed carry policies at area transit operations and other transportation providers be added as an agenda item for the next meeting. There was some brief discussion regarding these policies in light of the recently approved concealed carry law in Wisconsin.

11. Adjournment

Moved by Jason Kakatsch and seconded by Deborah Wetter that the meeting of the Northeastern Wisconsin Regional Access to Transportation Committee be adjourned. Motion carried, with all voting aye on a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

Recording secretary,

Jeffrey C. Agee-Aguayo

