

MINUTES  
NORTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (First Floor, Community Room)  
439 South Jackson Street, Green Bay

MEETING ATTENDEES: Jeffrey Agee-Aguayo (Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission)  
Sunny Archambault (Aging and Disability Resource Center of Brown County)  
Nathanael Brown (Waushara County Dept. of Aging)  
Pam Busch (Door County Transportation Consortium)  
Lisa Conard (Brown County Planning Commission)  
Joann Dewhurst (Calumet County Aging and Disability Resource Center)  
Essie Fels (Green Bay Metro)  
Linda Grider (Manitowoc County Mobility Manager)  
Kari Jansen (Outagamie County Housing/NAHBRS)  
Jason Kakatsch (East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission)  
Holly Keenan (Lutheran Social Services/Making the Ride Happen)  
Patty Kiewiz (Green Bay Metro)  
Dale McAllister (Calumet County Aging and Disability Resource Center)  
Derek Muench (City of Manitowoc – Maritime Metro Transit System)  
Sandy Popp (Options for Independent Living)  
Carrie Porter (Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources)  
Traci Robinson (Shoreline Metro Connection)  
Mary Schlautman (Aging and Disability Resource Center of Brown County)  
Dave Vickman (Oshkosh Transit)  
Tom Wittig (Green Bay Metro)  
Mai Yia Yang (Forward Service Corporation)

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Dale Deterding (Sheboygan County Aging and Disability Resource Center)  
Matt Halada (WisDOT Northeast Region – Green Bay)  
Ron McDonald (Shoreline Metro)  
Valerie Mellon (City of Manitowoc Public Works Dept./ Maritime Metro Transit System)  
Judy Rank (Manitowoc County Aging and Disability Resource Center)

Katie Scheffen (NEWTC/NEWCAP)  
Chris Strong (City of Oshkosh/Oshkosh Transit)  
Deborah Wetter (Valley Transit)

**1. Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions**

Sandy Popp called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. Sandy Popp 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 Lisa Conard and seconded by Derek Muench to approve the agenda for the October 12, 2011, meeting. Motion carried, with all voting aye on a voice vote.

**3. Review and Approval of the July 13, 2011, Northeastern Wisconsin Regional Access to Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes**

Jeffrey Agee-Aguayo commented that he received an e-mail from Carrie Porter asking that the final sentence in the final paragraph under agenda item #4 (on page 3) be deleted from the minutes; that sentence read as follows: “Carrie Porter also discussed asset limits that now need to be met in order to qualify for Family Care.”

**Moved** by Pam Busch and seconded by Derek Muench to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2011, Northeastern Wisconsin Regional Access to Transportation Committee, as amended. Motion carried, with all voting aye on a voice vote.

**4. Update on Transportation Providers’ Responses to the 2011 – 2013 State Biennial Budget**

Jeffrey Agee-Aguayo stated that the focus of this agenda item was on anticipated changes in fares or levels of service at transit operations and at other transportation providers in the NEWRATC region due to decreases in state (and possibly local) aid resulting from the 2011 – 2013 state biennial budget.

Derek Muench stated that there would be no fare increases or service cuts at Maritime Metro Transit, adding that bargaining will lead to cuts in expenses. Derek Muench added that Maritime Metro Transit might need to implement service cuts later on.

Dave Vickman noted that he was looking at raising paratransit passenger fares at Oshkosh Transit. Dave Vickman added that he still did not know what savings would come from unionized employees, but indicated that for now, Oshkosh Transit expects minimal changes to its level of service.

Jason Kakatsch commented that Valley Transit was looking at route consolidations and at cuts to Saturday service. Jason Kakatsch added that Valley Transit was still worried about reaching TMA status and its implications.

Jason Kakatsch indicated that he was not aware of any changes to fares or the level of service at Fond du Lac Area Transit. Dave Vickman noted that he did hear that Fond du Lac Area Transit was increasing agency fares for its paratransit services.

Patty Kiewiz and Tom Wittig stated that Green Bay Metro will reduce weeknight service by one hour, and also discussed the Green Bay area's upcoming TMA status and its potential impacts on Green Bay Metro. Patty Kiewiz and Tom Wittig added that there would be no changes to Saturday service, as this has been quite successful.

Finally, Jeffrey Agee-Aguayo discussed service reductions being considered at Shoreline Metro. Through employee concessions and increasing agency fares for paratransit services, a \$1.2 million funding gap was reduced to \$370,000. Similar to Green Bay Metro, Shoreline Metro is looking at reducing one hour of service each weeknight. Similar to Valley Transit, Shoreline Metro is looking at a route consolidation (going from ten to nine routes), and is looking at restructuring Saturday service. Originally, a shorter range of service hours (with frequency every half hour) was proposed for Saturdays, but in response to public hearings on October 6, 2011, several alternatives have been developed in regard to the delivery of transit service on Saturdays. The Sheboygan Transit Commission will take up these potential changes at a meeting on October 18, 2011.

## **5. Update on Medical Assistance (MA) Transportation Management**

Carrie Porter started the discussion by stating that complaints regarding LogistiCare have decreased, but added that this is most likely because users are finding other ways to get around (such as using Section 85.21 programs in the counties). Carrie Porter noted that the complaint rate is around one percent, but added that this rate is still significant. Carrie Porter commented that some critical trips (such as for dialysis) are being missed.

Several committee members noted there have been complaints about LogistiCare trying to obtain volunteer drivers from the county ADRCs, and added that there needs to be a unified front among the counties expressing opposition to this practice.

Joann Dewhurst commented that there had been outreach from ADRCs with state legislators regarding LogistiCare complaints. Things were particularly problematic in Waupaca County. LogistiCare flew one of their administrators up from Georgia to address complaints. The relationship between LogistiCare and certain transit operations has also been poor.

Dave Vickman discussed his efforts at tracking MA trips in his service area, noted that the number of such trips has decreased. Tom Wittig commented that the number of MA trip requests has decreased in the Green Bay Metro service area as well.

Sandy Popp discussed the complaints that she received from one MA client, and added that rural areas have few options for MA transportation.

Sandy Popp asked how one shows the magnitude of this problem to state legislators. Carrie Porter responded by discussing an advisory council that could look into this, but commented that this advisory council needs more customers on it. Carrie Porter added that consumer and provider satisfaction surveys are also needed. Carrie Porter also noted that legislators are becoming more aware of these complaints.

Carrie Porter indicated that state legislators are becoming more aware of the “dumping” of MA transportation onto transit operations. Dave Vickman asked if agency rates for paratransit services need to be communicated to DHS and to LogistiCare; Carrie Porter responded affirmatively.

Jason Kakatsch stated that about one third of MA clients are located in southeastern Wisconsin.

Lisa Conard noted that several MA trips in the Green Bay area have been shifted to the American Red Cross. Sunny Archambault also discussed this issue, noting that LogistiCare is getting paid for these trips. Sunny Archambault added that the Brown County ADRC is assisting many individuals to negotiate the LogistiCare MA transportation “maze.” Sandy Popp commented that if the current MA transportation arrangement is here to stay, then there is a need to provide MA clients with access to the system.

Sandy Popp noted that several MA trips got “double counted” in other categories with Green Bay Metro’s previous paratransit provider.

Lisa Conard asked if some providers are not renewing contracts with LogistiCare or are opting out early; this question generated considerable discussion among several committee members.

Carrie Porter suggested that transportation providers communicate with medical centers in their area (particularly those that provide dialysis services) to discuss problems that they have had with MA transportation.

Nathanael Brown discussed his recent experiences in regard to this issue in Waushara County.

Several committee members commented that vans are coming into the region from considerable distances to provide MA trips brokered by LogistiCare.

Carrie Porter suggested that committee members continue to make transportation information available to consumers, noting that there is a complaint form (via fax), and there is an ombudsman who is there to resolve conflicts. Sandy Popp discussed the efforts of Options for Independent Living to communicate with their clients on these issues (including surveys and other feedback).

Lisa Conard suggested that “double billing” be the “buzz words” that get communicated to legislators regarding these problems; Tom Wittig and Dave Vickman also discussed the “double billing” issue.

## **6. State and Federal Legislative Update**

Jeffrey Agee-Aguayo noted that this agenda item would focus on transit operations in transportation management areas (TMAs), regional transit authority (RTA) state enabling legislation, reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU, and other state and federal legislative issues affecting the committee membership.

Jason Kakatsch reported that the Wisconsin League of Municipalities is working with state legislators to try to soften the impact of the 10 percent state cut in transit aids.

Jason Kakatsch also indicated that some state legislators are trying to restore the Dane County RTA. There are also rumors that State Representative Robin Vos is working on an RTA bill that could split a local option half cent sales tax between transit and highways; Jason Kakatsch noted that the Wisconsin Transportation Builders’ Association (road builders) will likely support this legislation.

In addition, Jason Kakatsch discussed federal legislation, including the status of reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU.

Dave Vickman commented that some transit operations serving urbanized areas with populations over 200,000 in the state of Florida have retained their federal operational funding. Carrie Porter discussed federal legislation that would allow certain transit operations serving urbanized areas with populations over 200,000 to continue to receive federal operational funding. Jason Kakatsch discussed the “100 bus coalition,” a group of smaller transit operations (fleets of 100 buses or less) in urbanized areas with populations over 200,000 advocating for their continued receipt of federal operational funding.

Tom Wittig commented that FTA Region 7 (serving Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri) has allowed fuel costs as a “capital expense.”

Several committee members discussed the Obama “jobs bill” and its potential impacts on transportation services.

## **7. Task Force Update**

Jason Kakatsch reported that he had a meeting of the task force (via teleconference) with Pam Busch, Lisa Conard and Traci Robinson recently. During this teleconference, it was determined that there is a need to review the goals and objectives for the committee that were adopted in 2009, look at what was accomplished, and examine the next tasks that should be accomplished. This review will be accomplished soon.

## **8. Concealed Carry Policies at Area Transit Operations and Other Transit Providers**

Dave Vickman discussed the City of Oshkosh's efforts in responding to Wisconsin's new concealed carry law. Dave Vickman added that he was researching the appropriate transit response to this law by having discussions with the transit operation in Duluth. (Minnesota has had a concealed carry law on the books for several years).

Tom Wittig stated that the Green Bay Common Council will deal with a citywide response to concealed carry (including Green Bay Metro) in the near future.

Patty Kiewiz noted that WURTA is advising Wisconsin's transit operations on appropriate concealed carry policies.

Derek Muench commented that if a transit operator puts up "no weapons allowed" signs on its buses or at its facilities, it becomes liable if there is a problem (according to Manitowoc's City Attorney).

Committee members indicated that some intercity (such as Greyhound) bus operations in larger cities (Chicago, Los Angeles, etc.) have passengers go through metal detectors before boarding the bus.

## **9. Committee Member/Program Updates**

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

- Traci Robinson stated that Shoreline Metro has implemented an "agency rate" for paratransit trips of \$13.85 per trip. Shoreline Metro is also implementing a \$3 "day pass." Shoreline Metro's fixed-route ridership is up about 17 percent over 2010, while paratransit ridership to date in 2011 is about at the level observed in 2010.
- Holly Keenan commented that she was working with Oshkosh Transit on a travel training program, and noted that she was also involved with a volunteer driver program.
- Kari Jansen noted that she was working with Holly Keenan on various activities, and was also working on providing transportation to public housing in Appleton (via Valley Transit).

- Derek Muench indicated that ridership at Maritime Metro Transit (MMT) is up about 15 percent (to date) over 2010, but noted that he was having problems with certain details in getting the new MMT transfer point implemented. Derek Muench discussed some of the reasons behind recent ridership increases at MMT.
- Patty Kiewiz stated that ridership on Saturdays has increased greatly at Green Bay Metro (there is no longer a fare to ride on Saturdays), but added that the Green Bay Metro staff needs to work on establishing agency fares. There was discussion regarding changing the names of the Green Bay Metro routes and how this was received by the riders. Jason Kakatsch asked if there were any FTA charter regulation implications in regard to the routes serving Lambeau Field on Sundays when the Packers play at home; Patty Kiewiz and Tom Wittig thought that there would be no problems with FTA charter regulations, since Miller Brewing Company is paying for this service as a form of advertising, and added that similar precedent has been set at transit operations serving other metropolitan areas with NFL and major league baseball teams. Tom Wittig noted that ADA paratransit can be provided within 0.75 mile of the limited service routes on home game Sundays. Green Bay Metro staff also discussed their recent multiple hub route restructuring, noting that a shelter was added to the Green Bay Plaza hub, and indicating that a shelter will be added at the Bay Park Square hub in the near future.
- Jason Kakatsch noted that the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission had just completed the Oshkosh Transit Development Program (TDP). Jason Kakatsch added that Deborah Wetter could not be at today's meeting because she needed to meet with Valley Transit's connector service provider, and also indicated that Valley Transit's ridership to date in 2011 is up about 11 percent over 2010.
- Carrie Porter announced that the week of December 5 – 9, 2011, is "Older Driver Safety Awareness Week."
- Nathanael Brown stated that Waushara County is applying for an extension of its STRAP grant, and noted that service through this grant is provided not just to the elderly and disabled, but to all of the public within the county. Nathanael Brown added that he is continuing to negotiate with LogistiCare on reimbursement rates.
- Linda Grider noted that the City of Manitowoc is receiving two minibuses, freeing an older minibus up for Manitowoc County. Linda Grider added that on October 4, 2011, the Manitowoc County ADRC participated with other agencies in a nuclear event exercise/drill.
- Pam Busch commented that she was working with the local United Way to implement a volunteer driver program, adding that veterans currently have first priority in this program. Pam Busch added that she submitted her New Freedom (mobility manager position) and Section 5311 (shared-ride taxi in the Sturgeon Bay area) grant applications to WisDOT.
- Joann Dewhurst stated that she continues to deal with LogistiCare, primarily in regard to volunteer driver issues.

## **10. Other Issues**

Linda Grider commented that Dodge Caravans (for model years 2008 through 2010) have recalls for ignition and front wheel bearing problems. Linda Grider added that these vehicles are often used to provide ADA paratransit service in some areas.

## **11. Next Meeting Date and General Location**

The next meeting was scheduled for **Wednesday, January 11, 2012, at 9:30 a.m.** This meeting was tentatively scheduled to be held at the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, 400 Ahnaip Street, Suite 100, Menasha.

## **12. Adjournment**

**Moved** by Jason Kakatsch and seconded by Derek Muench 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 11:24 a.m.

Recording secretary,

Jeffrey C. Agee-Aguayo