

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY
SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL MEETING**

Minutes

DATE: 2/14/23

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: ZOOM

PRESENT: Nicole Davis-Dawald (Winnebago County Aging Resource Supervisor), Adam Bellcorelli (Transportation Planner with East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission), Rob Paterson (Council Chair), Holly Keenan (Lutheran Social Services – Make the Ride Happen, Winnebago Catch a Ride), Judy Richey (Committee on Aging Chair), Steve Tomasik (Transit Operations Manager for Go Transit City of Oshkosh), Susan Garcia Franz (Winnebago County Health Department), Jim Collins (City of Oshkosh Transportation Director), Laura VanHooreweghe (Valley Transit), Sara Schneider (Valley Transit)

1. **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS** – **Nicole Davis-Dawald** called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM. Nicole welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made by all committee members.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – Nicole stated there have been no complaints brought to her attention regarding transportation since the last meeting, aside from some consumer concerns regarding Route 10.

Rob Paterson asked for clarification on the minutes from last meeting regarding wording of "Nicole stated that the she is being told that people have already tried to call and let them know this is an issue; however, have not received a response." Nicole stated that complaints regarding the time waits were being voiced to the wrong person/company. This has been addressed as Nicole now has information on the correct person/company to call for customer concerns and there have been no complaints since. In addition, Rob stated he wanted to make a comparison regarding the 85.21 funding from last year to this year. Nicole stated that the funding was at the same percentage and will provide the specific figures to Rob.

3. **UPDATES FROM OUR AGE FRIENDLY TRANSPORTATION BREAK OUT COMMITTEE**
 - Neenah Human Services building - The transit center has changed routes in Neenah and now the only route passing by the Neenah Human Services building entails a 20-minute ride before reaching the building. There is another nearby route which requires a four-block walk to the Neenah Human Services building.
 - Bathroom facilities – Long-term planning is being done to address issues with the temporary transit facility such as having to utilize the bathrooms at Neenah City Hall.
 - Valley Transit: Human Services staff have started working together as a team with Valley Transit on issues of transportation and social isolation at assisted livings.
 - Transit Routes / Walmart bus stop: A committee member is advocating with Walmart's cooperate office regarding providing a safer, more accessible designated path in the

Oshkosh Walmart parking lot to the bus stop. **Rob Paterson** shared concerns regarding routes that riders have had to adapt to and indicated the preference for routes to remain within a half hour. **Jim Collins** shared a brief history of the bus stop informing members that this is not a Go Transit issue, rather occurred when Walmart prioritized adding the customer pickup area. At that time, the engineering firm hired by Walmart determined there was no safe, accessible location available within the lot for a bus stop. The bus stop was temporarily relocated by the outdoor garden center; however, was discontinued as there were multiple safety issues. As the city controls only the right-of-way, the only viable alternative the city had was to locate the bus stop on Washburn Street. Jim stated that paratransit services are available for disabled passengers who cannot safely traverse the parking lot. Additionally, other local stores are available that have drop-offs with less of a walk. **Susan Garcia Franz** stated she will continue efforts to advocate for safer alternatives including possibly demonstrating a walking path made of white pylon cones.

4. MAKING THE RIDE HAPPEN & WINNEBAGO CATCH A RIDE UPDATES

- May Conference – Holly Keenan stated that she and Go Transit have been asked to present at a conference being held in May to educate high school students on the services they provide.
- Travel Training Experiences – Holly also recently did a travel training experience educating a youth on bus services and plans to hire a staff who will provide travel training experiences in Oshkosh.
- Catch A Ride continues and ridership numbers are back up again now. Their committee has been brainstorming on ways to combat the issue of capacity issues at certain times of the day resulting in the inability to take on new riders and await hearing how much State funding they will be receiving to support the project.

Q: Did anyone take over Oshkosh Express Delivery?

A: Oshkosh Economic Development is aggressively trying to find a buyer and the owners have already sold some of the cars.

5. VALLEY TRANSIT UPDATES

- **Sara Schneider** reported that Valley Transit and Running Inc continue to seek bus drivers.
- Paratransit ridership is slowly incrementally increasing with daily ridership reports reflecting mid to upper 2,000 rides per day.

6. GO TRANSIT UPDATES

Steve Tomasik reported the following 2023 statistics:

- 9.4 percent increase in fixed route rides.
- 64 percent increase in student rides.
- 33 percent increase in fixed rides during the month of January.
- 30 percent increase in student rides during the month of January.
- 0.08 percent increase in paratransit rides.
- 28.3 percent decrease in senior dial-a-rides.
- 48.5 percent decrease in January senior dial-a-rides.
- 25.5 percent decrease in rural over 60 rides.
- Paratransit services have improved overall.
- They are now in a new transit center with the office being open Tuesdays and Thursdays.

- Still awaiting some platform improvements on the east side and includes a new supervisor's office.
- February 3rd – celebrated Transit Equity Day.
- February 22nd – Winnebago Literacy Council refugee training class.
- 43 percent increase in Route 10 inner-city and 48 percent increase in January.

Q: Will the token transit app be continued?

A: Now with the student pass system it is not anticipated to be changed in the near future and gives riders an option to use credit cards.

7. ANY OTHER AGENCY UPDATES

- **Judy Richey** reported that the Committee on Aging is always looking at transportation options. She reported more people are considering filing an application for paratransit; however, are apprehensive about giving up a level of independence. Individuals are reporting that ADVOCAP has provided a good personal door-to-door service for appointments.
- Judy inquired about the shelter that is on the corner of Witzel and Westhaven being moved from the north to the south side of the road stating it is presenting a safety challenge to individuals who wish to utilize it. Jim Collins responded that the bus stop is on that side of the street as that is the direction the bus travels and is located a traffic-controlled intersection with a button to push in order to cross the street. In addition, the bus stop had to be moved in order to accommodate temporary changes to sanitary services to the building.

Q: Would it be helpful to have a demonstration project on use of that shelter and gather people using the intersection together?

A: Judy hopes to do some more one-on-one as current residents seem hesitant towards utilizing transportation resources.

- **Adam Belcorelli** reported that he just saw this morning that the UW-Oshkosh Public Administration Department is conducting a survey for parents/guardians of students who are riding the bus and also plans on an upcoming survey for the students themselves.

Q: Are there still a lot of issues with student riders?

A: **Steve Tomasik** reported issues continue; however, since stepping up cooperation with the school board, there are fewer suspended students and continues to be monitored.

Q: Can students ride without access to a cellphone?

A: Paper passes are available.

Q: Has there been tracking on the number of paper passes?

A: 217 paper passes have been handed out.

8. NEXT MEETING DATE – May 16th at 1:30 PM.

9) ADJOURNMENT – With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by: Nicole-Davis-Dawald, Human Services Department