



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Approved ADA TRANSIT SUBCOMMITTEE TO THE TRANSIT AND PARKING COMM

Monday, May 24, 2010

5:10 PM
Please see note. 215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Room 303
(Madison Municipal Building)

NOTE: 5:10 - 5:30 PM: Accessible vehicles staged in front of Madison Municipal Building for agenda item #4. Meeting will then convene at 5:30 PM in MMB, Room 303 for the rest of the agenda.

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Also present: Jeanne Brunette-Tregoning (left at 5:30 PM) and Mary Jacobs

Staff: Crystal Martin, Ann Gullickson, Ann Schroeder

Guests: Mark Jones and Peggy Jones from Abby Vans

Present: 5 -

William J. Tangney; Susan M. De Vos; Ida W. Nathan; Carl D. DuRocher and Kenneth M. Streit

Absent: 1 -

Michael A. Huckaby

Excused: 1 -

Chris Schmidt

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Streit moved approval of the minutes; Ms. De Vos seconded. The motion carried by voice vote/other.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. [18578](#)

Accessible Vehicle Demo and Feedback, Mark Jones

a. Abby Vans requesting feedback on accessible vehicle types for paratransit service

Attachments: [Accessible Vehicle Specifications.pdf](#)

Mr. Jones said he came to solicit comments, feedback, and opinions about the

accessible vehicles he demonstrated. Even if members didn't have any feedback at the meeting, he asked that later thoughts be forwarded to Ms. Martin or submitted on AbbyVans.com. The demonstration was of vehicles Abby Vans has used successfully. Mr. Streit said it would be helpful if Mr. Jones gave a list of who they have delivered those vehicles to. Ms. Nathan said she hoped we would not get the smaller van. Another vendor has smaller vans that are not comfortable to enter/exit. She did not notice that in the larger one. The larger seemed the more comfortable of the two. She was happy to see that the seatbelts are easier to put together when they meet in the center rather than trying to do it on the side. Ms. Gullickson said much of our fleet is cutaways, and we've gone that direction because it gives more room for tie-down areas. They don't require the first in, last out loading and unloading. If we can get four people in, these are occasions that we are looking for in a vehicle.

Ms. Martin thanked Abby Vans for coming and doing a demonstration. She hadn't seen the Sprinter with a conversion, so this was very helpful. We serve a shared ride service in higher density populations, so we do make use of multiple boardings of wheelchairs. She would like to hear from Ms. Jacobs how a multiple boarding situation would go in a minivan. She liked the seating for the rear loading. We are still dealing with minivan issues and how to make use of them. They are economical, but we still need to make sure they are accessible for some of our ambulatory customers. Ms. Martin asked for a description about how the rear loading vehicles work. Right now Metro is using side loaders almost exclusively. Ms. De Vos said she was having a hard time contextualizing this. No one told the committee why Abby Vans was on the agenda.

It is a very good feature to load in back instead of the side; it's safer in a number of places. Mr. Tangney said the flap at the end of the ramp did not fall down well. The surface was level, and he felt that should have worked a little bit better. Mr. DuRocher wondered if there was something pending as far as a vehicle purchase or whether this was more of information gathering for the future. Also, similar to other comments, Badger Bus uses some side loaders. Some people in wheelchairs would get loaded sideways and remain sideways, and for some people that feels unsafe. Ms. Martin explained that Metro just went through a bus procurement. We're starting to get feedback on the four buses (low floor) from our drivers. We were able to get the more expensive low floor vehicles with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) money. We're going out to bid in the near future for another 16 vehicles. We're still formulating how we might use minivans. So in talking to Mr. Jones, he wondered how to get some feedback, and Ms. Martin invited him to speak with this group. Ms. Nathan asked if the 16 larger buses would be replaced with minivans. Ms. Martin said no. We will replace 8 in 2012 and 8 in 2013. They will undoubtedly be larger vehicles, but it's good to get feedback about other types of vehicles that are available. Ms. Nathan asked if the trend is toward smaller rather than larger vehicles. Ms. Gullickson said it's very common for Metro to get demonstrations of vehicles. Sometimes when manufacturers have vehicles in the area, even if it is well before time to replace our current vehicles, we will have a demonstration. We had no agenda other than wanting to see a vehicle we hadn't seen, and we had the opportunity.

Ms. Jacobs said she wanted to comment on the larger van. She didn't see any

side rails when the ramp was down. Some ambulatory people need a ramp to get up because the step might be too high. Some people are fearful getting on a ramp and like side rails to hold onto. Some also have a belt to go around the person or something to help with that during loading. Mr. Jones said he was just here for feedback, not to sell anything. The ramp does have the handrails; Ms. Nathan did use those. The belt has been taken off the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirement. It can cause problems in the field. None of the major manufacturers have that standard, although you can request it with your order. The wheels of the vehicle were in a bit of a hole, and that's why the back flap did not go down as Mr. Tangney said. It's a safety issue any time the wheels aren't at the same level of the ramp. So the back flap would not go down to prevent someone from taking a nose dive.

Mr. Jones said one reason you are just now seeing the rear load minivan in Wisconsin is because this is a new code interpretation of the ADA requirements. It used to say you had to have 56" clearance from the opening of the door to the securement area. This has changed. Now from the ramp to the door height has to be 56", but there is no interior requirement. The vehicle demonstrated has a clear opening of 55 3/4". Diagonally from the door to the ramp hinge is about 62", which meets state code. So that is okay to use in Wisconsin. Nobody liked side door minivans. It's against the law to ride facing sideways in a commercial vehicle. A van is economical because it costs 50% of a larger vehicle and costs 50% to maintain. It has the same useful life as big vehicle. The larger vehicle demonstrated are used in two systems – LaCrosse's rural system and the City of Wausau. The 170 will hold four riders who use wheelchair and four riders who are ambulatory. However, it is not able to do first in/first out unloading. The smaller vehicle demonstrated is being used in Wausau. The level of comfort is better, and it is quick to load. Passengers can be loaded in a rear load minivan much faster than with a hydraulic lift. The restraints are fast and easy. Fewer injuries are sustained helping someone in and out of a minivan. There is more room in a cutaway, but the movement of bending down causes strain on the driver compared to a minivan. A minivan cannot be a replacement for all other vehicles; no system can run 100% one style of vehicle. Economies for vans can be figured on a per trip basis. Trip numbers may be slightly less; yet, passengers don't ride as long. This makes for more routes; however, feedback from the customer is positive. Jump seats are very small in the minivan. Abby has ordered a brand new seat that was specially developed for Abby Vans. There is a shoulder belt in the seat, and it is not a folding seat. It is as comfortable a seat as you can have for the amount of room available. Ms. Nathan asked if the belt comes high from roof. No, it is integrated into the seat. Ms. Nathan liked that since it is more comfortable. Mr. Jones said they are going 100% to that seat style. Ms. Nathan said that is a great improvement to not have the belt cut you at the neck.

Mr. Jones said Abby sells a lot of specialized medical vehicle providers to organizations working through Family Care. They sold a minivan to the City of Appleton. Other than two full size Ford conversion vans, all Abby Van vehicles are drop floor minivans.

Mr. Jones said they are very interested in the Madison system. They are very interested in feedback. It doesn't pay to give something that is "really great" if it's not what people want. If Madison already knows some of the challenges,

they are not interested in putting a vehicle in a system that won't provide the level of service people expect. Metro will not be able to buy Sprinters for their directly operated service because those vehicles don't qualify for Buy America status. A vendor can come in and use those very satisfactorily, but Metro can't. Sometimes a system that gets federal funding can get a waiver to buy a Caravan, sometimes not. They are made in Canada. That is one of the reasons people in Madison haven't seen these vehicles.

Ms. Nathan wondered why the group is seeing a demonstration of vehicles that we can't use federal funding to purchase. Ms. Gullickson said she wasn't aware that the vehicles didn't qualify. The City of Madison could not purchase the vehicles for use in the directly operated paratransit fleet. However, contractors could. That means vendors like Transit Solutions, Badger Cab, Abby Vans, and Kobussen could provide service with those vehicles, but Metro could not purchase them with their own money. Ms. Nathan said perhaps Mr. Jones should have been talking to a vendor who would be able to buy those vehicles. Ms. Gullickson said he also provides paratransit service and is interested in this market. He wanted to learn more about us and let us learn more about him.

5. [18579](#)

FTA Triennial Review 2010 - ADA Area

- a. UW Free Fare Routes & Impact on Paratransit Fares
- b. Customer Service Hours on Sundays & Holidays

Ms. Martin said Metro had its Triennial Review. Every three years, the Federal Transit Administration does a review for compliance with federal requirements including procurement, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), drug and alcohol testing, half fare, and others for a total of 22 areas. Metro hasn't changed how they provide service since their last review, but the consultant discovered a few things in this review. There are some things about how Metro's service is perceived, which need correcting. Sometimes it's just sending out a notice; for example, letting people know that Metro is compliant with Title VI. There were others findings that were more than just brushing up on the technical paperwork. Metro personnel are still working on the findings to do with the ADA. Customer Service hours on Sundays and holidays were deemed inadequate. They need to be reflective of Metro's regular administrative hours. So beginning July 1, 2010, customer service will open at 9 AM on Sundays and holidays. That's the plan; which Metro needs to submit to the FTA as to what is their intention.

The other issue that came up is on the UW Campus 80s routes (80, 81, and 82). They have evolved to the point where we advertise them as free fare, even though they are subsidized through the University. So the FTA said there is a free fare zone in the middle of Metro's service area, even though there are other paid routes in that area. The FTA said the free fare should apply to paratransit service, as well. Metro personnel still have some questions about this finding since the routes are subsidized by the UW, and there are fare routes going through that area. In terms of how that impacts Metro's system and the UW, Metro personnel are working with the UW to come up with a solution about how to resolve the situation. Metro can only charge two times the adult cash fixed route fare for paratransit service, so twice free is free. This affects a 3/4 mile boundary of the fixed route service. It would be somewhat

problematic to determine the boundary of the Routes 80s. The FTA vision is that a paratransit customer calling for a ride in that zone; for example, Memorial Union to UW Hospital would be free. There could be alternatives. The deadline to submit Metro's correction plan to the FTA for this finding is July 25th. Metro personnel have meetings with UW scheduled.

Ms. De Vos asked what the arrangement is with the UW faculty pass. Ms. Martin said that it is the same as with student passes. UW employees use a pass ride fee, and UW reimburses Metro for those rides. So the only time this would be an issue is if someone isn't a UW faculty member or student and is riding. Ms. Martin said we're doing research to determine how many trips it affects and how many are supported by a pass program. Metro personnel don't know the nature of the trips on paratransit. Ms. De Vos said Route 80s around campus are meant for UW staff and students, even if drivers don't check ID every time someone gets on board. Ms. Martin said she suspects UW will bring that to Metro's attention.

6. [18580](#)

Reports

- a. Transit & Parking Commission
- b. Commission on People with Disabilities
- c. Dane County Specialized Transportation Committee
- d. Transportation Planning Board (MPO)
- e. Other Community Meetings
- f. Report on the Chair
- g. Staff Report
- h. Paratransit Performance Indicators

Attachments: [Para Indicators Mar10.pdf](#)

a. Transit and Parking Commission – There was no report.

b. Commission on People with Disabilities – Mr. Tangney has given his notice that he will be leaving the Commission. Someone is coming to the Commission from Access to Independence, and he suspects they would be the liaison to ADATS.

c. Dane County Specialized Transportation Committee – There will be a meeting this week.

d. Transportation Planning Board (MPO) – There was no report.

e. Other Community Meetings – There were no community meetings.

f. Report from the Chair – Ms. Martin reported on Ms. Brunette-Tregoning's behalf. We will have elections for officers at the June meeting.

g. Staff Report – This room, MMB 303, is no longer going to be available for meetings. We have scheduled MMB, Room LL-130 for the rest of the year for ADATS meetings.

h. Paratransit Performance Indicators – Ms. Martin said that under the

customer service year to date Late Ride report numbers and customer complaints, the formula in the spreadsheet is wrong and the numbers are misleading. Metro personnel will make adjustments for the April report. The on-time performance for Metro is 92%, which has been a goal. Metro has been on the low side. They have found the right incentives.

Ms. De Vos said it appears that despite the fare hike, we are seeing an increase in ridership. Ms. Nathan asked what happened to her proposal to not have that \$1 increase during rush hour for paratransit service. Her "protest" is to call 5 minutes after 4:00 PM, and then she finds that those rides are very late and also long rides. She thinks it has always been Transit Solutions. She said the drivers are nice, yet, they cannot explain why they are late. The pickup time right after 4:00 PM is very bad. Sometimes she does not get home until 5:30 PM. It is not the ride itself; it is the total time spent. Because of her age, she finds it extremely fatiguing and worries about her diabetes. Sometimes she is not home close to the time she would want to eat. That is tertiary. The main problem is that the rides are longer and longer.

Ms. Martin said she had no information on the progress of the \$1 fee roll back, but encouraged Ms. Nathan to call in complaints about late rides as they happen.

7. [08706](#)

Other Transit Related Announcements

Ms. De Vos said she thinks people know that there is a Dane County Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Board. There is a subcommittee that is going to start setting policy. There is a coalition of a number of groups that will hopefully be supporting whatever plan comes out. That is still in formation. She wanted to inform people.

Ms. Nathan said she is wondering what happened from the last public hearing where she asked for a very slight increase of bus service. She would not have bought the condo she did if she had known the nearby bus stop was only served by commuter service. She has asked for a slightly later morning bus and a slightly earlier afternoon bus. At that meeting, she was told that there would be a reduction in the service of that route. Nothing is said about the possibilities of getting more service. She is hoping someone will have an answer for that at the next meeting. They are routes 56 and 57. She would also like to know how to suggest that there be a short run bus from Muir Field Road to Verona. There is now a big shopping center on McKee Road. If you want to leave your car behind, the City does not encourage you to do that because they do not provide any service. She would like to know who to write to. Mary Jacobs nodded that she has had that trip issue come up, too.

Mr. Tangney said that he has been looking at the Tampa/Ft. Meyers area, and Metro's bus service here is far superior to what they have. Their population is less than here. Normal service is every hour and half-hour at rush hour.

The intersection that concerns Ms. Nathan is Stone Crest and East Pass, which is right off Maple Grove. Mr. Streit said that one of the tougher things about being on the Transit and Parking Commission (TPC) is that for every bus you are put on, it costs X number of dollars per year to provide that. One of the

jobs of the TPC is to figure out where to cut service. In general, the overall budget does not cover all requested service. The main reason is that generally what happens is there is not enough ridership. There is barely enough ridership during the times some routes do run. We put it out there hoping to generate interest; and if the ridership is there, we might be able to expand. The closer you are to the Capitol, the better your chances of getting service. It is more likely that there is better ridership in dense areas because the ride is short. Ms. Nathan said that she understood what he was saying, but she believes if the bus were there and advertised, then the ridership would be there. Many people would like to leave their car at home. Mr. Streit said that we have a budget and that means X number of driver hours; and, we have to put it where it is best used.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Jacobs moved to adjourn; Mr. DuRocher seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:43 PM.