



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, July 27, 2009

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

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Staff: Ann Gullickson, Crystal Martin, Ann Schroeder, Crystal Martin

Present: 6 -

Chris Schmidt; William J. Tangney; Jeanne M. Tregoning; Susan M. De Vos; Mary E. Jacobs and Ida W. Nathan

Absent: 1 -

Michael A. Huckaby

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Tangney, seconded by Jacobs, to Approve the Minutes. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Carl DuRocher, 1441 Williamson Street, requested as a former member and chair of this body, that he be extended ex-officio status for the duration of this meeting so he could request information from the chair. Ms. De Vos said she would like to extend ex-officio status not just at this meeting, but indefinitely.

OLD BUSINESS

4. [15142](#) Subcommittee Organizational Items

Normally at this time of year we elect a chair and vice-chair. We also confirm the standing meeting time on our calendar. Ms. De Vos opened the floor to nominations for chair. Ms. Jacobs nominated Ms. Brunette-Tregoning. Mr. Tangney seconded the nomination. Ms. Brunette-Tregoning accepted the nomination. The motion passed by voice vote/other. Ms. Brunette-Tregoning is the new chair. The group thanked Ms. De Vos for her service as chair. The floor was opened for vice-chair nominations. Ms. Jacobs nominated Mr. Tangney. Mr. Tangney seconded that nomination and accepted. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

Members discussed whether the current meeting day and time is still good for

everyone. There are no holiday conflicts. There could be budget meeting conflicts during that season that could cause a change in the future, but right now there are no conflicts. We will keep the fourth Monday of each month at 5:10 PM until 6:40 PM as our meeting time.

5. [15144](#) Metro Transit Management Performance Audit - 2009
a. Paratransit Recommendations

Attachments: [Wis DOT Audit 2009 - Paratransit Area 06 09.pdf](#)

This item was tabled until a future meeting.

6. [15145](#) Rainy Day Wish List

Ms. De Vos said that usually we have to cut expenses. But very occasionally there is money that becomes available. It is important to have ideas ready to go to use the money very quickly. She thought it would be good to have a list of things the Subcommittee would like to recommend itemized. Her favorite is always benches at bus stops. Perhaps members could come back next month with ideas so they are ready whenever money should become available. Ms. Brunette-Tregoning said she thought we had had a list at one time. Ms. Martin said we have a pending issues list. But this rainy day wish list is more in response to a situation like the recent stimulus funding that became available and potential recipients were asked for projects that were "shovel ready" and could be implemented with a short turn-around time. It's good to have a list ready to keep in mind for when funding might become available on short notice. It doesn't happen often. Ms. Gullickson said one idea is doing outreach to the vision impaired community to see if there is technology that could help them gather and communicate information in ways that work for them. This would be an appropriate Subcommittee to help gather information about that technology if Metro should be working toward this. We could do outreach in the name of this Subcommittee to the Wisconsin Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Federation of the Blind and similar organizations for people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Mr. Tangney wondered if there could be a form to fill out on the Internet to allow people to schedule their own rides.

Ms. Nathan said if the first pole or whatever first thing a blind person would touch on the bus could have a braille message on it that could be helpful. There could be other short, braille messages on the bus somewhere. Ms. Nathan said her personal wish list is that the ramps be improved and the doors for the low ramp vehicles be improved. Recently a driver had to lift Ms. Nathan's walker onto the ramp because it would not go fully down to the bottom. Another time, once the ramp was down, the end plate had to be kicked down and the driver had to stand on it so it would go and stay flat. Also, the low ramps have an angle that is very steep. There is not enough length to them. Recently on a ride, the door wouldn't close, so the driver tried various ways to tie the doors shut. Ms. Nathan ended up riding while holding the door closed. Also, the ramp is too noisy. She is talking about paratransit and not

the mainline buses.

Ms. Martin said that there is on-going maintenance for all buses. These are things that may happen during the day, but buses don't go into service with operating defects.

Ms. Tangney asked if the wish list is about items of cost or items that don't cost anything. Ms. Brunette-Tregoning said we could have two lists. Mr. Tangney said it always seems to take quite a while after we get our first snow until we get good access for our buses and customers. We should start early to notify business owners who are responsible for taking care of a curb cut or space near a bus stop. Another item is the recordings on the buses. He would like a recording to remind the driver to change his destination sign when necessary. Mr. Tangney said he has found out that there are sometimes if not always the reduced fare 31-day passes left over. If income for Metro works out so that there is extra money, perhaps we could consider increasing the number of these passes available for low-income users.

Ms. Nathan asked where the "extra money" comes from. Ms. De Vos said it doesn't exist, but we need to have ideas ready in case, for example, the state offers some extra money. Another example is the stimulus funding the federal government made available.

Ms. Nathan said she thought paratransit fares should be rolled back to \$2.50 for a regular fare and \$3.00 if you want to maintain a peak fare. Eventually fares will have to be increased again. Where do you go from \$4 and \$5 fares? She wondered if Metro was always operating at a loss or if there were some money left over each year. Ms. Martin said that it would be good to develop a consensus on some items in case extra money does become available. She said it depends if there is always a deficit. Some years if there is savings, the goal is to put money into a reserve. In the years we don't operate in a surplus, we can go to the reserve to make up some of the deficit.

Mr. DuRocher said supporters for increased fares have said that if the anticipated revenue were realized, this money would be put into a reserve fund because it had been so depleted in previous years with large increases in fuel prices.

Ms. Jacobs said increased security at transfer points with additional cameras or personnel could be a use for any extra money. Ms. Gullickson said with the \$9.5 million in stimulus money, one project we're using it for is upgrading the equipment at the transfer points. The police department will be able to see in real time themselves transmissions from the transfer point cameras and not have to wait or rely on Metro staff to pull that information for them. Ms. De Vos asked how people can call in incidents without pay phones at the transfer points. Ms. Gullickson said people are using cell phones. Pay phones were removed because there wasn't enough use. Mr. Tangney said perhaps there could be "panic buttons" at transfer points to alert the police to problems happening.

Members should bring ideas to add to this list to future meetings. Ms. Brunette-Tregoning said also bring back the pending list as a separate list.

NEW BUSINESS

7. [15478](#) Performance Indicators

Attachments: [Para Indicators Apr09 \(2\).pdf](#)
[Para Indicators May09.pdf](#)

Mr. Tangney wondered if the Metro Directly operated 89% on-time performance could be increased. Ms. Martin said this is not from their manifest but from buttons they push on their mobile data terminals. It has been slow getting drivers to change to this new way of recording on time performance. Ms. Martin has been meeting with drivers one on one to encourage compliance. The 89% reflects driver accuracy in recording the pick up time and not actual arrival time. Mr. Tangney asked about GPS in helping to gauge on time performance. Ms. Martin said GPS is in the directly operated service vehicles now. However, there is no GPS automatically verified on time performance measurement. Staff would have to work with the GPS software to look up on time performance per ride.

Ms. De Vos said the statistics show the total number of rides varying quite a bit month to month. Ms. Martin said overall paratransit ridership has increased about 3% this year, which is expected and what we budget for. What has been unexpected is that the demand for wheelchair space has increased over 8%. That would indicate that ambulatory trips are down from what they had been in the past. What generally happens in the summer is that we cut back on our wheelchair van space and then put that service back on in the fall when we get busier. Because of the change in the dynamics of the requests this year, we are increasing our wheelchair capacity in the summer months, too.

Mr. Tangney asked whether there is consideration when buying new vehicles to making an accommodation for the increase in wheelchair trips. Ms. Martin said when we need increased capacity, we purchase it from our contractors. Mr. Tangney thought perhaps when ordering new Metro paratransit vehicles we would have extra space for wheelchair capacity. Ms. Martin said being able to accommodate additional rides with our existing personnel would be great. But we would need to make policy changes so we would not hurt our efficiency.

8. [15479](#) Staff Update for Information Only

- a. Regional Transit Authorities Established by Governor
- b. State Medicaid Transportation Manager Approved

Attachments: [2009 Wisconsin Act 28 MA Transportation Manager.pdf](#)

a. Regional Transit Authorities Established by Governor – Ms. Martin said the Governor approved the ability to establish regional transit authorities (RTAs) for Dane County, the Eau Claire area, and the Ashland area. Milwaukee's situation is up in the air and the Fox Valley is still working on it. There will be on-going discussions, but it has been a goal to have this enabling legislation, which we now have. Our general manager has been a very strong proponent

of RTAs. The enabling legislation allows up to a half-cent sales tax in order to fund the RTA. Ms. De Vos said there was a measure that the governor vetoed that would make a referendum for an RTA in Dane County mandatory. The Mayor, County Executive and the Chair of the County Board of Supervisors will have a public referendum anyway. Alder Schmidt said a referendum will be problematic because the RTA area is the same as the Transportation Planning Board area (also know as the MPO), some parts of which are not in Dane County. Other areas in Dane County, which want to be involved in an RTA, like DeForest, aren't part of the MPO area. There are a lot of questions. The group will be kept up to date.

b. State Medicaid Transportation Manager Approved – Ms. Martin said this is a separate issue from Family Care. It is related to specialized medical vehicle (SMV) and Common Carrier transportation for low-income eligibility and people with physical disabilities. Several parts of the Medicaid transportation program that are currently managed by the County will be managed by a state broker. That means a request for proposals will be sent out to choose a private company to manage these programs. The County currently administers this program for the state. The County will no longer do this; a private entity will. So our relationship with the County and these rides will change. Perhaps we will have a similar relationship with the new entity. This change might not be ready to go into effect until late next year. There is a possibility of trip shedding onto Metro a large number of unfunded trips. We don't know yet what to expect. Ms. Martin will keep the group updated.

In response to a question by Mr. DuRocher about how this program will affect state aid money, Ms. Martin said many of the people served by Medicaid are also served by Metro's ADA paratransit program. Because of that overlap, there is a push back and forth about who is going to pay for the services. Under this new program, the County will no longer have authority over Medicaid funds. Ms. Martin said the 85.20 and 85.21 monies will not be affected by this.

Mr. DuRocher asked whether the way this was enacted, as part of the budget, gives it a sunset provision so that it's a pilot program with an end date. Ms. Martin said there is a reporting mechanism to see if there are savings and whether enhanced data collection for these trips can lead to increased efficiency. It's unclear what effect the report will have.

Mr. Tangney wondered if Metro could overlap rides to produce savings with the new program as they did with the County. Ms. Martin said it could happen depending on who the broker is. Metro has been very fortunate with our local relationships. Some companies that provide broker service primarily shed rides and then do level of need assessments so that some people who had been getting cab rides are given a bus pass or not given transportation services at all. In some instances there has been chaos; in some cases it saved the state a lot of money. Some people feel in some cases it saved the state money but shifted costs to local government. Ms. Martin said her next course of action is to find positive models of the program and see how to develop those types of relationships.

Ms. De Vos said she heard talk about this model and called it a total disaster. They described it very much how insurance companies have gotten into health

care. Brokers don't work for free; they get paid and at the cost of local transit agencies, perhaps having to cut mainline service to provide more paratransit service. There is some speculation that this has no benefit to the public. Ms. Martin said this change is happening all across the country and the pressure on human service agencies to reduce expenses and manage costs is tremendous.

Mr. DuRocher asked if there is a mechanism in the state budget to amend this program before it goes into effect. Ms. Martin said she believes there is always a way. Ms. De Vos said there are some bills being introduced individually from the budget that could have an effect on this.

9. [10785](#)

Reports

- a. Transit & Parking Commission
- b. Commission on People with Disabilities
- c. Contracted Service Oversight Subcommittee
- d. Dane County Specialized Transportation Committee
- e. Other Community Meetings

a. **Transit and Parking Commission** – Alder Schmidt said there is an event to celebrate Carl DuRocher's many years of service to the TPC on Thursday 7/30/09 at 5 PM at the Capital Brewery in Middleton. Also at the last meeting, the group presented Mr. DuRocher with a plaque and a card for his years of service.

b. **Commission on People with Disabilities** – Mr. Tangney said that he passed on the idea of asking for budget neutral fares and asked people to bring feedback to the next meeting. He was reappointed as liaison to this Subcommittee. There is an idea going forward that if one of several major commissions wants an ordinance change, it would not require sponsorship by the Mayor or an Alder. There was a lot of discussion, including how that could backfire once in a while. There was also discussion about how to encourage people with disabilities to participate in citizenship. Polling places have been made accessible, but few people with disabilities vote. Encouraging will be a long process. Ms. De Vos said she always votes absentee because she never knows if she will be able to get around on voting day. Chris Felton, the sign language interpreter for this commission for many years has been replaced by a teleinterpreter service from Texas.

c. **Contracted Service Oversight Subcommittee** – The most recent meeting was cancelled.

d. **Dane County Specialized Transportation Committee** – Mr. DuRocher said the focus was the statewide transportation broker. There will be a meeting Wednesday night when Norah Cashin from the County will meet with the affected local transportation providers. He wonders if there will be new information provided at that meeting. Ms. Martin says she doesn't know; that's why she's going. She would be happy to report back to this Subcommittee. They postponed their budget review until the next meeting.

e. **Other Community Meetings** – No one reported on other community meetings.

10. [08706](#) Other Transit Related Announcements

Not transit related, but Ms. Nathan invited all members to the opening reception of an exhibit of her welcome home photos she took on VJ day that will be at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, 30 Mifflin Street on August 4th from 5:00 to 6:30 PM. Her professional name is Ida Wyman. The show runs until Oct 30th. Ms. Nathan will speak at 5:30.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Tangney moved adjournment; Ms. Jacobs seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:44 PM.

[15480](#) Attachment: Newspaper Article

Attachments: [Newspaper Article - S DeVos.pdf](#)