

COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

July 28, 2009

IN ATTENDANCE:

Amy Wiley, Chairman, Provena St. Mary's Dialysis; Dorci Schoolman, Vice-Chairman, Options CIL; Cheryl Chamberlain, KC-CASA; Jeannette Tetreault, Thresholds; Mary Jo Martyn, KCC-WIA; Rob Hoffmann and Michelle Brutlag, River Valley METRO Mass Transit District; Laura Dick, SHOW BUS; Gloria Richard, Illinois Department of Employment Security; Cheryl Lockwood, NE Illinois Area Agency on Aging; Mike Butler and Rhonda Munson, Good Shepherd Manor; Mike Lammey, Melissa Rosenow and Jim Greenstreet, Kankakee County Planning Department.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Wiley called the meeting to order at 9:38 AM, welcoming all. Everyone present then introduced themselves.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Chairman Wiley asked for any Public Comment. There were no public comment forms filed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the May 26, 2009 meeting were presented for approval. Ms. Lockwood made a motion to approve as presented, seconded by Mr. Butler. Motion carried.

AGENCY TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND INTERAGENCY COORDINATION:

Ms. Dick of SHOW BUS presented an overview of rural public transportation history, and the inception and growth of SHOW BUS. She distributed a handout of their scheduled days for service to the areas of the County. Public rural transportation grew out of social service needs, and has gradually increased to include general population ridership. SHOW BUS started receiving only Federal and local (County) funds to operate. Ms. Dick stated that Kankakee County was allowed to receive Illinois downstate transit funds as of three years ago, allowing for increases in service. Funding is also generated via contracts with social service agencies and other government bodies, not with for-profit businesses.

Ms. Dick explained some of the differences between rural transportation service and urban service such as METRO provides. She described their deviated-fixed-route service and their on-demand paratransit service. Ms. Dick explained the differences between curb-to-curb, door-to-door and door-thru-door service options and problems. She explained that they are organized, as of July 1, 2009, as SHOW BUS Public Transportation, NFP (Not-For-Profit).

VETERAN’S TRANSPORTATION ISSUES:

Mr. Lammey stated that we had learned other counties are facing similar problems. The Grundy County VAC Superintendant is providing his own cars to veterans to go to medical appointments. There are issues of drivers, insurance and liability to be considered. Mr. Hoffmann stated that there have been numerous statements of veterans not being able to get their transportation needs met, but in a year and a half, no one has given him the names and telephone numbers of the veterans. He needs the information to contact them to try to meet those needs on an interim basis, and to document the problem and to justify pursuing resolution of the Manteno Veterans’ Home bus to Hines issue.

Ms. Schoolman suggested a mailing to organizations such as the VFW and American Legion, asking their memberships about transportation to VA facilities needs. She stated that Hines and other VA facilities are not real cooperative in scheduling appointments for veterans. It would be unlikely to be able to schedule a veteran for two or three different needs appointments in the same day, for example. Thus one veteran may need to go there two or three days a week. She also stated there is a bus that veterans in Crown Point schedule rides to Hines on, but it is always overbooked. Veterans wait for the bus, only to find there is no room on the bus when it gets there, so they miss their appointments.

Ms. Dick stated she had heard of a Federal Funds grant that was to be used for veteran’s case management, possibly through the Area Agency on Aging. Ms. Lockwood stated they have not been given anything on that yet, but their fiscal year doesn’t start until October, so it may be in the works.

REGION 6 RURAL HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN ISSUES:

Chairman Wiley then opened discussion on Region 6 Rural Human Services Transportation Plan Issues. There is a need for two people to represent Kankakee County at the Region 6 meetings, in order to have a sufficient number in attendance to have a quorum. Presently, Ms. Wiley is the delegate with Ms. Schoolman as an alternate if Ms. Wiley cannot attend. It is suggested that a second delegate to attend all meetings be appointed by this committee. Mr. Butler volunteered to serve in this capacity. Ms. Schoolman stated she would be willing to serve as an alternate for both delegates. There were no other volunteers, and unanimous vote elected Mr. Butler to serve as the second delegate.

Mr. Lammey reported there were four applications reviewed by the Region 6 Committee for busses, including Good Shepherd Manor, Mosaic, Futures, and the Grundy County VAC. All four were approved and passed on to IDOT for further review. Two applications were approved with an approved letter from Region 6 to apply replacement priority to the vehicles, since they were replacing private vehicles or service replacing a discontinued service provider.

PAYMENTS WITHHELD TO PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS:

Chairman Wiley then addressed the issue of payments withheld by the State to private transportation providers for family needs under Sections 94 & 96 Public Aid cases. The State approved the service, transportation was provided, but payments for November through February are still being withheld. The matter is in court, but no action has been

taken. The issue reportedly is that the program was instituted by the former governor without proper legislative approval of an allocation of funds to pay for the program. Further, because of the current State budget problems, more changes are expected in Public Aid in the near future.

ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES:

Vice-Chairman Schoolman opened this topic, reporting Options CIL has invited three local legislators to take to wheelchairs for a day in July to visit sites in the community. Representative Lisa Dugan has accepted the invitation, however, had to postpone the activity due to a schedule conflict. No news media are invited to the activity. It is not intended to draw public attention to any particular site, but rather to enlighten the legislators of accessibility issues in structures and transportation.

The plan is to visit one good accessibility site and one bad accessibility site in each community, Kankakee, Bradley and Bourbonnais. The Kankakee County Court House serves as an example for poor accessibility. Ms. Schoolman will report back to this Committee after the event.

Ms. Schoolman also stated that SHOW BUS and METRO have both been invited to Option, CIL to address clients concerning how to access their services. Ms. Schoolman asked Mr. Hoffmann if there was any progress in organizing a new ADA Committee at METRO. Mr. Hoffmann stated that he is in the process of establishing projects to be worked on by such a committee. He stated it probably will not be an ADA committee, but more of a Users Access committee, dealing with issues other than just ADA matters. He has installed a GIS program and has obtained GIS locations for sites on their routes, to be utilized by the committee. He has scheduled dates to meet, and believes this committee may become an Urban HSTP Committee.

DISABILITY/AGING/TRANSPORTATION ISSUES:

Mr. Butler stated that their contract is in place with SHOW BUS and they are very happy with the service. Their clients are happy, and are better able to access the seating as compared to the vans they have been using. They are already considering how else they may utilize SHOW BUS in their program.

Ms. Lockwood stated the current State budget problems have caused a 2 month furlough on a program they have Catholic Charities administer. They see cuts coming in the Care Rx program. ARRA Senior Employment Program funds have not been received as of yet, even though the programs have been started.

Mr. Lammey stated the ODC (Occupational Development Center) supportive employment program closed down in McLean County. Ms. Dick stated social service agencies that had been providing some services outside their own counties, have scaled back due to budget woes. Ms. Lockwood stated substance abuse programs and programs serving developmentally disabled, homeless and poor and have been hit with funding cuts.

PROGRAM STATUS OF TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS:

Ms. Dick reported on SHOW BUS in the opening presentation. She stated that SHOW BUS serves three counties that are in jeopardy of losing their food stamp provider offices. One county has lost funding for emergency response to mental health crises

Ms. Brutlag reported on River Valley METRO Mass Transit District. Ridership is up 22% over the previous year, with 634,000 riders. In June there were 67,400 riders, a record for one month. There were over 900 riders on the Manteno route in the first eleven months of service. Free Circuit Breaker rides were at 6,713 for the year and Free Senior rides were at 2,700. Route 10 in Bourbonnais had 7400 riders in June, and has had an additional bus added to the route, as of July 1.

METRO has met with school teachers to promote the bus service. There are YWCA preschooler trips and daycare trips to the Paramount for a matinee. Metro Plus service is being well utilized. There will be a special County Fair bus going from the Chestnut & Schuyler Transfer Center to the Hilton Garden Inn, to the Fairgrounds, to the KOA Campgrounds, then back to the same stops, Wednesday through Sunday. Schedules are in the busses and at the stops.

Federal and State money scheduled to come to METRO has not been released. The free Summer Pass program for 3rd grade through 12th grade are in use, but must be accompanied by an adult to go to University Park. METRO is promoting information on missing or endangered children on the front sign, and will do so in busses in the near future. They will also place not-for-profit announcements on the signs. METRO also has video conferencing links to military bases in IRAQ and Kuwait for families to make contact with service men and women in those regions. This is a free 30 minute call. It was suggested to get this information into the newspaper, in the Military News section.

QUESTIONS FROM THE NEWS MEDIA:

No media present.

NEW BUSINESS:

Kankakee area servicemen will be returning home, possibly on Monday. All who can are encouraged to welcome them home.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

Chairman Wiley then reviewed the meeting schedule planned for this Committee:

- August 17, 2009, at 10:00 AM, The Region 6 HSTP Meeting at the LifeCIL office in Pontiac.
- September 29, 2009 – 9:30 AM @ METRO Centre, Kankakee County Transportation Committee: Ms. Lockwood presenting on NE Illinois Area Agency on Aging.
- November 17, 2009 at 9:30 AM @ METRO Centre, Kankakee County Transportation Committee: Ms. Schaafsma presenting on the Kankakee County Health Department
- General Meeting Schedule – Last Tuesday of every other month at 9:30 A.M.
 - September, November of 2009

- Meeting Location – METRO Centre

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Wiley announced the meeting was adjourned at 10:55 AM.