

# Kankakee County Transportation Committee

## Minutes

July 29, 2014

Members in attendance: Mike Butler, Good Shepherd Manor; Roger Hess, Kankakee County Board Member; Laura Dick, SHOW BUS; Cheryl Lockwood, Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging; Bonnie Schaafsma, Kankakee County Health Department; Michelle Brutlag, River Valley METRO Mass Transit District and Dorci Schoolman.

Others in attendance: Mike Lammey, Geoff Olson, and Jim Greenstreet, Kankakee County Planning Department; and Don Mitchell, Options CIL.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Butler called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM and welcomed everyone.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the May 5, 2014 meeting were submitted for approval. Ms. Schoolman made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Brutlag. Motion carried.

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Mr. Hess nominated Mr. Butler to continue being chairman for the committee, seconded by Ms. Lockwood. Unanimous vote, the motion carried. Mr. Hess nominated Ms. Dick as vice-chairman of the committee, seconded by Ms. Lockwood. Unanimous vote, the motion carried.

### **PRESENTATION ON KANKAKEE COUNTY RURAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICE**

Ms. Dick gave a presentation of the history and guidelines of rural transportation. Rural transportation started as a means of providing those with special needs a form of transportation from a rural area into an urban area. There is still a debate on whether or not most public transit buses are considered full access or effective access. The debate is based on the idea of separate but equal treatment; that all riders should get on and off the bus in the same manner. Currently some riders use the stairs, whereas others require the use of a lift. Supporters of full access would have everyone use the same entrance of the bus in the same fashion.

Due to the fact that there are differences in service between urban and rural transit providers, coordinating between urban and rural transit providers can be difficult. Many of the rural riders are those with special needs, are low-income, or are elderly. Being able to ride one bus and trip-chain is more convenient and costs less for the rider. In urban transit systems, which are intended for mass transit (not necessarily the individual rider) it is required to be certified as qualified to ride the para-transit services. Urban operators are also limited to curb-to-curb services, as opposed to rural operators which can serve riders from door-to-door. Urban systems also have caps on how much they can spend toward para-transit services.

## **DRAFT KANKAKEE HSTP PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Mr. Lammey informed the committee that the Urban Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) is in the public comment period. The last day to submit a comment is August 18, 2014. Mr. Lammey asked each member of the committee to review pages 29-31 to check the accuracy of their agency's information. He also explained that there were elements, typically implemented in HSTPs that were absent. The absent elements would be a section listing agencies that could use Section 5310 funding to provide transit to their clients. However, without the inclusion of those agencies in the plan, they would not be eligible to submit an application. Ms. Brutlag also confirmed that METRO would have preferred these types of sections be added and that not all the goals listed were noteworthy or meaningful.

## **AGENCY TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AND ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES**

Ms. Brutlag said there was nothing to mention for METRO. Ms. Dick informed the committee that SHOW BUS is still transporting patients needing psychiatric care to Iroquois County. She also said that trips for dental care has become an eligible program again. Ms. Brutlag explained that there are a number of hospital patients that are released by the hospitals without enough tokens to take transit back up north, to Chicago areas. The hospitals give patients one token, which will allow riders to get to METRO Centre in Bourbonnais, but the receptionist needs to give the patient two more tokens so they can get to University Park and continue their trip on Metra.

Ms. Lockwood also explained that many hospital patients are also admitted for observation at the hospital because the hospital receives more money from this category of service, which Medicare does not cover. Many patients are under the assumption that they are being admitted to the hospital because they are being told they are being "admitted for observation." They later learn that they were not actually admitted to the hospital and are responsible for paying the bill themselves. Mr. Hess said that this practice "is not right."

Ms. Schaafsma explained that Medicaid patients will have to choose between two care plans, Smart and Illinois Partnership for Health. The Smart Plan would include the Presence Network, such as St. Mary's and the Illinois Partnership for Health would include Riverside and Rush Networks. If patients do not choose a plan, Medicaid will assign one to the patient after 60 days. She said her agency is still resolving issues with the Affordable Care Act and also facing

cutbacks. They are also focusing on mental health for their patients. Mr. Hess added that Kankakee County was also continuing to face cutbacks.

Mr. Butler let the committee know that the lift at Good Shepherd Manor is operational. He also said that they have received their April 2014 payment this month. Last year they didn't receive their April payment until September. Ms. Schaafsma mentioned that using direct deposit can help expedite the repayment process.

### **PROGRAM STATUS OF TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS**

Ms. Brutlag informed everyone that METRO had another record year of rides. Ms. Dick said that JARC and New Freedom programs will not be available for continuation from IDOT, however any service that had been started can remain until those funds are exhausted. She also said that SHOW BUS was pursuing one fund, but IDOT stated that the program would be defunded in 9 months.

### **QUESTIONS FROM THE MEDIA**

None

### **NEW BUSINESS**

None

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Brutlag motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Lockwood. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 10:53