

# Kankakee County Transportation Committee Minutes

November 27, 2012

Members in attendance: Mike Butler, Chairman, Good Shepherd Manor; Roger Hess, Kankakee County Board Member; Laura Dick, SHOW BUS; Cheryl Lockwood, Northeastern Illinois Area Agency on Aging; and Dorci Schoolman, Options CIL.

Others in attendance: Don Mitchell, Options CIL; Richard Nolan, McLean County Regional Planning Commission and Co-coordinator Region 6 HSTP; Meg Weston, Catholic Charities; Rob Hoffmann, Cortney Koning, Norm Grimsley and Michelle Brutlag, River Valley METRO Mass Transit District; Mike Lammey and Jim Greenstreet, Kankakee County Planning Department.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Butler called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM, and welcomed everyone. Chairman Butler asked everyone to identify themselves and who they represented.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the September 25, 2012 meeting were submitted for approval. Mr. Hess made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dick. Motion carried.

## **STATUS OF GRANT APPLICATIONS**

Mr. Lammey stated there has still been no official announcement for awards at this time. Mr. Lammey requested this committee approve him sending a letter to IDOT to complain about the slowness of their processing grant applications from last April for programs that should have been under contract for July 1<sup>st</sup>. Ms Lockwood made a motion to approve the letter be sent, seconded by Ms. Schoolman. Motion passed. Mr. Nolan reported part of the delay was the practical disbanding of the oversight committee to score and approve the grants, followed by the appointing new people to the committee. These new people had to be trained on how to score the grant applications and to rank them.

## **PRESENTATION BY OPTIONS CIL ON METRO BUS SHELTERS**

Ms. Schoolman and Mr. D. Mitchell explained that their office is in an advocacy position to assist people with their needs for public accessibility. They have reviewed potential polling places for Bruce Clark's office and recreational areas for 4 park districts. They

also review sites after complaints are received and identify sites that are non-compliant on their own initiative. The intent and purpose being to help attain compliance.

Mr. Hoffmann inquired as to the reason for this urban site issue to be brought before a rural transportation committee. Ms. Schoolman and Mr. Lammey explained the committee was a county-wide committee, including the urbanized area and the rural area. Mr. Hoffmann stated that he believed this committee was only formed to report to the Regional HSTP committee. Ms. Schoolman told him this committee had its origins to before HSTP. Mr. Grimsley asked which is it, urban or rural? Mr. Lammey stated it serves both, the State says it is serving both, but will not put that into writing.

Two years ago, they received a complaint about a River Valley METRO Bus Shelter not being accessible. Many such shelters are on the public right-of-way while others may be on private property. They set about to identify the responsible party for the subject bus shelter. During June and August 2012, they observed a number of METRO Bus Stops and Bus Shelters, finding a lot of them to be compliant with Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities from the US Access Board. However, some locations were not compliant, with signage that protruded into the accessible route that were not high enough (80" at the bottom edge of the sign). Other locations had no curb cuts for access to the street or improper height of the curb cuts, impeding wheel chair access. Some bus shelters had less than 36" wide sidewalks to access the shelters.

Mr. Hoffmann stated any complaints should be brought to his attention. Ms. Schoolman indicated she had tried to bring issues to his attention. Mr. Hoffmann stated that the Accessibility Guidelines cited by Options are not the requirements he has to comply with. He has to comply with US Department of Transportation regulations as enforced by the US Department of Justice. Ms Schoolman stated that it was her understanding that when there are multiple regulations, the strictest is the one that must be complied with. Mr. Hoffmann stated the Access Board Guidelines are not appropriate to use to determine compliance or non-compliance, as they are not regulation, just guidelines.

Mr. Hoffmann stated his Bus Stop signs have lettering at a minimum size of 5/8" which is for signs to be posted 60" to 72" from the ground, not at or above 80". Mr. Hoffmann agreed that there was insufficient pathway to the shelter at Washington by the Jewel/Osco store, stating the contractor who installed it placed it backwards. It will have to be turned around. METRO is applying for a grant to improve bus stops sites. Mr. Hoffmann stated they have identified \$1.9 million in needed improvements to bus stops and shelters on their system, including the absence of sidewalks or bus stops where there are ditches to cross. Mr. Hoffmann agreed the bus shelter along Court Street at the Family Dollar store had problems with curb cuts, narrow access and uneven concrete pad for the shelter to the sidewalk. He explained the pad was poured in 2002, and the pad has since dropped or settled and is no longer even with the sidewalk. This shelter was also installed backwards and will need to be turned around.

Ms. Schoolman continued her presentation citing a curbing that was cut down for access at Christine Drive at K-Mart was not cut low enough (1/2") being as high as 2" in spots, not accessible for wheel chairs, and should have truncated domes to indicate the street crossing. Mr. Hoffmann stated the curb is not METRO's. Ms. Schoolman agreed.

Ms. Schoolman then showed a photograph of a stop intersection with a Bus Stop sign where there is no sidewalk, making it necessary for pedestrians and wheel chair bound persons to wait in the street for the bus. Mr. Hoffmann stated they are reviewing all of their bus stops and having architectural drawings made where necessary for making improvements. Mr. Koning has been hired two weeks ago as a Project Engineer and will be working on these projects. Mr. Hoffmann stated other problems include areas like at the Kohl's store, where the owners will not allow them to make any improvements. IDOT will not allow placements of bus shelters on pads along their highways, insisting instead that bus pull-outs be built which would need to be at least 2 bus lengths long and cost \$100,000 each.

Mr. Grimsley stated that if Options or others have a problem bringing complaints to management at METRO, they are free to contact the METRO Board, which he is currently the Chairman. The Board will be happy to work with Options to make improvements to their system as they are able, to meet required standards, as funding allows.

Mr. Lammey announced there will be a presentation by Kevin Burke from IDOT on January 8, 2013 at 1:00 PM about Americans With Disability Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) / Public Right-Of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). All present are invited and will be given specifics about the meeting location.

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

Ms. Dick stated Kankakee County is providing service on a JARC grant. There is an unusual process starting now to "pre-apply" for a New Freedom grant for an expansion of the fleet. Then, if prequalified, we will be invited to formally apply for the grant. Documentation of area coordination is a factor in the pre-application. Kankakee County has had over 160% increase in ridership since 2009, with a 41% increase in one year. Buses are at or near capacity.

### **DISABILITY/AGING/TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**

Ms. Lockwood reported there is a new staff member in the Will County Executive's Office dealing with transportation issues. She is forming a new committee to address issues as we do here and she is looking forward to attending the meetings. Grundy County is also forming a new committee like this one and she will be working with them as well. Ms. Lockwood stated that Circuit Breaker is no longer directly funded as it was previously. Mr. Hoffmann agreed that there are issues in dealing with the changes in this

area, as the requirements are being changed. METRO doesn't have the staff or funds to do screening for an income based need determination for clients to get discounted or free bus service. Ms. Lockwood stated there are several programs with different requirements for determining eligibility for service. Mr. Hoffmann stated there should be a relatively simple solution, but the State isn't looking for a simple solution.

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

Ms. Dick stated that the uncontrolled growth of ridership has caused unique problems, with funds being slow coming from the State. SHOW BUS is currently receiving Medicare payments about 9 months after services are rendered. Many entities are no longer providing bus service to their clients, because they were not being paid in a timely manner, pushing them onto public transportation. As the Managed Care system continues to be expanded in Illinois, there may be more problems.

### **QUESTIONS FROM THE MEDIA**

No media present.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

### **MEETING SCHEDULE**

January 14, 2013 at 10:00 AM Region 6 HSTP meeting in Pontiac, IL

January 29, 2013 County Transportation Committee at METRO Centre at 9:30 AM.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Hess and seconded by Ms. Schoolman. Motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:35 AM.