

Minutes

Kankakee County Transportation Committee

Conference Room, METRO Centre
1137 E. 5000N Road, Bourbonnais, IL

Tuesday, September 29, 2015

Members in attendance: Laura Dick, SHOW BUS; Bonnie Schaafsma, Kankakee County Health Department; Michelle Brutlag, River Valley METRO Mass Transit District; Michael Roof, Veteran's Assistance Commission; Steve Mitchell, Kankakee County Training Center for the Disabled;

Others in attendance: Heather Long, Options CIL; Rick Nolan, HSTP Region 6; Mike Joyce and Tracy Chapman, Oasis Medical Home Care; Damon Rosenthal, Prince of Peace Transportation Service; and Mike Lammey, Geoff Olson, and Jim Greenstreet, Kankakee County Planning Department.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Dick called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM and welcomed everyone.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the May 5, 2015 meeting were submitted for approval. Mr. Roof made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Brutlag. Motion carried.

INTRODUCTION OF OASIS TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Dick asked Mike Joyce and Tracy Chapman to present an overview of their new transportation service. Mr. Joyce stated that they have been providing home health care services to the community since 2007 and noticed the need for medical transportation services. They have been providing medical transportation for the past three months. They operate with one car, one van and one wheelchair lift bus. Oasis has their rides scheduled primarily by insurance companies through MTM services who handle the billing for insurances and Medicaid. MTM pays Oasis immediately and MTM waits for reimbursement from Medicaid. Ms. Chapman is the Transportation Manager. She receives calls for scheduling rides essentially around the clock. They transport clients as far as Chicago for medical needs.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ms. Dick opened the floor for nominations for Chairman. Mr. Mitchell nominated Mike Butler for Chairman, seconded by Mr. Roof. Mr. Butler was elected.

Ms. Dick opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Chairman. Mr. Roof nominated Ms. Dick, seconded by Mr. Mitchell. Ms. Dick was elected.

HSTP COORDINATOR ISSUES

Mr. Nolan said they have completed the process of updating the Region 6 HSTP Plan Document and it was approved at the last meeting. Applications are all filed with IDOT for the current round of CVP bus purchase requests. John Edmonson has retired from IDOT and no replacement has yet been named. He and Jennifer Sicks will be updating the lists of medical and social service providers and transportation providers in Region 6 in the next few months. They are also trying to identify transportation providers from other regions who routinely provide transport into the region to have them participate in the Region 6 process.

AGENCY TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AND ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

Ms. Brutlag said METRO has doubled the weekday service to Midway Airport and ridership has continued to grow. The Metra train service from University Park to downtown Chicago raised their fare to \$7.50. So riders have found it less costly to ride the bus to Midway and take a different train with better on-time service to downtown Chicago. Ms. Brutlag is also working on their new software program from Route Match to improve their scheduling.

Ms. Dick reported that SHOW BUS has been informed that the "low-rider" bus that has been in planning for three or four years is closer to a reality. IDOT has approved the specifications for the bus design and approved applications to piggy-back on Springfield Mass Transit's order. This bus kneels down and has an extending ramp for better wheelchair access than the wheelchair lift bus.

DISABILITY/AGING/TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Mr. Mitchell stated that many of the funding sources are fee based services KCTC provides. A recent class action suit in federal court required the State to pay for those services in a timely manner, so they are receiving those payments. Mr. Mitchell reported that his fleet of buses are aging. He has contracted with Cardinal Bus Lines to provide some of his rural transportation needs, and with Show Bus for other needs.

Ms. Schaafsma reported that the Health Department has been paid for July and August for some federally funded program expenses, but the majority of state funding is being held up by the State. Senate Bill 2046 passed the senate but is still pending in the legislature, would require certain program funding to be paid when billed.

Mr. Roof reported the Veteran's Assistance Commission of Kankakee County bus ridership has increased from 1 to 2 people a day to 7 to 9 people every day. They have not had any wheelchair clients riding the bus, if that continues to be the situation, they may reinstall one seat for two more riders, keeping one wheelchair position available. They operate with volunteer drivers going to Hines VA Hospital daily.

PROGRAM STATUS OF TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

Ms. Dick reported that due to the State holding federal pass-through funds, a lawsuit was filed. Two rural transportation operations have had to stop providing service due to the lack of funds, and other systems have cut back service. SHOW BUS has not cut service yet, but has not taken on the expense of hiring and training new drivers as drivers have retired. This has increased hours for the remaining drivers. The good news is that Kankakee County has received six new buses from State capital funds. The down side is there is no increase in operating funds to expand service at this time.

Ms. Brutlag reported that METRO has not received any new buses since 2008 and all of their buses are past their useful life. Three buses were taken out of service recently, including two ADA buses. Another bus will soon be taken out of service. METRO has received a Pace bus to use as a back-up spare ADA bus. METRO is expecting delivery of six Federal and State funded buses soon. METRO had received some used CTA buses but all were vandalized the night before they were picked up. Only one has been repaired and placed into service. METRO now has seven different brand of buses in service for their mechanics to service.

INTRODUCTION OF PRINCE OF PEACE TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Damon Rosenthal was in attendance and introduced himself and the Prince of Peace Transportation service. They operate starting at 6:00 AM Monday through Saturday and transport people with a wheelchair accessible van for any non-emergency purpose, shopping, doctor appointments or to the airport. They have applied to the State for Medicaid licensing. Clients call them directly to schedule trips in the Kankakee and Will County area.

QUESTIONS FROM THE MEDIA

None

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Heather Long from Options CIL was present and was asked to describe Options' services. Options is a Not-for-Profit that receives federal and state funds to assist people of any age with disabilities to live an independent life. They have a satellite office in Iroquois County, as well. They are not set up to provide any transportation service to their clients and are not allowed to as employees due to liability issues. They also work with South Suburban Fair Housing for their clients.

NEXT MEETING

There will be a Region 6 HSTP meeting on November 9, 2015 at 10:00 AM in Pontiac. The next scheduled County transportation Committee meeting on December 29, 2015 was discussed. It was generally agreed to move the meeting date to December 15, 2015 at 9:30 AM at River Valley METRO Centre to avoid the Holliday Season. If IDOT announces new CVP application deadlines it may be necessary to adjust the meeting dates accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chairman Dick adjourned the meeting at 10:30 AM.

