

**Transit Plus Advisory Council
June 18, 2024 Minutes**

PLACE: Milwaukee County Transit System Administration Building, 1942 N. 17th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Large Conference Room & via Microsoft Teams Meeting

PRESENT: David Buck - Chair, Jim Bahneman – Vice-Chair, Gerald Balezentis, Laurel Henschel, Arlene Washington, Mae Wingo

ABSENT: Marcia Perkins

GUESTS: Janice Briggs-Simmon, Terry Hogans, Elois Reed, Nilda Rivera, Kelley Santi, Helen White - TPAC Applicants; Kevin Meyers - guest; Scott Germann, Mark Ward, and Patrick O'Brien – Transdev; Claire Enders – Milwaukee County Older Adults Transportation Service; Fran Musci, Paula Schultz, Chris Fox and Lisa Walters - Transit Plus

CALL TO ORDER:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the May 21, 2024, meeting were approved.

COMMITTEES:

Driver/Reservationist Recognition Committee: no report

Membership Committee: Applicant Kelley Santi was attending her second TPAC meeting. Applicant Nilda Rivera was attending her first TPAC meeting. Jeanette Williams has just reapplied for TPAC membership. All applicants need to attend two meetings before they can be interviewed by the Membership Committee and considered for membership. David Buck advised that the Committee's goal is to make membership recommendations in September.

Public Relations Committee: David Buck reported that there will only be a virtual meeting in July and there will be no meeting in August. David mentioned that Fran Musci was recently seen on television being interviewed by the local news about the launch of Transdev's "My Transit Manager" app. David urged everyone to be vaccinated for COVID.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Van Contract Transition: Chris Fox reported that service standards are not being met to our satisfaction. Yesterday and today service has been good. Ridership has increased. Need to align staff to demand. "My Transit Manager" app was launched at the end of May. There are currently 166 active app users. IVR notifications began in March. IVR notifications are sent the night before a scheduled trip and when arrival is imminent. Lisa Walters and I recently went to Beyond Vision and IBVI to train and assist riders with the app. We will be going to Seniorfest at Summerfest on July 5th, Clinton Rose Senior Center on July 29th, and Kelly Senior Center on August 6th to promote and assist with the app. We will help anyone who wants to get set up on the app. Riders are happy with the app and like to rate their trips and

see who their driver will be. The comments placed in the app are not in real time. Comments should not be placed in the app to change or cancel trips. You must call Transdev to change or cancel trips.

Paratransit Taxi Task Force: Chris Fox reported that the RFI's have been reviewed and we are getting clarification from vendors as needed. MCTS and MCDOT will be meeting with the Task Force Executive team on Friday to discuss next steps.

Virtual July Meeting/No August Meeting: Chris Fox reported that because of the RNC the July TPAC meeting will be held on Teams. TPAC will also be taking a summer break from meetings in August. Call Lisa Walters if you need any help with the July Teams meeting.

Summerfest/Other Festival/State Fair Service: Chris Fox reported that Summerfest starts Thursday July 20th through July 22nd and then again on the following two weekends. Transit Plus service for Summerfest is at the mid-gate. A tent, a bench and a portable restroom will be available there. Three MCTS flyer routes will serve Summerfest from the College Avenue, Brown Deer Road and Hales Corners Park and Ride Lots. The fare is \$5.00 round trip. State Fair is in August. The pickup drop off area will be on the west side of the park off 84th Street the same as last year. There will be no flyer service to State Fair. MCTS routes on 84th Street and on Greenfield Avenue may be used to go to State Fair.

Account Based Fare Collection System: Chris Fox reported that MCTS met with Transdev and UMO to discuss what would need to happen to set up UMO fare collection for paratransit. It may be possible to use the driver tablets to scan Wisgo Cards. Transdev will need to test the UMO app to see if the tablets will work with it. It would be seamless for riders to have one account to ride the bus, van and other transit systems using one card. We hope to get this implemented in the next two years so that we can stop using tickets.

NEW BUSINESS:

Transdev Management Team: Chris Fox reported that Brian Kading is no longer with Transdev.

Review of June 1st Public Meeting: Chris Fox reported that riders were given the opportunity to express their dissatisfaction with the service provided by Transdev at Independence First on June 1st. Riders complained about late pickups, long rides, missed appointments, lack of professionalism and unanswered phones.

Cheri McGrath Bus Shelter Dedication: Paula Schultz reported that MCTS will be dedicating a bus shelter to Cheri McGrath for her many years of volunteer service to MCTS on Tuesday, June 25th at 1:00 p.m. in front of St. John's on the Lake at Prospect and Royall. Cheri was an avid bus rider and taught bus drivers how to interact with persons who are blind and have service animals.

Travel Training Initiative: Paula Schultz reported that Transit Plus would like to increase awareness about Travel Training opportunities when people are being assessed for the Transit Plus program. Travel Training is a free service that helps people learn how to use the bus.

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT: Paula Schultz reported that the Mobility Management Team will be at McGovern Park's resource fair on June 28th from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

They will also be at Seniorfest at Summerfest on July 5th. Admission to Summerfest is free for people 60 and over plus attendees will be given a \$2.00 voucher for food. There will be a lot of information about available resources. The Team will also be at the ADA Celebration at Gordon Park at Humboldt and Locust on July 26th from 10:00 am. to 2:00 p.m. This is the 34th year of the ADA.

TRANSDEV REPORT: Mark Ward, Transdev's Regional Director reported that Brian Kading is no longer with Transdev. Mark also introduced Scott Germann who is Transdev's Regional Vice President. He advised that Transdev has conducted a rigorous evaluation of the Milwaukee operation's systems, procedures, and performance. They are assessing the strengths and weaknesses here. Service has not been acceptable. They will bring in specialists, resources, energy and time to improve service. They recognize the need to get things right. Assistant General Manager Patrick O'Brien advised that Transdev will be holding a job fair next week. They want to hire 30 more drivers. Their goal is to have 145 drivers. More drivers will make a difference in service.

TRANSIT PLUS REPORT: Chris Fox reported that ridership is up. There were 31,214 rides in May. That was 500 more trips than in April. Demand is continuing. The RNC is less than a month away. The Secret Service will be holding a press conference on Friday to reveal the security perimeter around the convention. The RNC is kicking off the convention with an event on the Summerfest grounds on July 14th. Expect travel delays. There will be significant fixed route detours around downtown. Check MCTS' website for details.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

Keven Meyers wanted to know how many drivers Transdev currently had. Patrick O'Brien advised that Transdev has 125 drivers and their subcontractor Peoples has 12-18 drivers. Fran Musci explained that the work that Peoples drivers do is a permanent part of the service. Transdev gives 15-17% of their work to Peoples. Peoples drivers are dispatched like Transdev drivers. Kevin was also interested in knowing about driver call offs. Mark Ward explained that Transdev employs between 125 to 150 people. They still have issues with call offs but are managing it. They have a new attendance policy. Laurel Henschel asked about driver pay. Mark Ward advised that Milwaukee is one of the highest paying operations for wages and has a solid benefit package. Mark explained that paratransit is a special service industry. Special people need to be hired. There is a 50% attrition rate in the first 6 months for paratransit drivers. The job is not for everyone. It is a hard job that must be done in extreme weather. People who have been on the job for three years find the job rewarding and want to stay.

Helen White complained that the 10-minute arrival notifications turn into 30 minutes of additional waiting. Mark Ward explained that the IVR notifications provide an estimate based on gps and that things can change in real time. Helen also complained that one of her co-workers at IBVI is feeling disrespected. She reported that he has a 3:45 p.m. return ride but is not getting home until 7:00 p.m. Mark Ward explained that riders who live on the fringes of the County may get picked up at a central point with others but drop offs are performed in an order to the farthest point similar to a school bus route. Mark also stated that he did not want to dismiss the problem for captive riders but this principal is a function of efficient transportation.

Janice Briggs-Simmon was interested in knowing if drivers could be assigned to certain geographic areas, i.e. north, south, east, west. Mark Ward explained that as Transdev gets more drivers they can optimize routes. However, Milwaukee has a high number of riders that

make cross county trips which makes a zone system not work as well. Mark advised that ridership is growing, but the finite number of buses available is also a part of the challenge. Schedulers are doing a pretty good job and are watching productivity. Fran Musci explained that Transit Plus needs to take riders where they want to go, not to the store they live closest to.

Kelley Santi complained that drivers are stopping at the green sign and not going to the end of the road to pick her up. Fran Musci advised that drivers need to look for the notes on the second page of their tablets for instructions. Transdev has issued reminder announcements to their drivers to check their tablets for notes.

Kevin Meyers was interested in knowing about free fares for attending TPAC meetings. Fran Musci explained that in consideration for their service, TPAC Members and TPAC applicants are reimbursed their fares when they attend TPAC meetings in person.

ADJOURNMENT