

**Transit Plus Advisory Council
February 20, 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, Grace Graves, Laurel Henschel, Arlene Washington, Mae Wingo

ABSENT: Gerald Balezentis, Marcia Perkins

GUESTS: Janice Biggs Simmon, Terry Hogans, Elois Reed, Anita Spight and Helen White - TPAC Applicants; Danita Jackson and Kevin Meyers -guests; Brian Kading and Latisha Scott – Transdev; Fran Musci, Jo Douville, and Lisa Walters - Transit Plus

CALL TO ORDER:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the December 19, 2023, meeting were approved.

COMMITTEES:

Driver/Reservationist Recognition Committee: no report

Membership Committee: Grace Graves reported that five applications for TPAC membership have been received. Two applicants, Anita Spight and Helen White, were interviewed today. Grace explained that the make-up of the Council must be diverse and have members with a variety of disabilities, use of different mobility aids, reside in different areas of Milwaukee County, etc. The Membership Committee will continue to interview applicants next month and will have recommendations to submit to the full Council in a short time.

Public Relations Committee: David Buck reported that masks are back in some places such as hospitals and clinics. New vaccines and boosters are coming out. David thanked Molsen Coors for New Year's free rides. St. Patrick's Day is coming up.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Van Contract Transition: Fran Musci reported that new processes, reporting, invoicing etc. are still being ironed out. Significant improvement in key performance indicators were seen in January. On-time was at 93.51% in January. This was just barely at the expected level. Key performance indicators such as ride duration and appointment time are still not being met. The biggest roadblock is having enough drivers. Transdev has introduced a new policy for driver no show/no calls. The goal is to have 140 drivers and currently there are 125 drivers. We still have out of town drivers. Transdev's DBE contractor Peoples has 11 drivers but needs 15. Every contractor with Milwaukee County must have a DBE subcontractor. Transdev has a DBE requirement of 17%. Laurel Henschel stated that she has received rides from Peoples and that they are very good.

2024 TPAC Calendar: David Buck apologized for having to cancel January's meeting due to weather. TPAC will be taking a summer break in August. There will be no meeting on August 20, 2024.

TPAC By-laws: Laurel Henschel volunteered to make corrections and update the By-laws. Any references to First Transit, Transit Express and taxi will be removed.

NEW BUSINESS:

2024 TPAC Committee Assignments: Arlene Washington will Chair the Driver/Reservationist Committee, Grace Graves will Chair the Membership Committee, David Buck will Chair the Public Relations Committee, Jim Bahneman will Chair the Nominating Committee and Laurel Henschel will Chair the By-law Committee.

Hop Zone: Fran Musci reported that she has been working with the Hop, the downtown streetcar. The Hop is required to have free paratransit rides on the streetcar. They also need to be free within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the Hop route. Transit Plus will be providing these free rides in the Hop zone. Transit Plus rides will be free only if they start and end in the Hop Zone. Mention it to the reservationist if you think you are traveling in the HOP Zone. The HOP will be reimbursing Transit Plus for the free rides provided in the zone. This will continue for as long as HOP rides are free.

IVR & My Transit Manager App: Fran stated that she was excited to tell the Council about two new ride amenities. IVR stands for Interactive Voice Response System. Transdev's phone system will send out computer generated calls to riders the night before to remind them of their next day rides. The IVR will also call riders when their ride is 10 minutes away. Transdev is using these services in several locations around the country. Transdev is providing these amenities to Transit Plus at no cost. Letters will be going out to clients in the mail and by email. Riders are urged to contact Transit Plus with their current cell phone number and email address so that they can receive the 10-minute reminder calls. The IVR will be launched by the end of March. My Transit Manager App can be used on a computer or on a smart phone. The App allows you to see all your rides. It will work with voiceover technology. The app will send notifications by email, text or through the app. When the van is 1 hour away you will be able to see the vehicle on a map. Caregivers will be able to track riders. The app is available in English or Spanish. It will not be possible to book or cancel rides with the app at the present time. That function is provided with a separate piece of scheduling software at a cost. The My Transit Manager App will be made available after the launch of the IVR. Brian Kading of Transdev advised that if someone does not want to receive the reminders, they can opt out of the IVR service.

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT: Jo Douville reported that the Mobility Management team will be participating in the Inclusive Resource Fair for transition students at Wauwatosa West High School. They will be bringing a bus to the fair. ADA sensitivity training will be held for new bus operators this week. This is the first training session in 2024. Twelve Freedom on Wheels presentations are scheduled between now and May. There will be bus route changes happening in March. Someone from MCTS Service Development will be coming to TPAC's next meeting to talk about the changes. The Mobility Management Team will be helping to get the IVR letters out. The 2023 Mobility Management report is being worked on.

TRANSDEV REPORT: Brian Kading reported that Peoples is good with 15 drivers but that they would like to increase the driver number to 21. Peoples' uses the same type of vehicle as Transdev. Peoples' new drivers are trained by Transdev. Peoples has an office that is housed at Transdev's base in Milwaukee. Transdev has made huge improvements and is increasing staff and focusing on improving their key performance indicators. January's on-time exceeded 93%. This is a huge increase from October and November. Yesterday Transdev was 97-98% on-time. There still are things to work on. They are still struggling with weekend scheduling. More drivers are needed for the peak periods of service. There are 4 times in the day that need improvement. Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., Monday through Friday from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and weekends. Transdev has a new Safety Manager, a new Payroll Clerk, a new Safety and Recruiting Clerk, two new staff members in Maintenance, two new Customer Service Representatives, and three new Dispatchers. In all Transdev has 8 dispatchers, 4 schedulers and 11 reservationists. The IVR and the App are outstanding tools. Latisha Scott stated that regular safety meetings have been reinstated.

TRANSIT PLUS: Fran Musci reported that there were 26,313 rides performed in January 2024. This was a decrease from December of 2023. There were 350,779 rides provided in 2023. This was 80% of the ridership in 2019, but an increase from 2022. The next Paratransit Taxi Task Force meeting will be on February 29, 2024 from 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. The meeting will be held at Independence First. The meeting can be attended in person or on Zoom. The Task Force is working to develop an RFP.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

Jim Bahneman commented that he has noticed that service has improved lately.

Laurel Henshel complained that there is so much noise in reservations and that it is hard to hear if you have hearing difficulties. Brian Kading explained that all the reservationists are in the same room. They sit in cubes next to each other. He hoped that sound will be able to be muffled with the upcoming office remodeling. Laurel also complained that when she calls after 4:30 p.m. to find out where her son's driver is or to request a will call ride no one answers the phone when she presses #2. Brian stated that calls go to dispatch when pressing #2. Now that the service has improved Transdev is not getting the volume of calls that was overwhelming the system. Adding the extra dispatchers will help get calls answered. Voice mail messages trigger emails to managers.

Anita Spight stated that Transdev is doing a good job for IBVI, but yesterday's driver was rude and did not provide door to door service. The driver let a rider off the van and then took off. Anita also stated that no one answers the phone for lost and found.

Danita Jackson advised that she has had late drop offs for her appointments. Latisha Scott stated she would work with the reservationists to better negotiate pick-up times to get her to her appointments on time. Fran Musci stated that a requirement for on-time appointment drop offs is new to the new contract. The old contract did not have an appointment time requirement, only a pick-up time requirement.

Helen White stated that on January 29th she overheard on the radio that a person picked up at the airport got left after a driver had a confrontation with a dispatcher. The rider had been

waiting 3 hours and the driver refused to take her home. On January 30th she heard a driver who was overwhelmed refuse to finish her route and didn't care. On February 5th she heard a female driver refuse to pick-up a woman and that the driver argued with the dispatcher. Helen commented that customer service is not the same as it was. Latisha Scott advised that this is not tolerated and that she wants to see improvement.

Delois Reed stated she missed an eye appointment because she requested an alternative pick-up at 415 E. Knapp Street due to icy conditions that was not accommodated. She also stated she was hung up on when she called Transdev. Latisha Scott stated that drivers need to check notes and that they are addressing this.

ADJOURNMENT