

**Transit Plus Advisory Council  
June 15, 2021 Minutes**

**PLACE:** Microsoft Teams Meeting

**PRESENT:** James Bahneman (Chair), Gerald Balezentis, David Buck, Grace Graves, Laurel Henschel, Danita Jackson, Mae Wingo

**ABSENT:** Arlene Washington (Vice-Chair), Annie Johnson, Nilima Mehra, Marcia Perkins, Jeanette Williams

**GUESTS:** Jonathan Liegeios – American United; Morgan Mc Clelland - First Transit; Tracy Harrington – Transit Express; Fran Musci, Chris Fox and Lisa Walters - Transit Plus

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the May 18, 2021 meeting were approved.

**COMMITTEES:**

**Driver/Reservationist Recognition Committee:** no report.

**Membership Committee:** no report.

**Public Relations Committee:** David Buck reported that the federal mask mandate was extended until September 13, 2021. He also reported that MCTS was in the news breaking ground on the BRT. David urged everyone to participate in the Paratransit Customer Satisfaction Survey.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Paratransit Customer Satisfaction Survey:** Fran Musci reported that the Paratransit Customer Satisfaction Survey was now live on the website. Some people have reported trouble getting onto the survey link. The link can be found under the Accessibility drop down on the website and on the Transit Plus page of the website. It would be appreciated if Transit Plus members would participate. Assistance in completing the survey is available by calling 414-343-1716.

**Federal Mask Mandate:** Fran Musci reported that the federal mask mandate for paratransit and fixed route is in place until September 13, 2021 unless we hear otherwise.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT:** Chris Fox reported that it has been a busy month.

They have been getting out into the community conducting outreach and MCTS Next presentations. There is one more phase of MCTS Next yet to be implemented. The ADA training class at the end of May had nine new drivers. They will be going to all the stations beginning next week to provide refresher securement training. This will involve a lot of drivers. Marketing materials, videos, and Transit Plus brochures will be updated in the fall. We are looking for volunteers when the mask mandate is lifted to participate in filming.

Jo Douville reported that travel training is picking up. They are receiving about one referral a week. They are busy and are fitting in training as they can.

## **CARRIER REPORTS:**

**American United:** Jonathan Liegeios reported that things are going well and service has been improving. They have ten new drivers and will be holding ADA training for them.

**Transit Express:** Tracy Harrington reported that they are continuing to have problems finding qualified driver applicants despite that they are paying more than \$15.00 per hour. People walk away because they do not want to have contact with the public. They are trying to prevent their workers from undo stress.

**First Transit:** Morgan McClelland reported that First Transit is also having some of the same issues. They have always had some turnover, but it is much more difficult to hire right now. They need to conduct 10 to 15 interviews to get 1 person in the classroom. It is also harder to hold onto people through the hiring and training process, although they are getting drivers licensed faster now. They are having to ask drivers to work more hours than typical which is very demanding on them. Service quality is better when there are more drivers. They have 4 to 5 driver in classroom training and have rehired two former drivers and are providing refresher training for them. First Transit is still at 97% on-time.

**TRANSIT PLUS:** Fran Musci reported that the document management project is moving forward. Files are being prepared for scanning. The Transit Plus office remodeling construction will begin in September or October. Ridership is up 60% of pre-COVID levels. The PPVL backlog has been resolved. MCTS Next Phase 2 went into effect on June 6, 2021. Ten more routes will be changing in September when Phase 3 is implemented. MCTS expects to lift 20 passenger capacity on fixed route in the near future. Ground breaking on the BRT took place last week at 27<sup>th</sup> & Wisconsin. The BRT will travel from The Couture to the Medical Center along Bluemound Road. There will be dedicated lanes, level boarding platforms, off bus fare payment, front or back door boarding, and Quantum self-seurement. Stops are also spaced out along the route. The 27<sup>th</sup> Street corridor may be next for the BRT, but this is still under discussion with SEWRPAC. MCTS fixed route will not provide bus service to Summerfest, State Fair or the ethnic festivals this year. We have a call into State Fair to determine how paratransit should be handled this year. The State Budget Committee decided to cut funding for transit in Milwaukee and Dane County by 50% in the next budget cycle because we are receiving federal COVID relief money. No other Counties in the State were cut. We already have a huge budget hole so this is big concern for us. Concerned citizens may want to make their voices heard to their elected officials. Laural Henshel suggested that a letter be sent to legislators. David Buck suggested that calls should be made to Senator Alberta Darling of the Joint Finance Committee.

**OPEN DISCUSSION:**

**ADJOURNMENT**