

**Transit Plus Advisory Council  
November 15, 2022 Minutes**

**PLACE:** Microsoft Teams Meeting

**PRESENT:** James Bahneman - Chair, Gerald Balezentis, David Buck, Grace Graves, Laurel Henschel, Nilima Mehra, Mae Wingo

**ABSENT:** Gerald Balezentis, Annie Johnson, Marica Perkins, Jeanette Williams

**GUESTS:** Kevin Meyers; Morgan Mc Clelland - First Transit; Tracy Harrington – Transit Express; Fran Musci, Paula Schultz, and Lisa Walters - Transit Plus

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the October 18, 2022 meeting were approved.

**COMMITTEES:**

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

**Membership Committee:** no report

**Public Relations Committee:** David Buck reported that there are new warnings out about the RSV virus. David urged everyone to get COVID boosters and flu shots. There is no change to the mask mandate.

**Nominating Committee:** Laurel Henschel reported that Grace Graves and David Buck are being nominated for Chair and Arlene Washington and Jim Bahneman are being nominated for Vice-Chair. Election of the new 2023 officers will take place by mail. Results will be announced at the December meeting.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Milwaukee County Mask Mandate:** Fran Musci reported that the County's mask mandate is still in place for the foreseeable future.

**2023 Milwaukee County Budget:** Fran Musci reported that the County Board's Finance Committee voted last week Thursday to put money back in the budget until the end of 2023 for taxi. This creates a quandary for MCDOT as we can't extend the taxi program if there are no WAVs and drug testing. MCDOT is working on a path forward and will be seeking input from public listening sessions. MCDOT will be forming a Taxi Task Force which will have representation from various disability advocacy groups so that conversations can be had about how a taxi program can be provided in the future. Donna Brown-Martin will be bringing people together soon. If you would like to get involved let Fran know and she will tell Donna. Laurel Henschel stated that a TPAC member should be included in the group. There is a tight timeline

as the current taxi contract expires in May. A new same day ride program will be more costly and we will have to figure out how to pay for it.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Early Drop Offs:** Fran Musci reported that Jim Bahneman has had some early drop offs lately. Laurel Henschel mentioned that she has also been dropped off an hour early. Morgen McClelland explained that the goal is to be a half hour early or as close as possible to the appointment time. First Transit prefers to be early so as not to miss a rider's appointment. Riders are not required to board the van early. Morgen stated that he would speak with dispatch to see if this can be managed closer and avoided from happening. Tracy Harrington stated that Transit Express agrees with Morgen. If the van arrives early, riders should not be coerced into leaving early by the driver or dispatch. Either the van will wait until the rider's scheduled pick-up time, or another van will be sent back. Enough time must be allowed to make cross county trips, however. Cancellations can affect route planning. Drivers have been told that they cannot leave someone whose location is not open. Fran Musci clarified that riders can either specify a pick-up time or an appointment time but cannot specify both.

**In-Person TPAC Meetings:** The Council voted to postpone the first in-person Council meeting to January 17, 2023. Lunch will be provided before the first in-person meeting.

**MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT:** Paula Schultz reported that the video planned for today's meeting will be postponed until the first in-person meeting. Paula advised that there have been some changes to the Flex Ride Program. This program operated by SEWRPC and UWM provides employment rides from the City of Milwaukee to Menomonee Falls and Butler. There is no longer an application process. Call or download the app for a ride. The program has also been extended to 2024 with new funding. The plan is to expand the service area west and south. A Spanish version of the Transit Plus Rider's Guide, and Transit Plus Eligibility and Travel Training brochures have been produced. Audio versions of these will be available on our website. MCTS is partnering with other transit systems around the State to use the same fare collection system utilizing "Wisgo" fare cards. This will help to move regional transit forward.

## **CARRIER REPORTS:**

**American United:** not present

**Transit Express:** Tracy Harrington reported that Transit Express has 8 driver trainees, 3 are in behind the wheel training and 5 are in classroom training. They will also have another class before the Holidays. The driver "pick" is coming up in December. This happens twice a year. Winter is finally here we have snow today. They are reminding drivers to increase their following distance and to practice defensive driving skills. They are thankful for the feedback from drivers and passengers.

**First Transit:** Morgen McClelland reported that it is tougher to hire during the Holidays. Two people have finished from the last class and they have 3 new people in training. They are hiring at a manageable rate. They are managing on-time and will work to improve drop off times. It helps to have TPAC and customers give us good feedback. Commendations foster pride.

Nilima Mehra stated that drivers should be thanked and that it goes a long way to show appreciation. She has observed that riders often view the service as a utility.

**TRANSIT PLUS:** Fran Musci reported that van ridership increased in October. There were 30,010 rides provided. November is trending even higher. People are out and are using and relying on the service. The Van RFP panel is reviewing and scoring the proposals. An award will be made in the not-too-distant future. We are still trying to work out the bugs with the Service Infractions computer software. We are optimistic that we will get the program running very soon. Happy Thanksgiving and thank you to everyone who is helping to make the service better.

**OPEN DISCUSSION:**

Lisa Walters explained that she will mail a ballot and a business reply envelope to all Council members. Vote one candidate for Chair and one candidate for Vice Chair and return the completed ballot in the business reply envelope to Lisa before the next meeting.

**ADJOURN**