

**Transit Plus Advisory Council
November 21, 2023 Minutes**

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

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

ABSENT: Annie Johnson

GUESTS: Elois Reed, Janice Biggs Simmon, Anita Spight and Helen White - TPAC Applicants; Sonia Williams and Kevin Meyers -guests; Paul Buherin, Mark Ward and Brian Kading – Transdev; Sandy Kellner – MCTS; Fran Musci, Jo Douville, and Lisa Walters - Transit Plus

CALL TO ORDER:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the November 21, 2023, meeting were approved.

COMMITTEES:

Driver/Reservationist Recognition Committee: no report

Membership Committee: Applicant Janice Biggs Simon was attending her first TPAC meeting today. Anita Spight and Helen White were attending their second TPAC meeting. Guest Elois Reed stated she was interested in applying for membership. An application was also received by mail from Terry Hogans today.

Public Relations Committee: David Buck reported that new viruses and new vaccine boosters are coming out. COVID hospitalizations are increasing. Wear a mask and get a booster. David's objectives for 2024 include the establishment of a Regional Transit Authority with funding for transit, a same day ride solution for the Paratransit Taxi Task Force, and better service quality with Transdev. David requested more participation on TPAC's Committees. David wished everyone a happy holiday and a happy new year.

Nominating Committee: James Bahneman, David Buck and Grace Graves were running for Chair. They all stated that they would also be willing to serve as Vice-Chair. Whoever receives the most votes will be Chair and whoever receives the second most votes will be Vice-Chair. In the event of a tie there will be a coin toss. James Bahneman and David Buck tied for Chair. Sandy Kellner flipped a coin and David Buck won the toss for 2024 Chair. James Bahneman will serve as Vice-Chair in 2024. David thanked Grace for serving as Chair in 2023.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Paratransit Taxi Task Force: Fran Musci reported that at the last Paratransit Taxi Task Force meeting on December 7, 2023 the findings of SEWRPC's same day ride service study were reviewed. Priorities for a proposed new service were discussed. Should the service be for

medical and/or employment only? Should it be curb to curb or door to door? Should the service issue vouchers or should it have a contracted provider or providers for same day rides? There have been no conclusions reached yet. SEWRPC will continue to study pricing and models of service. The next meeting of the Paratransit Taxi Task Force will be held on January 18, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. at Independence First.

Van Contract Transition: Fran Musci reported that the contract with Transit Express ended on October 28, 2023. Transit Express has submitted all their paperwork, and a final check will be going out to them. Transdev has experienced a turnover with their General Manager and Operations Manager positions. There has also been a misalignment of drivers to ride demand. A “pick” was recently held to align driver hours with ridership demand. Service has been strained in the afternoon, especially between 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Transdev is continuing to train and hire drivers. They have brought in drivers from other locations to shore up service. New radios and camera systems have been installed. Their DBE provider Peoples will be getting some new vans, and when they do, some old vans will be retired.

Republican National Convention: Fran Musci reported that the Convention will take place next July. A meeting was held last week on Friday. There will be a security perimeter around downtown. There will be both a soft and a hard perimeter. We are not sure yet how we will be able to get people inside the perimeter to the door of their destination.

Transit Plus ID Card Mailing: Fran Musci reported that the new ID cards have been mailed. Everyone should have received their new card. The cards are for ID only, not for fare on the fixed route bus.

NEW BUSINESS:

2024 TPAC Calendar: Jim Bahneman commented that TPAC used to meet until 3:30 p.m. and that the last three meetings went past 3:00 p.m. He feels more time is needed for open discussion. Jim also wondered if TPAC could take a break in December. David Buck moved that the subject of TPAC’s hours and breaks be tabled to January. His motion was approved.

TPAC By-laws: Council members received a copy of the bylaws to review and be ready to discuss possible revisions at January’s meeting. A By-law Committee may be formed at that time. The TPAC Application and TPAC Interview questions should also be reviewed.

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT: Jo Douville reported that in December 2023 the team provided mobility device securement refresher training to 453 fixed route drivers. These were provided at both stations. They have also provided 85 presentations in 2023 to schools, senior centers, senior housing complexes, and at other community events. The Transit Plus Riders’ Guide was updated in both English and Spanish and the new version is available on the MCTS website. The AIRA wayfinding app will be free again next year. Call the Mobility Management team at 414-937-3256 if you would like to learn how to use the app. AIRA can be used on MCTS transit, and at Milwaukee County Parks and beer gardens, the Courthouse, and Walgreens.

TRANSDEV REPORT: Brian Kading reported that Latisha Scott who was present at the last TPAC meeting and who had been hired by Transdev as a Safety Manager has now been promoted to Assistant General Manager. They are happy to have her move up. Earline

Logan-Moore was promoted from dispatcher to be Transdev's new Operations Manager. Both Earline and Latisha worked for Transit Express in the past. They are rebuilding with a strong management team. Brian explained that the goal for the beginning of the contract on November 1st was to have 108 drivers. This has since been determined to be an insufficient amount. Transdev has now exceeded this number of drivers but is still hiring. Brian stated that in the last couple of months, service has been unacceptable, and he apologized for this. Transdev has subcontracted with TransStar to help meet the demand for service, but they cannot always help. Transdev also reached out to DCS, who was Transit Express' former DBE contractor, but they sold all their vehicles and released all their drivers. DCS would need a long-term commitment to be able to buy vehicles and hire drivers. Transdev recently had a "pick" but this was implemented too quickly and drivers did not have sufficient notice to change their schedules. Some schedules will need to be renegotiated. Three drivers have been released from training this week, and more will be released later in the week. Additionally, a class of 8 new drivers started yesterday. Transdev will continue to recruit new drivers to increase staffing. Transdev has other locations around the country and internationally. We are bringing in drivers from other locations to help meet demand until we can staff sufficiently. Yesterday and today's performance has improved. Grace Graves wanted to know what riders are supposed to do when they cannot reach anyone on the phone. Brian explained that when service goes down, calls increase significantly and that this overloads the phone system. As service improves, call volume should go down. Transdev has also added people to answer phones, and this should help improve telephone access. Phones are a priority for us.

Paul Buherin stated that Transdev has not provided the service you deserve and that they are going to bring in extra resources and training to deliver more efficient and on-time service. Our first priority is on-time service, customer service and phones.

TRANSIT PLUS: Fran Musci advised that the new van contract has a requirement for on-time appointments.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

All TPAC members present shared their individual accounts of being stranded, missing appointments, waiting extended periods of time for pick-ups, missing appointments and not be able to get through on the phone with Brian, Mark and Paul of Transdev. Transdev assured the Council that they were committed to improving service.

ADJOURNMENT