

**Transit Plus Advisory Council
January 17, 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, David Buck, Marica Perkins, Arlene Washington, Mae Wingo

ABSENT: Gerald Balezentis, Laurel Henschel, Annie Johnson, Nilima Mehra

GUESTS: Morgen Mc Clelland - First Transit; Quentin Averhart – Transit Express; Fran Musci, Paula Schultz, and Lisa Walters - Transit Plus

CALL TO ORDER:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the December 20, 2022 meeting were approved.

COMMITTEES:

Driver/Reservationist Recognition Committee: Arlene Washington and Mae Wingo will co-chair the Driver/Reservation Recognition Committee for 2023. No additional report provided.

Membership Committee: Jim Bahneman will chair the Membership Committee for 2023. No additional report provided.

Public Relations Committee: David Buck will chair the Public Relations for 2023. David reported that the new COVID strain is milder, but that people should get their boosters and continue to wear masks on the transit. David thanked MCTS and Miller Coors for providing free rides on New Year's Eve. Free rides will also be provided on St. Patrick's Day.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Milwaukee County Mask Mandate: Fran Musci reported that the Milwaukee County's mask mandate for vans and buses is still in place for the foreseeable future. During this winter for sure. Remember that you do not know the people you are riding with and if they may be ill. Drivers should have a supply of masks.

Election of 2023 TPAC Officers: Lisa Walters announced that Grace Graves was elected Chair and Jim Bahneman was elected Vice-Chair.

Van Contract Transition: Fran Musci reported that the new van contract was awarded to First Transit. Morgen McClellan of First Transit has been talking to Transit Express employees to inform them that they would be hired by First Transit if they remained with Transit Express until the end of the current contract. Grace Graves asked Morgan what would be improved with the

new contract. Morgen explained that there would be increased efficiencies with one provider. There will be more buses in each area, less deadhead resulting in improved service quality. Fran Musci also advised that we remained conscious of the needs of the community with the award of the new contract. Maintenance of the trapeze scheduling and dispatch system will be switched from MCTS to First Transit. First Transit has more expertise on a national level with Trapeze and we hope for better scheduling. MCTS and Transit Plus does not have the staff to support Trapeze. First Transit will also be adding an IVR feature to Trapeze for reminder calls, imminent arrival calls and call outs.

NEW BUSINESS:

TPAC Summer Break: The Council voted to table discussion about when the summer break would take place until the February 21, 2023 meeting.

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT: Paula Schultz played the training video for fixed route bus operators that was shot in July of 2022 by Stumptown Media. This is used for ADA sensitivity training. The fixed route bus fare collection system is changing in the spring.

CARRIER REPORTS:

American United: not present.

Transit Express: Quentin Averhart, Transit Express' Operations Manager reported that the van provider transition will take place on November 1, 2023. Morgen McClelland of First Transit has met with members of Transit Express staff and they are eager and happy about the change. Transit Express is still hiring. There are four new drivers in on the road training. Another class will be starting next week. Transit Express is trying to keep service on the road.

First Transit: Morgen McClelland reported that First Transit is also continuing to hire and ramp up their driver force. However, hiring during the Holidays is challenging. Two people are in training now. There will be another class next week. Trainers will be re-trained this week. Morgen is working with Fran on a transition schedule. Trapeze and First Analytics reporting will be a big focus. First Transit has highly developed staff with Trapeze and server management. MCTS data will be picked up and transferred to First Transit. Transit Express will continue to take reservations until the last day. Transit Express drivers will come over and drive the same routes. Vehicles have been ordered. Six vehicles have already been delivered but are not yet in service.

Morgen was asked if First Transit and Transit Express were merging. Morgen explained that no First Transit and National Express Transit are two separate national companies and that they are staying separate and are not merging. However, First Transit is in the process of being purchased by another national transit company Transdev.

TRANSIT PLUS: Fran Musci reported that van ridership was down in December 2022. There were 27,236 van rides provided in December 2022. The ridership total for 2022 was 331,263 rides. This was up 22% from 2021. In 2021 there were 269,581 rides provided. Still 100,000 less than pre-COVID. We are expecting a further increase in rides in 2023. Taxi ridership in

2022 was down. There were 25,271 taxi rides provided. There were 62,000 rides before the COVID pandemic. There were 761 people who used the taxi in 2022. Just under 10% of those riders (70 people) took 53% of the taxi trips. The Service Infraction software program is finally working and riders who do not cancel their rides can now be suspended. Two warnings are issued before there is a suspension. Suspensions will start in March. Rides should be canceled two hours in advance. It costs the system time and money when rides are not canceled. Fran advised that taxi is in the news and in discussion. She met with MCDOT and Milwaukee County Health and Human Services to discuss the next steps for taxi. We are meeting again in February. MCDOT is working to establish a Paratransit Taxi Force pursuant to a resolution by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors. Fran read the resolution to the Council. Donna Brown-Martin of MCDOT is working to establish the Task Force and to understand how the requirement for this group impacts TPAC. It is not yet known whether the current taxi program will be extended or replaced. American United is currently struggling to find drivers. Fran will keep everyone posted.

OPEN DISCUSSION: none

ADJOURN