

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

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

**PRESENT:** Grace Graves - Chair, Jim Bahneman – Vice-Chair, David Buck, Arlene Washington, Mae Wingo

**ABSENT:** Gerald Balezentis, Laurel Henschel, Annie Johnson, Marcia Perkins

**GUESTS:** Helen White and Anita Spight – TPAC Applicants, Kevin Meyers -guest; Latisha Scott and Brian Kading – Transdev; Fran Musci, Paula Schultz, Chris Fox, and Lisa Walters - Transit Plus

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**A MOMENT OF SILENCE** was observed for former TPAC member Cheri McGrath.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the October 17, 2023, meeting were approved.

**COMMITTEES:**

**Driver/Reservationist Recognition Committee:** Arlene Washington presented the recognition award to Brian Kading who was accepting the award on behalf of Transdev's driver Wanda Buzzell.

**Membership Committee:** Grace Graves reported that Applicants Helen White and Anita Spight were attending their first TPAC meeting.

**Public Relations Committee:** David Buck reported that he intends to attend the next meeting of the Paratransit Taxi Task Force next month. The CDC is encouraging adults to get vaccinated for COVID and RSV. Vaccines are less available for children right now. Clinics and hospitals may start masking again as COVID is spiking.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Paratransit Taxi Task Force:** Fran Musci reported that the Transit Plus taxi program ended on September 28, 2023. Van ridership has increased by 14 rides per day by former taxi riders. Van riders are still riding at the same rate. The next meeting of the Paratransit Taxi Task Force will be on December 7, 3034 at 9:30 a.m. at Independence First. SEWRPC will give a report at the next Task Force meeting about taxi programs utilized by other systems.

**Van Contract Transition:** Fran Musci reported that the last day of service for Transit Express was October 28, 2023. All riders have been transferred to Transdev as of October 29, 2023. The management of the computer system has been moved from Transit Plus to Transdev and the system is working. Transdev has updated their phone queue to better route

calls. Dispatch has experienced a deluge of calls making dispatching difficult. Transdev will continue to work to better triage their phone system. Service is not where we want it to be. Some days are better than others. Transit Express still needs to close out their reporting to facilitate upcoming NTD reporting and payment of their bill. Some computer equipment still needs to be picked up.

**Transit Plus ID Card Mailing:** Fran Musci reported that the ID card proof was sent to the printer this morning. The letters with cards will go out the middle of next week. The card should be peeled off the letter. The cards are just an ID card for the van or for proof of PCA designation on the fixed route bus.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Nominating Committee:** Jim Bahneman and Arlene Washington will serve on this Committee and will present a slate of new officers for 2024 at December's meeting. The offices to be filled are Chair and Vice-Chair.

**Milwaukee County 2024 Budget:** Fran Musci reported that there were no major changes to fixed route or paratransit service areas. There is no fare increase except for an increase in the Agency fare. Effective 1/1/24, the Agency fare which applies to long term care agencies funded by State and Federal dollars such as Family Care, IRIS, ICare, Community Care that buy tickets for their participants. Agency fare tickets will increase in price from \$215.00 per book to \$350.00 per book. Paratransit service is currently costing Milwaukee County about \$42.00 each way. Riders who are not enrolled in a long-term care program can pay \$4.00 each way. There was an amendment to the budget for the Department of Transportation and Paratransit in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Paratransit Taxi Task Force to develop accessibility options to support mobility which prioritize work and medical appointment transportation. This should include an analysis of available state federal reimbursements that may be available to offset the cost of the program. The County appropriated \$1.1 million to help fund a same day ride program.

**MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT:** Paula Schultz reported that fixed route bus winter changes will go into effect on December 3, 2023. Frequency will be increasing with a few minor route changes. Call Customer Service if you have any questions. The Connect 1 BRT will be increasing frequency in the evening. The BRT is serving 3,500 riders per day. The BRT is free until spring of 2024. Waukesha Metro connects with the BRT at 95<sup>th</sup> and 92<sup>nd</sup> Streets. MCTS renewed its subscription for AIRA in 2024. This wayfinding app is free for those who utilize it for their bus and van transportation. It is a valuable tool that is currently underutilized. AIRA training is available. The team is going to the stations on 4 days in December to provide drivers with wheelchair securement refresher training. Miller Free rides will be available on New Years Eve. Snow is coming. Property owners are responsible for shoveling sidewalks. If they don't the City of Milwaukee can be contacted at 414-286-2489. They will send someone out to shovel if the property owner hasn't done it within 24 hours.

**TRANSDEV REPORT:** Brian Kading stated that he was deeply saddened by Cheri's passing. He stated that he had known her for a long time. He was a Bus Operator when Cheri lived on North Avenue. Transdev has had some growing pain. A direct phone line to dispatch has crippled their operation. They will be changing driver schedules to have more drivers when

they are needed. There has been a surplus of drivers from 11:00 a.m to 12:00 p.m. but not enough drivers after 2:00 p.m. By redoing schedules, they will have more service on the road when demand is higher. The new schedules will be posted before Thanksgiving. Drivers will bid on these new schedules based on their seniority. The new schedules will start on December 10, 2023. Transdev has been giving some work to TransStar. However, TransStar does not always have availability to take rides. They will try to get a conversation going with DCS, the former DBE contractor for Transit Express. Some drivers have been brought in from Chicago to provide some service outside of the Milwaukee city limits. Milwaukee's Chapter 100 ordinance requires that drivers have a PPVL and a Wisconsin driver's license. This hinders the ability to bring in drivers from other states. Brian commented that the recognition certificate for Wanda Buzzell was outstanding. She has been a driver for more than 20 years and loves what she does. Latisha Scott is now Transdev's Safety Manager. Latisha advised that she is excited and thankful for this opportunity.

**TRANSIT PLUS:** Fran Musci reported that there were 30,538 rides provided in October. This was the fourth highest month this year.

#### **OPEN DISCUSSION:**

Arlene Washington mentioned that no one showed up for her pickup to go to a doctor's appointment. Her rescheduled appointment is not until next month and that is not fair.

Fran explained that by federal law, Transit Plus is not allowed to prioritize trips. All rides must be treated the same. Reservations are going to be more actively negotiated if someone does not have a specific appointment time. If you have an appointment time, tell the reservationist and they will give you a pickup time that will get you to your appointment on time. Fran stated she takes the responsibility for providing service seriously as does Brian and Latisha. We want to see that everyone gets picked up and we are doing everything we can. We have even sent out MCTS Route Supervisors and fixed route buses to help at times. Please continue to be patient.

Anita Spight complained that the riders from IBVI want the routing of their trips home to go back to the way it was before. She stated that she and others have not been able to get to doctor's appointments on time, they are not getting to work on-time, they are not getting door to door service and have found the drivers to be rude.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**