

**Transit Plus Advisory Council  
October 17, 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, Gerald Balezentis, David Buck, Marcia Perkins, Arlene Washington, Mae Wingo

**ABSENT:** Laurel Henschel, Annie Johnson

**GUESTS:** Kevin Meyers -guest; Latisha Scott – Transit Express; Brian Kading – Transdev; Fran Musci, Paula Schultz, Chris Fox, and Lisa Walters - Transit Plus

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the September 19, 2023, meeting were approved.

**COMMITTEES:**

**Driver/Reservationist Recognition Committee:** Mae Wingo reported that the Committee selected a reservationist from the commendation made by Jean Dodson on May 26, 2023, to be recognized.

**Membership Committee:** Grace Graves reported that an application for TPAC membership has been received from Helen White. The members whose terms are expiring on December 31, 2023, are Gerald Balezentis, David Buck, Annie Johnson, Marcia Perkins and Mae Wingo. Gerald Balezentis, David Buck, Marica Perkins, and Mae Wingo all stated that they would like to serve another two-year term. Their names will be submitted to MCDOT.

**Public Relations Committee:** David Buck reported that he was not able to attend the last meeting of the Paratransit Taxi Task Force because he had a conflict that afternoon. He also mentioned that COVID vaccines are available at pharmacies and some clinics.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Paratransit Taxi Task Force:** Fran Musci reported that the Transit Plus taxi program ended on September 28, 2023. Fran stated that we will be trying to track the impact this has on heavy riders and what other services they may be using instead. More will be known about this by the end of October. The Paratransit Taxi Task Force is continuing to meet to explore other same day ride options. SEWRPC is conducting research into other systems' taxi services. The next meeting of the Paratransit Taxi Task force will be held on December 7, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.

**Van Contract Transition:** Fran Musci reported that the transition is twelve days away. As of October 29, 2023, everyone will ride with Transdev. There was a good turnout for Transdev's hiring event. Transdev's DBE provider People's has a good number of drivers.

About 20 Transit Express staff members will be going to Transdev. This number includes 18 drivers, 1 reservationist and 1 dispatcher. Transdev currently has 101 drivers. The goal is to have 108 drivers and we are on target to meet this goal. It is hoped that there will be 127 drivers on October 29<sup>th</sup>. Transit Express is doing what they can to continue to serve the riders remaining in their territory. A plan has been put in place to use MCTS staff and vehicles to pick up ambulatory riders who have had excessively long waits. There will be a lot going on in the next two weeks.

**Transit Plus ID Card Mailing:** Fran Musci reported that everyone will be getting a new Transit Plus ID card. The cards are at the printers, and the printer will mail them out when ready. Transit Plus ID cards are for the van. Fixed route bus riders need to use the WisGo card when riding the bus. However, you will need to show your Transit Plus ID card on the fixed route bus if you are traveling with a PCA.

**TPAC Brochure:** Lisa Walters distributed the new TPAC brochure to the members who were attending the meeting in-person. Brochures will also be mailed to Marcia Perkins, Gerald Balezentis and Laurel Henschel. The brochure will be given to new and renewing Transit Plus clients at the time of their assessment. It is hoped that the brochure will be a help in recruiting new members to TPAC. TPAC needs to have a variety of members who have different types of disabilities, different ages, and who live in different parts of the County.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**On-line Transit Plus Ticket Ordering:** Chris Fox reported that in late September, Transit Plus enhanced our website to allow for ticket ordering online. In the past, tickets could only be purchased in-person, by mailing a form, or over the phone with a credit card. To order online go to the Transit Plus page and click on Fares and then hit the button to order regular or Agency fare tickets. The form to order by mail can also be printed from this page. Online ordering is available 24 hours a day. Transit Plus staff are monitoring the number of books allowed for purchase so that the number is appropriate. If the purchaser provides an email address or cell phone number, they will be able to receive confirmation of their order. Ticket orders are only processed on Tuesday and Thursdays. Kevin Meyers requested information on the link so that he can check out the screen reader function.

**Republican National Convention:** Chris Fox reported that the Republican Convention will be held next summer in the third week of July. He participated in a meeting with the Secret Service today. They are finalizing the security perimeter for the Convention. The perimeter will mostly be on the west side of the river around the Fiserv Forum and the Baird Center. People will need to get in and out of the perimeter to get to their residences, dialysis, etc. Fixed route buses will need to be detoured. The next meeting will be held in early December. Chris should have more information later.

**MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT:** Paula Schultz reported that a new Transit Plus Riders Guide is ready and will begin to be handed out on November 1<sup>st</sup>. The Riders Guide will be put on our website in print and audio versions. A braille version will be available upon request. We are also working on a Spanish version. There will be changes to MCTS routes in December. The changes are mostly time changes rather than route changes. Most routes are adding frequency. The 18 is changing a little bit on the northeast end and will be going around MSOE. The 51 will be more frequent to Franciscan Shores and Juniper & Canticle

Courts. The 92 will stay on 91<sup>st</sup> Street to Brown Deer Road. The BRT will continue to be free until early 2024. People are still converting to WisGo cards. Let us know if you want one. The WisGo cards are empty, value must be added on to them online, at a fare outlet or at the MCTS Administration Building. WisGo Reduced Fare Cards are processed in-person at the MCTS Administration Building. The Mobility Management team has been very busy. We have 15 presentations and 2 ADA driver classes remaining for this year.

## **CARRIER REPORTS:**

**Transit Express:** Latisha Scott reported that she will be moving over to Transdev next Tuesday. She is very excited to go to Transdev. The last couple of weeks have been difficult. Latisha thanked everyone who trusted Transit Express over the many years that they have provided service in Milwaukee County.

**First Transit/Transdev:** Brian Kading reported that Transdev is looking forward to the transition. They're at the 10-yard line and their staff is ready and working hard to provide the best possible service. The recent job fair resulted in 1,000 people signing up, 140 people showing up and 90 job offers being made. Some people were lost due to background checks. They are now fully staffed but expect to exceed their staffing goal by the end of the contract. Dispatchers and reservationists are also being added. Latisha Scott is being brought on as Transdev's Safety Manager. She will be a good addition to our team. The Regional Safety Manager is coming next week to train Latisha. Building renovations are coming and the parking lot improvements are half done and should be completed by the end of the week. Ongoing meetings are being held with Trapeze regarding tablets and radios for all vehicles. A meeting was also held yesterday regarding the phones. We are looking to change the distribution of calls. We are looking to dedicate a line to dispatch for "where's my ride" calls and cancellations. It is hoped that there will not be any issues in the first week of the new service, but if there are any they will be handled as quickly as possible. Grace Graves commented that drivers have been having trouble getting through to dispatch. There used to be two channels, now there is only one. Brian advised that the old system was very outdated. The new system is national and will have more channels and greater capabilities. All radio calls will be recorded.

**TRANSIT PLUS:** Fran Musci reported that 28,221 rides were provided in September. This is 80% of pre-COVID. On Sunday, October 29, 2023 the Transit Plus Office will be staffed in case there are any problems that day. Hopefully there will not be any. The new contract with Transdev is for 7 years. This allows the vendor to depreciate vans, and because transitions are too disruptive.

## **OPEN DISCUSSION:**

Arlene Washington commented that on some days the phones are not working well. She has had long wait times.

Mae Wingo asked if the vans were still going to Brookfield Square. Fran Musci advised that for now they are, but that service may go away in the future.

Kevin Meyers asked Fran Musci about early van drop offs. Fran explained it is an FTA recommendation that riders not be dropped off more than 30 minutes before their appointments,

but it is not an ADA regulation.

## **ADJOURNMENT**