TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE / TRANSIT COORDINATING COUNCIL

Friday, July 11, 2014
Administrative Center – Room 3220
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Audrey Kader, Don Bina, Peter Fletcher, Va Thao, Sandy Sechrest, Roland Bogert, Walter Baltz for Dennis Manthei, Jackie Eastwood.
MEMBERS EXCUSED: Tim Kabat, Keith Lee, Steve Johnson, Dennis Manthei.
MEMBERS ABSENT: Richard Running, Dean Olson, Will Ward, Kristopher Sheehan, Shaun Morrell, Sandy Turner, Fred Buehler, Noreen Holmes, Joanne Dierkop, Mike Poellinger.
STAFF & GUESTS: April Harmon, Tom Faella.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL
Audrey Kader called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
MOTION by Bina/Thao to approve the minutes of March 14, 2014. Motion carried unanimously; Tim Kabat, Keith Lee, Steve Johnson, Dennis Manthei excused; Richard Running, Dean Olson, Will Ward, Kristopher Sheehan, Shaun Morrell, Sandy Turner, Fred Buehler, Noreen Holmes, Joanne Dierkop, Mike Poellinger absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT
None.

UPDATE ON TRANSIT ENHANCEMENT PLAN ACTIVITIES
Jackie Eastwood summarized the processes and results from three of her public outreach activities: An all-day public input opportunity at the Grand River Station; a 100% count boarding and alighting ridecheck and onboard survey; and an online survey of employees and students at area universities. Jackie will soon be conducting an online survey of major employers and also presented a new brand for MTU to be “Grand River Transit,” which was well-received by the MTU Board. Audrey Kader stated that this is a good time for a re-brand of MTU, but it should wait until after the MTU Board and the Parking Utility Board are merged.

Sandy Sechrest commented that she does not like the wrapped bus. It’s hard to recognize as a transit bus. Jackie Eastwood and Peter Fletcher agreed. Peter stated that in contrast the S.M.R.T. buses are highly recognizable.

MOTION by Sechrest/Bina to communicate to the MTU Board that the TCC is concerned with the effect of whole-bus wrapping of MTU buses for advertising on ridership and would like to see a study of the financial, bus recognition, and ridership pros and cons of such wrapping. Motion carried unanimously; Tim Kabat, Keith Lee, Steve Johnson, Dennis Manthei excused; Richard Running, Dean Olson, Will Ward, Kristopher Sheehan, Shaun Morrell, Sandy Turner, Fred Buehler, Noreen Holmes, Joanne Dierkop, Mike Poellinger absent.

Walter Baltz suggested talking with Keith Carson regarding the cost/benefit of static billboards to moving ads.

OTHER INFORMATION ITEMS/UPDATES
SMRT—Peter Fletcher stated the S.M.R.T service was reduced by 20% on April 1 to address the cut in WisDOT funding for 2014 (reduced from 80% to 70%) and a future cut for 2015 to 60% federal/state funds. The route between Prairie du Chien and Viroqua has been underperforming and so those buses were cut. Three buses continue to run between Viroqua, Coon Valley, and La Crosse at seven round-trips per day. Service between Prairie du Chien and La
Crosse continues with three round-trips per day. Ridership dropped by 15% in May, but Peter does not see it coming from the lost service.

Peter said that they are looking to add a stop at the VA outpatient center in La Crosse. Terry Dwyer from the VA is encouraged by the S.M.R.T. service and is willing to cooperate any way he can.

Peter informed the board that Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center in Cashton—the only clinic in the region that will take Medicaid for dentistry—will be opening a clinic in Viroqua. This will be a real benefit to those who don’t have transportation to Cashton to be able to take the S.M.R.T. service to Viroqua.

With the reduction in funding again in 2015, Peter is unsure of how they’re going to make up the loss. They are looking at an increase in fares, but they are also looking to try out a community-to-community fare (i.e. Viroqua to Coon Valley).

Peter also noted that with regard to branding, the S.M.R.T. buses have a brand and are very visible. Wrapping a bus like MTU has for Altra can make the bus unrecognizable for new people. Sandy Sechrest noted that she liked having the bus as part of the Rotary Lights display.

Va Thao asked Peter if there was a way to use messaging that could help educate people on how to use the bus. Peter responded that getting the word out has been a challenge. Now that the schedule and routes are set, they’ll be getting more schedules out.

MTU—No update.

OHWSPT—No update.

AGING UNIT RURAL SERVICE—No update.

OTHER—Don Bina voiced his concern with access to some of the rural county programs when the Administrative Center moves to the Associated Bank building. He would like to see Land Conservation, UW Extension, and others moved to West Salem for better access by farmers.

ADJOURNMENT
MOTION by Baltz/Bogert to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously; Tim Kabat, Keith Lee, Steve Johnson, Dennis Manthei excused; Richard Running, Dean Olson, Will Ward, Kristopher Sheehan, Shaun Morrell, Sandy Turner, Fred Buehler, Noreen Holmes, Joanne Dierkop, Mike Poellinger absent. The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Disclaimer: The above minutes may be approved, amended or corrected at the next committee meeting. Jackie Eastwood, Recorder.