TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE / TRANSIT COORDINATING COUNCIL

Friday, November 14, 2014
Administrative Center – Room 3220
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Audrey Kader, Don Bina, Peter Fletcher, Noreen Holmes, Va Thao, Keith Lee, Roland Bogert, Tim Kabat, Walter Baltz for Dennis Manthei, Francis Schelfhout, Jackie Eastwood.

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Sandy Sechrest, Dean Olson, April Harmon, Dennis Manthei.


STAFF & GUESTS: Bridget Karl, Tom Faella.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
MOTION by Fletcher/Bina to approve the minutes of July 11, 2014. Motion carried unanimously; Sandy Sechrest, Dean Olson, April Harmon, Dennis Manthei excused; Steve Johnson, Richard Running, Will Ward, Kristopher Sheehan, Shaun Morrell, Sandy Turner, Fred Buehler, Mike Poellinger absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT
None.

5311 RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM and 85.21 COUNTY ELDERLY AND DISABLED TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE
Noreen Holmes stated that the 5311 program funds the shared-ride service in Holland, Bangor, and Rockland and the 85.21 program funds the County Minibus and volunteer driver programs. Ms. Holmes is not changing anything in the applications, but noted that funding goes down each year. Future funding for the Minibus is uncertain after May 2015.

MOTION by Bina/Bogert to approve the applications for 5311 and 85.21 transportation assistance. Motion carried unanimously; Sandy Sechrest, Dean Olson, April Harmon, Dennis Manthei excused; Steve Johnson, Richard Running, Will Ward, Kristopher Sheehan, Shaun Morrell, Sandy Turner, Fred Buehler, Mike Poellinger absent.

MOVE TO A BETTER BALANCE TOWN HALL MEETING
Jackie Eastwood updated everyone about the Move to a Better Balance Town Hall Meeting that took place at the Ho-Chunk Three Rivers House in La Crosse on October 22, 2014. Ms. Eastwood stated that the Move Wisconsin Alliance held several town hall meetings across the state with the purpose of presenting the challenges for funding transportation in a balanced way. The message is that transit is taking a back seat to road building. The Alliance, which is made up of representatives from various advocacy groups in the state, was formed to ensure better coordination among groups and to avoid duplicative advocacy activities.

OTHER INFORMATION ITEMS/UPDATES
TRANSIT ENHANCEMENT PLAN ACTIVITIES—Jackie Eastwood provided an update on the work she’s been doing for the MTU transit plan. She had just met with Keith Lee regarding some route recommendations. Keith Lee will take the maps back to MTU for review and discussion. Jackie Eastwood stated that she is currently writing a summary report for the major employer online survey, which will be completed in December. That document will then be distributed to the employers that participated. Audrey Kader asked if the route recommendations and summary
report could be presented to the TCC. Jackie Eastwood replied that she plans to present the route recommendations to the TCC, but not until after she presents to the MTU Board in January. As soon as the summary document is done, she will distribute it to the TCC members also. Ms. Eastwood plans on holding two public information meetings in February—one on the northside and one on the southside.

SMRT—Peter Fletcher stated that since the service was implemented in December of 2012 ridership has grown to 13,000 rides. Mr. Fletcher is projecting a 40% increase to 18,000 rides for 2015. Because of the reduction in funding, bus service hours were reduced. They are tracking and evaluating individual routes to improve efficiencies. The Monroe County TCC is now looking at a Tomah – La Crosse route. Va Thao suggested working with Trempealeau County for a connection to Arcadia. Peter Fletcher responded that Trempealeau County has little interest; however, the Ho-Chunk Nation is conducting a feasibility study for several counties. A potential project could come out of that.

Tim Kabat suggested having a dialog with employers such as Ashley Furniture and working with the Chamber to initiate discussions with smaller employers. Peter Fletcher added that when a company champions transit service, ridership goes up. Other discussion involved Ashley having its own bus and service between Mayo in La Crosse and Mayo in Rochester.

MTU—Keith Lee stated that MTU ridership is up 2% from last year. He is unsure if the drop in gas prices is going to have an effect. Mr. Lee is excited about the transit enhancement plan, but is fearful of a loss in future funding and anticipates funding will be reduced by 4%. Tim Kabat added that the City has budgeted money for 2015 for a circulator route operating at 10-minute frequencies. The route will unfortunately be impacted by construction projects on the UW-L campus. If the route proves to be successful, they hope to get some funding help from the colleges. Keith Lee said that the route could be operated with the current bus fleet.

OHWSPT—No one available to report.

AGING UNIT RURAL SERVICE—Noreen Holmes said her main update was addressed earlier in the meeting. She continued by saying that they had to reduce shared-ride service hours on the weekends from 7:00am-7:00pm to 9:00am-4:00pm and eliminate Minibus service on Sundays.

OTHER—Francis Schelfhout introduced himself as a DOT representative. His participation will allow him to inform relevant roadway projects about transit plans in the region.

Peter Fletcher announced that MRRPC was awarded a planning grant to do an inventory of 5310 vehicles in Crawford, La Crosse, and Vernon Counties. The 5310 program has a requirement to share vehicles; however, it doesn’t happen. Sharing is made difficult with insurance, drivers, etc, so working out an agreement ahead of time would simplify and streamline the process.

ADJOURNMENT
MOTION by Kabat/Holmes to adjourn at 10:52am. Motion carried unanimously; Sandy Sechrest, Dean Olson, April Harmon, Dennis Manthei excused; Steve Johnson, Richard Running, Will Ward, Kristopher Sheehan, Shaun Morrell, Sandy Turner, Fred Buehler, Mike Poellinger absent.

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