

## Rural Transportation Committee Notes for informal meeting

September 25, 2013

*Committee Members Present:* Julie Aubert, Alissa Dozier, Paul Rosenberger, Andrea Shaffer

*Committee Members Absent:* Gary Minich, Mark Wicklund, , Robert Brice, Leslie Stanberry

*Others Present:* Eileen Sierra-Brown, Bruce Bird, Laura Dick, Paul McChancey

*Next meeting:* October 23, 2013, 3:30 p.m. in Room 514 County Board Room, County Office Building

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Alissa Dozier began the discussion. A quorum was not present. A discussion session was held. Minutes from the previous meeting were not approved due to quorum not being present. For the record, these notes do not constitute minutes, but are simply notes of the discussion.

Update from Showbus: Laura Dick said they had a statewide conference for IPTA and IDOT was there and provided some updates, but the updates lacked some clarity. The buses that are being waited on, because there is a desperate need for buses, were supposed to be delivered in October, but there seems to be more fluidity to that and now it looks like it will be more toward the end of the year. The Macon County reserve money was used to, hopefully, purchase two medium duties. It appears that that contract has not even been awarded yet. We are looking more into 2014 before we can realistically expect to see those buses be delivered. That was a little disappointing.

Some executed contracts that have to do with New Freedom & JARC. The executed contracts for Downstate, DOPE nor 5311 have not been received. Laura said she did not know why. The problem with that is, although they say they will reimburse expenses from July 1 on, we have submitted a requisition, but it cannot be processed or paid until there is an executed contract. The bank account is being watched with some anxiety.

The planning grant was mentioned last month. There was optimism about that and the process of reviewing and approving one group to do the planning, which would include clarification at the PCOM had been submitted to IDOT for concurrence. Even though IDOT, at the conference, said they would no longer need to concur for amounts under \$100,000, we were told that for the Planning Grant, concurrence was needed. Unfortunately, the concurrence is still pending. The grant runs out as of October 1. Essentially, unless there is an extension, the Planning Grant will not be done, which is very disappointing.

More publicity in Macon County has begun with dissemination of brochures which has been done in most small towns except Maroa. They have been held in Town Halls, Post Offices and Libraries as available. This has generated some phone calls. A slide show has been developed, but it is very boring, but very clear about the voucher program, which Macon County can now pull

money from. That program acts as an encouragement to non-profit agencies to use Showbus because it gives them funds to pay staff to help transition clients. It has been extremely successful in encouraging service contracts in other counties. The slide show is available and can be given to any group that is interested in the idea including churches and any non-profit.

No good news on the Federal front especially for New Freedom and Job Access Reverse Commute. The New Freedom funding was rolled into the 5310 funding and the JARC funding was rolled into the 5311 funding. While IDOT has not said that they will not continue to fund it in rural areas, they have written a letter to small urbans stating that 5310 will be reserved only for vehicles. They will not be funding any New Freedom projects in small urban areas. This is a huge disappointment. It is not cast in stone. The State can change their mind, but they are arguing that they do not have the staff to do anything other than buy buses with the money. That is too bad.

A positive note, there was a statewide joint meeting with the Center for Independent Living and IDOT to make certain that they were coordinating information between those two groups. Most HESTP coordinators attended that meeting and that is encouraging. It shows that IDOT, on some level, is encouraging statewide collaboration.

The August numbers are a little down. They seem to be shooting up for September. We do have ridership from Blue Mound. This is a new toehold in that community and things are looking up there.

HSTP update: There was a phone call from IDOT regarding vehicles this a.m. regarding a delivery and they did confirm that the medium duties from the 2012 award and the banked funding. The pilot for those vehicles were being sent back and the pilot has to be redone and it is looking more like a December rather than October delivery. The mini vans, for sure, are going to be delivered in October and then the medium and light duties in December. Super Mediums are a special animal and is another whole conversation. There were several that were specialized that were pending. Then there were several they were going to go piggyback on. They've never given an update on the Super Medium Duties every time we've asked. It's worth a shot to ask and see if we can get something in writing. Paul asked Laura if she had ordered. Laura said they had back-ordered, including the ones with the DTIF money. She thought close to 20 super mediums. Paul asked if no mini vans. Laura said two mini vans and two mediums just in this area. Paul reported that the Transit System has just received two vans.

Someone (Laura) stated that they should have mentioned that they are one of the pending, specialized super medium low rider buses and she finally did tell IDOT that if they couldn't release the money, she wanted them converted to mini vans. She said that they would then convert the mini vans as they get other ones and put one in each county for the folks who are not safe on the lift.

One of the things they were saying for the FY14, because the first quarter of FY14 hasn't passed for 5311, they were saying part of that was the PCOM. The deadline to get the PCOM in place is January 1, so it seems like they should – has McLean County nominated someone to be PCOM? They've identified someone but not formally got concurrence from IDOT because it is not supposed to be in place until January and there was the wait for the planning grant. One needs to be clear what the deadline is and IDOT is not being clear about the deadlines.

IDOT noted that for JARC & New Freedom, they are looking at ways to continue those programs through other planning funds and other 5311 that they will get allocated based on the federal roll in, but in order to do that, they are going to push the selection of those applications to a competitive process and it is going to be done through IDOT in Springfield because they do not have the staff to do the competitive grant selection. This is for Rural, but they have not given a definite and the majority of the programs end in 2015. That is, the ones that are currently operating for JARC & New Freedom.

SMART is now online and providing rides. Springfield, Menard County rural system is up and running and we will have an updated provider map and phone number and web address. She said she would email out the pdf.

The next HSTP meeting is October 17 at 10 a.m. The main focus right now is marketing awareness. The committee shot down door hangers with information on various towns that are not having very high ridership across the region. We are looking at other alternatives per county and what / how they would like to this information advertised. This covers the whole region of who your provider is.

The Independent Living Center discussions were about how to have consistent operating hours across the board statewide because many people have tried to use system to system and are having problems where one system runs longer than another. Looking at the urban systems and if you are eligible for paratransit in one area, that you will be eligible in another city. There was a lot of information sharing about where the different regions were. Performance measures were talked about a little bit.

A question was asked about whether it was necessary to meet monthly. He asked Laura what was typical in other counties. Laura said it varies from county to county. Where there are a lot of service contracts and interaction with not for profit agencies, the tendency is to meet once a month. Things change so quickly. In areas where there are not so many service contracts, or they are very old, the tendency is not to meet as often unless something, such as integrated care and managed care, causes confusion causing more meetings. Here, until the service contracts get into place, it is probably not necessary to meet monthly. From the member standpoint, especially the ones looking to be replaced, was the frequency of the meetings an impact. Julie Aubert stated that she was one that was not going to be reappointed, but she wanted someone from her agency to be appointed because they are a managed care contract and have a huge network and a lot going on. It is important that a mix of people are involved. Managed care is a huge issue right now, especially when you talk about marketing. There are two managed care companies that cover this county and the Health Department will have contracts with both of them. The Health Department staff person she would like to have appointed in her place will be able to answer questions way better than Julie said she could. Laura said that in some counties, there is a really formal group that is called before the board, but does not meet very often and then there is a working group that the board is really not that interested in dealing with. That might be something to look at.

Alissa dismissed the group.