

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY  
SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL MEETING**

**Minutes**

**DATE:** 5/16/2023

**TIME:** 1:30 p.m.

**PLACE:** ZOOM

**PRESENT:** Nicole Davis-Dawald (Winnebago County Aging Resource Supervisor), Adam Bellcorelli (Transportation Planner with East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission), Steven Tomasik (GO Transit / City of Oshkosh), Holly Keenan (Lutheran Social Services – Make the Ride Happen, Winnebago Catch a Ride), Sara Schneider (Valley Transit), Susan Garcia Franz (Winnebago County Health Department), Tracey Razburg, Mary Tawaili

1. **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS** – **Nicole Davis-Dawald** called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM. Members were welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made by all committee members in attendance.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – **Nicole Davis-Dawald** stated that there were no concerns received from the public since last meeting. In response to dementia-friendly transportation often being sought in the area, the DHS is inviting transportation providers to attend a free virtual dementia simulation. Contact Nicole for more information or a flier in regards to the simulations.
3. **MAKING THE RIDE HAPPEN & WINNEBAGO CATCH A RIDE UPDATES- Holly Keenan:**
  - Due to State funding cuts and partnering Greater Oshkosh Economic Development exhausting partnering funds, Catch a Ride in Oshkosh is being selective in the voucher dollars used to supplement ride costs. A cab company in Oshkosh has been helping with the program during the peak hours of 4:00 AM to 8:00 AM.
  - A new staff member has been hired who will be doing travel training in Oshkosh. Volunteer recruitment in the southern part of the county has been a struggle; however, four drivers in the Fox Valley were recently recruited.
  - Work continues in Waupaca and a press release will be issued tomorrow announcing having reached the 1000-ride threshold.
4. **VALLEY TRANSIT UPDATES – Sarah Schneider:** Valley Transit's app will be changing due to the software provider going out of business. The anticipated transition time is mid to late-July, and the new app may cause confusion as it does not have the Valley Transit overlay in Apple Play or the AppStore.
5. **GO TRANSIT / CITY OF OSHKOSH UPDATES – Steve Tomasik:** Steve shared the following statistics:
  - Total ridership is up 12 percent, which is back to pre-pandemic numbers.
  - The dial-a-ride and ambulatory/non-ambulatory ridership (green and yellow tickets) is down drastically.
  - Agency fares have dramatically increased—4047 compared to 1336 at this point last year.

- Access to jobs is up 18 percent.
- Dial-a-Ride seniors is down 48 percent.
- Rural over 60 is down by 22.7 percent.
- Route 10 is no longer in service; however, Go Connect is averaging 10 rides per day.
- An agreement is in place to continue free student rides for approximately the next five years.
- Transit Center expansion – The platform is complete at the Transit Center. The next phase includes adding another platform with public restrooms, adding a waiting area, moving Coach USA off the street, and moving Go Connect to the second platform.
- Members discussed: Concerns/feedback regarding Route 10, upcoming refugee transit needs, and the concerns voiced to APS regarding medical transports to/from urgent care services as Go Transit does not provide same day pickups from medical facilities for unregistered riders.

6. **ANY OTHER AGENCY UPDATES:**

**Susan Garcia Franz** reported a goal for the Health Department is: 1) to identify transportation barriers being experienced (funding, resources, access), 2) articulate the identified barriers through reports/studies, and then 3) develop a long-term plan for overcoming barriers. Residents often state being unaware of available services. When asked whether Go Transit has the capacity to handle increases in ridership once promotions begin, Steve stated this is currently a pilot program. Capacities and funding will be reviewed next year and voiced that a vision from the county would be needed for services outside of the fixed route services already being provided. Adam raised the question of who on the county board would address that kind of vision and the procedure in creating such a vision. He added there are county board members who act as commissioners at East Central who talk about regional transportation topics. Susan indicated she will start by contacting those individuals.

**Tracy Ratzburg** reported that Waupaca County is the biggest item they are currently working on. The employment grant is often mentioned by the Governor and is looked at as a model across the ThedaCare service area with a possible expansion to Waushara County.

**Nicole Davis-Dawald** reported that for Aging Advocacy Day at the Capitol, one of the focuses was attaining funding for specialized transportation. Members discussed the gaps in rural and refugee transportation. Holly stated she takes part in the State's Non-Driver Advisory Committee meetings and will provide the committee with updates from those meetings. She also stated that the State is looking at funding the appropriate places to address statewide transportation issues. Steve stated that there are no programs for individuals under age 60 without disabilities in and that presence from a Winnebago County is needed.

**Adam Bellcorelli** screenshared a map of Waupaca County Catch-a-Ride trips along with corresponding statistics to illustrate the need for transports to rural areas. Members discussed the need for affordable rides, all of the trips individuals need to be transported to on a daily basis, cab companies not being sustainable in some areas, transport services may need to be done inhouse, and the idea of a "plunge" day to illustrate transportation issues.

**Mary Tawaili** reported that they stopped taking applications on May 4 in order to determine remaining funding and have started a program waitlist. Individuals are being referred to other transportation programs when appropriate.

**Nicole Davis-Dawald** shared that the Elder Awareness Walk is taking place at Noon on June 15<sup>th</sup>. The walk will be from the Oshkosh Human Services building to Sundial Park with speakers including the Sheriff, D.A., and hopefully Lori Palmeri. There will also be a purple candy buffet.

7. **NEXT MEETING DATE** – 08/16/2023 – 1:30 PM.
8. **ADJOURNMENT** – With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by: Nicole-Davis-Dawald, Human Services Department