

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY
SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL MEETING**

Minutes

DATE: Tuesday, August 9, 2022

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: ZOOM

PRESENT: Nicole Davis-Dawald (Winnebago County Aging Resource Supervisor), Rob Paterson (Council Chair), Jim Collins (Director of Transportation, City of Oshkosh), Brian Jacobsen (Director of Volunteer Services at ADVOCAP), Steve Tomasik (Transit Operations Manager for Go Transit City of Oshkosh), Adam Bellcorelli (Transportation Planner with East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission), Ronald & Josh (Carepool Innovation Incorporated), Sara Schneider (Mobility Manager Valley Transit), Valerie (Enterprise Rent-A-Car), Susan Garcia-Franz (Winnebago County Health Department), Mary (Forward Service Corporation)

1. **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

Nicole Davis-Dawald called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM. Nicole welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made by all committee members.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Nicole Davis-Dawald stated that she is hoping to get options and feedback from the Committee regarding a concern that the ADRC has been encountering recently regarding how an individual can return home after taking an ambulance to the ER. Lakeland has tickets which can be utilized to pay Cabulance for the return home ride; however, if the ticket is utilized on the same day as the hospital admit, then an additional \$10 fee is charged as the ride was not arranged prior to 4:00 PM on the previous day. Because some individuals cannot afford the \$10 fee, the ambulance is being used even in non-emergency situations. Nicole stated that this issue has occurred a couple of times in the last month and clarified the issue has occurred with both ambulatory and non-ambulatory (wheelchair) transports within Winnebago County.

Rob Paterson commented that part of the problem is that the ambulance transports cost too much to be utilized for non-emergency rides.

___ asked if there is a reason Lakeland is not negotiating the service and not covering this; perhaps they top out on reimbursements? Nicole stated that the tickets is the only option Lakeland gives.

Mary stated a resource called United Ride helps towards covering \$25; however, after looking the resource up online found that Winnebago County is not covered by that service.

___ expressed that he was curious whether Lakeland Care is advising their members who are within the bus route areas to take the bus as the bus goes to the different hospitals at a rate under the \$10 each way.

___ questioned why Winnebago County is not covered by United Ride services as providing non-emergency medical transport from the hospital is not a function of public transit. Additionally, the Fire Department is no longer picking up people from the hospitals either. Winnebago County needs some sort of program to account for this and asked how this is handled by other counties. Agency tickets could be utilized, but really for someone to qualify for services if not using agency fares, they would need to be registered. Thus, this is not a general population question as people serviced in the program would have to be prequalified.

___ stated that other counties and cities should be asked how they handle the rides home after hospitalization for Lakeland clients. Perhaps other counties are providing vouchers for cab fare, helping for Ubers or lifts, volunteer drivers, etc.

Holly stated that she has witnessed that some communities use other providers in their network and provide a lot of last-minute medical rides. The company used to do packaging moving widgets and now are moving people. In some of the rural communities, the hospital is reaching out to providers and paying for it. Holly's program receives a lot of calls from medical facilities that individuals cannot go in a cab following certain procedures therefore a volunteer is used to help whenever possible. Hospital systems are expressing that Veyo is often not reliable; however, is required to be the first source for Medicaid clients.

Nicole Davis-Dawald had recently received calls regarding the consistent issue that Cambulance is returning people back to the hospital who unable to pay for transports back home.

Josh stated that **Carepool** has started working with Ascension Hospital in Appleton. When Veyo is unable to provide same-day transport, Ascension can choose Carepool instead with the costs being covered by Ascension's charitable donations. This newly contracted program through Ascension is growing and Carepool is currently covering the hospitals in Appleton, Milwaukee, Racine, with hopes to soon cover New London and other nearby locations. Josh has not yet talked to Ascension in Oshkosh about the program and would be a good starting point since the national contract is already in place and would appreciate being provided with contact names.

___ stated that Veyo is the contacted provider for the non-emergency medical transports for individuals on Medicare in Wisconsin.

___ asked how Managed Care providers other than Lakeland handle this situation. Nicole stated that Lakeland Care is the one that individuals have been calling about and she will reach out to Lakeland, Community Care, and Inclusa to look at their contracted responsibilities. Additionally, she will look into whether there is anything that the County can think of or do as there have been a lot of recent calls regarding this issue. ___ wondered whether this was an internal policy that Lakeland has or whether this is a broader issue brought on by an outside agency.

___ wondered why individuals are contacting the County when this problem should fall back on either Lakeland or the individual involved in terms of collection of transport fees. ___ commented it might be that the nursing homes does not have a vehicle and the patient does not have money to pay for their ride. Nicole added that with Cambulance, nursing homes are stating that when the

transport arrives at the nursing home and find out there is no payment, the individual ends up being returned to the hospital. Nicole stated this is when the ADRC got involved due to the inappropriateness of an elderly or disabled individual sitting in a car for long periods of time due to being uncertain where they should go. The ADRC is trying to track how often this situation has happened and if it is still occurring.

___ stated he has had many conversations with City Cab and Cabulance and if this occurred in one of his programs, he would want to know more in order to could look into the problem.

___ stated that his program is vendors with Community Care, Inclusa, and Lakeland and have not had problems with getting paid as long as authorizations come through. This includes post-authorization, which have not been a problem to request.

3.) **ADAM BELL CORELLI – PRESENTATION / INFORMATION ON REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION THEMES/ UPDATES**

Adam presented an overview on regional transportation. He stated that the latest Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is important as there is a lot money available for new transportation projects. It is important for anyone who works in the area of transportation to start thinking of transportation in new ways, in order to utilize some of these new grants and programs in our area. The law is known in Wisconsin as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (formerly known as IIA). Adam shared a Power Point showing over 380 programs with many being carried over as previously passed funding streams that have been bumped up or continued on as well as brand new segments. Along with the transportation-related mission, focus has been added on environmental justice, disadvantaged communities, and community outreach so agencies that meet the need can be added. Adam shared the following resources utilized to assist with data for his grant writing:

- Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool: Online mapping tool being utilized to identify disadvantaged locations within Winnebago County.
- MUTCD – Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices: Website containing proven safety measure information on roadway changes, treatments, reflective paint, as well as local road safety plans. These safety plans outline the way local communities can identify some of the safety challenges being experienced as well as statistics on what the safety plan can look like, how it can be beneficial, how transportation services can be conducted, and how that relates to local road safety.
- WISDOT: WISDOT has guidance on all programs contained within the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
- The Carbon Reduction Program: This is a new program within the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of which funding is available for programs that reduce the number of vehicles on the road.
- Congestion Relief Program: Anything stakeholders can come up with to try and move people around. This is a program that they want to look into as a possible funding source and includes a larger population.

- Electric Vehicles: This program is directly related to volunteer drivers or county-provided rides in which electric vehicle options can start to be looked at. Funding is available for having electric vehicle charging stations at different public facilities.
- Safe Streets and Roads for All Program: This program goes back to the idea of a local road safety plan whenever there are viable alternatives for those who are not safe to drive their own vehicle.
- Transportation Access Pilot Program: This pilot program contains datasets and tracking. This program is specifically related to the program Waupaca County Economic Development received to do the Workforce Innovation Grant. Currently looking at how funding of Call Center technology routing and connectivity with drivers will be accessed.

4.) **ROUTE 10 – CHANGES / UPDATES FOR 2023**

Jim Collins reported that starting in 2023, the County will no longer fund Route 10 and that a study was commissioned for potential alternatives. A meeting is needed with the County Executive's office to determine their interest in available options. Beth had come up with some additional money for medical rides for elderly and disabled to expand the rural program; however, this will not help the people who need non-medical rides. In order to pilot some type of microtransit system, the county's support will be needed.

___ stated that 41 percent of rural rides is for jobs. So, an alternative is needed as a means of getting individuals to/from work.

Nicole stated from an ADRC budgeting perspective, there was no ability to continue funding route 10 with the small number of rides being provided daily and many of them not elderly or disabled. The Older Americans Act makes funding the elderly and disabled transports possible, which is why there was an ability to use OAA monies to increase the funding for persons over 60. She would be interested in working with others in an effort to bring new more efficient transportation ideas to the County that could expand the budget or find some funding grants. Nicole stated including someone who uses the route and is a good speaker would be beneficial as a personal touch could make more of an impact.

Holly stated that a contact was found in Waupaca Economic Development through which a person was found in Planning who was involved in distribution and talking about ARPA funding. The Chamber of Commerces then became involved who stated that all of the employers were having trouble finding employees. Nicole has been trying to reach out to bigger corporations other than factories regarding transportation and housing and has found that many individuals are working from home. Nicole stated there is a need to find out what can be done for individuals who are renting or do not have a vehicle. Their next goal is to reach out to faith-based organizations to see if they are aware of who is being impacted and how to talk to them; likely those who are lower to middle income. ___stated that Nicole could reach out to Lakeside Packaging, Lakeside Plastic, and Miron who have employees who use public transit.

Sara ___ stated she sent out a public notice to Lakeside Packaging, FVTC, the Fox Cities Chamber, and Larry Wurdinger on the Fox Cities Transit Commission who gave a history of Route 10, how it has come to have such a low ridership, and could be a true spokesperson advocating why Route 10 services should continue. Additionally, there has been a new class of international students who are exploring the area by bus and are going to Oshkosh next week through Route 10.

She also sent the notice to World Relief as there are many refugees who have found residences in Oshkosh that work in Appleton. World Relief and FVTC are certainly greatly impacted by the discontinuation of Route 10. Sara stated that the way she has talked to the chamber about the loss of Route 10 being an economic detriment to those employers.

___ stated that it is interesting that Route 10 is being discontinued as ridership has been up 37.3 percent over the prior year. The biggest raise in ridership is within the City of Oshkosh with an 81 percent raise. ___ agreed that all numbers across their transportation tracking are down and have not yet recovered from pre-pandemic levels. It remains unknown what levels will look like in the future. Their commissioner has budget concerns about this stating that the frequent stops is an issue which inhibits individuals from getting to work in a timely manner and as consistently as would be desired. ___ stated that several studies had been conducted which have yielded the same results; however, nothing has become of those studies.

Nicole stated the Transportation Committee is be doing a "ride the bus day" on September 26th where Public Health staff from the Oshkosh and Neenah offices will ride the bus. The event includes caveats such as getting groceries or riding from Oshkosh to Neenah for employment. The intention of "ride the bus day" is for those who are in the position of making changes to gain an increased understanding and awareness. A transportation equity day is also being planned for February.

___ added that she and Holly are part of the Wisconsin Mobility Managers were one of the more challenging barriers being encountered is crossing county lines, so Route 10 was extremely helpful.

Nicole asked if anyone has any promotional activities they are aware of that could be of benefit to the committee. ___ responded that she had received an email yesterday that a wheelchair wash is being done by Options for Independent Living.

___ shared that the transit center is coming along and reported that senior ridership and access to jobs ridership is down. Nicole thought that perhaps this could be attributed to Winnebago County now having increased to medium range for COVID activity which can also be reflected in the number of calls they have been receiving.

Nicole asked Sara whether radio promotions are being done regarding looking for drivers. Sara stated that marketing efforts are being amped up because of the high need for drivers.

5.) **MAKING THE RIDE HAPPEN & WINNEBAGO CATCH A RIDE UPDATES**

Holly reported for about the past year they have been working in the New London community with a team of very invested stake holders. After looking at available funding, the County Economic Development and County Planning became involved. The Wisconsin Innovation Grant funding was attained as a three-year grant and has utilized to begin providing employment rides with the plan to expand to additional rides including to healthcare. Holly stated they are trying to develop a microtransit system with the grant by modeling the City of Oshkosh who have a pool of volunteers and existing providers helping with transports. The funding has been secured to create the microtransit program and in the second year to purchase vehicles and pay drivers. Existing services will be looked at first, then will try volunteers, and if no one can do the transport then the microtransit program. Voucher dollars have been applied for in order to pay providers and drivers so that costs can be kept low in order for riders to maintain employment. The grant went to

Waupaca County Economic Development with Catch a Ride Program and Feonix – Mobility Rising being sub-recipients. Feonix will purchase the vehicles and bring in the necessary technology and Catch a Ride will be the hub and do the scheduling. Holly explained that there is no public transit system; rather a few cities have a shared-ride taxi company. The County has 85.21 funding which provides a program for older adults and those with disabilities to receive rides.

6.) **VALLEY TRANSIT UPDATES**

7.) **GO TRANSIT UPDATES**

8.) **ANY OTHER AGENCY UPDATES**

9.) NEXT MEETING Next Meeting Date – 11/8/2022 for public hearing on the 85.21 GRANT

10.) **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM.

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