

Champaign County Rural Transit Advisory Group (RTAG) Meeting Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, January 15, 2014

LOCATION: John Dimit Room (POD 100)

1776 E Washington St, Urbana, IL 61802

Attendee	Representation	Organization
Chris Bruns	*Medical	The Pavilion
Stan James	*County Board	Champaign County Board Liaison
Michelle Ramage	*Education	Rantoul City Schools
#Andy Kulczycki	*People with Low Income(s)	Community Service Center of Northern Champaign County
Elaine Palencia	*People with Disabilities	Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board
Seamus Reilly	*Employment	Parkland College, Institutional Advancement
Mary Sleeth	*Seniors	St. Joseph Resident
Debra Busey	Administrator	Champaign County
Rita Morocoima-Black	Executive Director	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Bill Volk	Managing Director	Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District
Karl Gnadt	Managing Director Designate	Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District
Drew Bargmann	Planner	Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District
Eileen Sierra-Brown	HSTP Coordinator	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Amy Marchant	Public Operator Staff	CRIS Rural MTD & CRIS Healthy Aging
Kathy Cooksey	Public Operator Staff	CRIS Rural MTD & CRIS Healthy Aging
Pam Schroeder	Recording Secretary	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Reuben James	Public	Unknown

#Chair

***Voting**

- I. Call to Order** – Mr. Kulczycki called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.
- II. Roll Call** – Ms. Brown called the roll. A quorum was established.
- III. Audience Participation** – **Mr.** Kulczycki asked audience members to introduce themselves. Mr. Reuben James introduced himself. Then Mr. Bill Volk, Mr. Drew Bargmann, and Mr. Karl Gnadt with Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (CUMTD) additionally made their introductions to the group.

- IV. Approval of Agenda** – The proposed 2014 RTAG Quarterly Meeting schedule was added to the agenda under New Business.
Mr. James motioned to approve the agenda as amended, Ms. Ramage seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.
- V. Approval of Minutes –**
- A. Meeting of October 15, 2013 –**
Mr. James motioned to approve the RTAG Minutes from October 15, 2013 meeting, Ms. Palencia seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.
- VI. New Business –**
- A. Proposed 2014 Quarterly Meeting Schedule** – Ms. Brown distributed the Champaign County RTAG Meeting Schedule for 2014's quarterly meetings. RTAG members had filled out a survey confirming their availability to attend the proposed meeting schedule, and beyond a few conflicts, the majority agreed with the proposed schedule of meetings.
Ms. Bruns made a motion to approve the proposed 2014 Meeting Schedule, Ms. Palencia seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.
- B. Champaign County 1st and 2nd Quarter FY14 Service Reports** – Ms. Brown directed the RTAG to review the draft FY14 1st Quarter and 2nd Quarter service reports for Champaign County's rural transportation services. Several items on the report were highlighted as attached; including one day when operations were shut down due to severe snow weather conditions. Additionally, Ms. Brown pointed out that denied trip figures on the 2nd Quarter's report were in red text due to conflicting reporting between CRIS' definition for denials and the documentation of those denials not adding up to the figures provided. Corrections to the 2nd Quarterly report will be forthcoming.

Ms. Brown then referenced the last page in the quarterly reports titled "Trip Trend Chart 1-15-2014". The first two quarters in 2011 were not included in the chart because the program was not yet in full operation, and therefore would not be good statistical information for a true comparison. However, this chart is a good guide to review and analyze the service being provided to the community on a daily basis.

Ms. Marchant stated there have been challenges, which have negatively impacted the trips in recent months. Ms. Marchant stated it has been difficult to maintain staff at the current pay rate and many times the prospective hires do not pass the drug test. The decision to increase the hourly rate is on hold until a future provider and their job description are being established.

Mr. James made a motion to accept the FY14 1st and 2nd Quarter Service Reports, Ms. Bruns seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.
- C. FY 14 1st and 2nd Quarter Fiscal Reports** – Ms. Marchant reported approximately \$66,000 in 5311 was billed in the 1st Quarter for FY14. In the 2nd Quarter of FY14 CRIS submitted a payment advance request to IDOT-DPIT for \$43,000. The 2nd Quarter billing is not due until

January 30th, 2014 and should be submitted on time to DPIT. Ms. Brown stated FY14 federal reimbursement checks were received earlier today. However, the reimbursement for the state funding drawdown along with the advance requested had not been received at this time. Ms. Brown asked Ms. Cooksey what percentage of the overall federal and state funding for Champaign County FY14 grant is remaining after the 2nd Quarter was closed out. Ms. Cooksey indicated that by the end of the second quarter's drawdown, all federal 5311 funding would be expended, as typical for these grants; and that approximately 40% of the state funding remained at the end of the 2nd quarter. Ms. Cooksey noted that RTAG should keep in mind that the state funding is used to pull down the federal funding and additional local match is needed to pull down the full amount of state funding available.

D. Review and Approval of Champaign County Rural Mobility Plan - Rita Black introduced Tina-Marie Ansong as the Champaign County Program Compliance Oversight Monitor (PCOM). Ms. Black then informed RTAG members that Ms. Ansong will be replacing Ms. Brown as the point of contact for RTAG matters.

Ms. Ansong revised and completed the draft *Rural Mobility Plan for Champaign County* and presented the findings to attendees. Ms. Ansong presented the following information from the Rural Mobility Plan:

- The literature review included documents such as Transportation Corporative Research Program (TCRP) *Report 161* that provides specific instructions for estimating need, demand and mobility gap for rural public transportation. The text *Organizing Transit in Small Urban and Rural Communities* and a number of other texts were reviewed for the plan. Once literature review was completed, the existing socioeconomic data and available transportation services in rural Champaign County were added to the plan.
- The plan also identified unique transportation needs of transit dependent populations, i.e. low income persons, persons with disabilities, persons living in zero vehicle households, as well as older adults and youth.
- In the plan, socioeconomic data collected was utilized to estimate rural transportation need, demand and current mobility gap in services. These estimates were defined as: Need equals the total number of persons in transit dependent groups; Demand equals the number of one-way trips transit dependent persons will require; and Mobility Gap equals the difference in the number of trips made between persons with access to a vehicle and those with no access to a vehicle.
- The final step in developing the plan was to goals, objectives, and performance measures based on the results of the analysis and then design strategies to implement the desired outcomes detailed in the goals and objectives.
- Ms. Ansong continued to present sections of the mobility plan, including maps of: the Study Area, which included all rural areas of Champaign County outside of

CUMTD district's boundaries; and a distribution map of high, medium and low transit dependent areas throughout rural Champaign County. She explained that high, medium and low was established based on the share of transit dependent groups for each rural block group.

- CRIS current service hours are Monday to Friday, 6am to 6pm except all federal holidays. Average Trips per day for FY13 was 69. Medical trips are the major trip type. CRIS has over 1,100 registered riders and 105 of those riders are persons with disabilities and 25% older adults. Most trips originate in northern Champaign County in the Rantoul area while most destinations are in the urbanized area.
- For analysis purposes the county was divided into 4 Demand Response Zones (DRZs). Demographic characteristics for each demand response zone were presented along with each zones estimated need, demand and mobility gap.
- Public comments and perceptions of Champaign County's rural service include the fact that it is perceived to be a Paratransit service, service hours need to be expanded and requested travel times are often booked.
- Common issues with CRIS service include: service hours do not facilitate employment commute, regular commute costs are unaffordable for low income persons, limited capacity and structure of operations make it difficult to meet demand, public is unaware of the full scope of CRIS' service and 48 hour advance schedule requests limit rider options and flexibility.
- Goals, objectives and strategies were presented and RTAG members were informed that these goals and objectives are not final and are open for discussion. Goals and objectives pertained to improving ridership, efficiency and ability to facilitate employment and education trips.

Mr. James commented that it seems the only way to achieve the goals and objectives presented is to form an MTD with property taxes, he was doubtful that CRIS could achieve providing public transportation for employment purposes. He thinks the goals are asking too much for what CRIS was mandated to deliver. He doubts persons will utilize CRIS for employment commute, because of the convenience of cars. Mr. James does not think a fixed route service would be appropriate for rural Champaign County, because the demand is not great enough.

Ms. Marchant stated that CRIS was not able to utilize its JARC funding, because the vehicles were not delivered, and if the vehicles had been delivered then the route would be operating; then CRIS would have achieved many of the goals and objectives presented. Ms. Black did agree that Champaign County has been waiting for 9 vehicles for a long time.

Mr. James proposed that the approval of the Rural Mobility Plan should be postponed until the next RTAG meeting when the group has adequate time to review the document. Ms. Black informed members that if they have questions or comments, those should be forwarded to Ms. Ansong for incorporation into the document.

VII. Old Business

A. Future of Champaign County Rural Transit System Operations -Ms. Black informed the RTAG that in November she received an email from Ms. Marchant stating that due to changes in CRIS' board members, they have now decided to discontinue the relationship with Champaign County. After consulting with Ms. Marchant and reviewing previous research on providers Ms. Black and Ms. Busey had concluded that CUMTD would be the ideal operator to take over rural transit services in Champaign County. Ms. Marchant stated that CRIS will continue to provide the service until CUMTD is ready to operate. Mr. Gnadt stated that CUMTD is willing to explore the possibility of being the rural transit operator, although the issue has not yet been presented to the CUMTD Board for approval.

Mr. James made a motion to have the RTAG proceed with negotiations with CUMTD to operate rural transportation services in Champaign County; the motion was seconded by Mr. Reilly. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Busey informed the group that this issue will be presented to the Champaign County Board in February.

Mr. James thanked Ms. Marchant and CRIS for doing an excellent job with providing the rural transportation service and meeting the transportation needs of the people in the rural parts of the county. Mr. Reilly also stated that he appreciated the thoughtful and diligent work done to present data and analysis in a meaningful way for the committee members to understand.

VIII. Announcements – Ms. Black announced that Ms. Ansong will be replacing Ms. Brown as the point of contact for RTAG issues and the liaison between the CRIS, the County and CUMTD.

IX. Audience Participation – None.

X. Adjournment – The meeting adjourn at 5:13 p.m.