

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
 RURAL TRANSIT ADVISORY GROUP (RTAG)
MEETING MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday, February 17th, 2016

LOCATION: John Dimit Conference Room

Attendee	Representation	Organization
Seamus Reilly	#*Employment	Parkland College, Institutional Advancement
Stanley Harper	*County Board	Champaign County Board Liaison
Mary Sleeth	*Seniors	St. Joseph Resident
Nathan Montgomery	*Person with Low Income	Salt & Light Ministry
Drew Bargmann	Transit Manager	CUMTD
Rita Morocoima-Black	County (Planning & Community Dev.)	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Zoe Keller	Champaign County PCOM	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Debbie Peterik	Recording Secretary	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission

#Chair **Voting*

- I. **Call to Order** – Mr. Reilly called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.
- II. **Roll Call** – The roll was taken by written record and a quorum was declared present.
- III. **Audience Participation** – None.
- IV. **Approval of Agenda** – Mr. Harper motioned to approve the agenda, Mr. Montgomery seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

V. **Approval of Minutes –**

A. *Meeting of October 21st, 2015 –*

Mr. Harper motioned to approve the RTAG Minutes from the October 21st, 2015 meeting, Mr. Montgomery seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

VI. **Old Business –**

A. Update on Rantoul Fixed-Route System Discussion –

Ms. Morocoima-Black indicated that at the last meeting in November with the Village of Rantoul, it was decided that a survey would be sent to all of the employees at the main companies in the Village of Rantoul. The purpose of the survey was to determine how many people would be willing to use the C-CARTS service and where their destinations were located. The results of the surveys would determine where the bus stops should be located. Results are pending on the survey at this time.

Mr. Bargmann was able to further update the committee on the survey. Rebecca Motley from the economic development department at the Village of Rantoul dropped off a package of 42 surveys from the Rantoul Multi-Cultural Center. Ms. Motley is currently involved in “Rantoul Tomorrow,” a planning process for the future of the Village of Rantoul. Mr. Bargmann is currently on one of the smaller committees that focus on transportation. The group’s goal is to determine what other transportation needs there are for the residents in the community in addition to transportation to and from their employer. The committee has expressed an interest in supporting C-CARTS. The Rantoul Tomorrow committee is also encouraging the industrial partners to get involved.

Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that the Village Manager, Jeff Fiegenschuh, had contacted her and indicated he has allocated funding in the budget to pay for transportation services in Rantoul. However, in order to move forward, the companies would need to compliment the village allocation.

Mr. Montgomery asked if there was a timeline on the surveys. Mr. Bargmann indicated that the surveys were sent out late due to the holidays. Mr. Reilly asked how many surveys were sent out. Ms. Morocoima-Black indicated that the surveys were sent out to all of the employees at the top employers in Rantoul.

Mr. Harper asked if there was an idea of how many people travel from Champaign-Urbana to the industrial park or to Rantoul. Mr. Bargmann indicated that most of the people that travel from Rantoul to Champaign-Urbana are manufacturing employees, but there are other people that commute to Champaign-Urbana as well.

Ms. Morocoima-Black stated that in order for C-CARTS to draw down more federal funding, a system providing the local match would need to be in place. Once a service is started in the Village of Rantoul, the vision is that the Village of Mahomet, and possibly St. Joseph, will be interested in the service. Mahomet has already inquired about transportation from Mahomet to Champaign-Urbana.

Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that C-CARTS has the capacity and the vehicles to provide service. The additional funding is needed to operate the vehicles.

Ms. Keller commented that if a service contract is put in place, it is possible that service hours could be extended for the village. The issue with extending the service hours would be the need to have a dispatcher during the extended hours to hand out keys to the drivers.

Mr. Reilly commented that C-CARTS vehicles have been very prominent on the road. Mr. Montgomery asked about the awareness from a marketing perspective. Ms. Keller commented that since C-CARTS is at capacity, service is currently not being advertised or marketed.

VII. New Business

A. C-CARTS FY16 2nd Quarter (Oct-Dec) Service & Fiscal Reports –

The following comments were made with regard to the service reports:

- The total trips are down from the first quarter this year which is typical due to the winter conditions.
- Total trips are down from the same quarter last year by about 400. Second quarter of last year was a good quarter for C-CARTS.
- For the entire year of FY 2016 the trips per hour are down. This change is due to the change that C-CARTS drivers are now accounting for their time when there are no passengers in the vehicle. Mr. Bargmann commented that from a ridership prospective (MTD and the national trend), gas prices have affected ridership. Mr. Montgomery commented that the winter was mild. Even looking at the employment numbers, there is a significant drop in the numbers. Mr. Bargmann commented that there were more medical trips; it is not a true drop in the employment category, it could mean that another category drew more riders.
- Ms. Keller presented the breakdown of denials. The top reason for denying a person a ride is that the time requested is not available (someone is calling for a ride during peak times and the buses are at capacity, i.e. 7:00 a.m., 8:00 a.m. or 9:00 a.m. as well as the ride back at 3:00 p.m. or 4:00 p.m.) The non-peak hours are from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. During those hours the likelihood would be greater that a ride could be provided. Mr. Bargmann commented that a denial log is maintained by MTD as required by IDOT to track the reason for not being able to provide service to someone.
- Total revenue is consistent. There was a minor drop of \$300 in total revenue. Total eligible expenses are about \$15,000. Mr. Montgomery asked what the \$15,000 expense covers. Mr. Bargmann indicated that the one-time expense was used for getting seven new vehicles ready for service; being outfitted with radios, flares, stripping, etc.
- Ms. Keller commented that the remaining grant funds must be spent in this fiscal year since a new grant agreement is received every fiscal year. Mr. Montgomery commented that looking at the quarters the funds won't be spent. Ms. Keller indicated that although C-CARTS has not spent the money, generally more funds are being received than needed.

The federal funds are the same amount each year. Since C-CARTS acquired new vehicles, the system is still considered in the start-up phase. The funds will be used and C-CARTS will continue to work on service contracts to secure the funds. There is about 65% of the grant funds left for the rest of FY 2016. Mr. Reilly asked what the trend was for the percentage of grant funds spent over the course of the year; over 5 years. Ms. Keller commented that she will research and get back to the committee. Mr. Reilly also asked

about the cash match in addition to the revenues. Mr. Bargmann indicated that cash match has to come through local contracts. Once C-CARTS has begun working with the Village of Rantoul, the cash match would be accessible to C-CARTS, but right now the federal portion is used.

- Mr. Reilly discussed the WIOA program, transportation funds, and other funds that are connected to educational expenses. Mr. Reilly used an example of five students from the Rantoul area that are travelling to Parkland College and the University of Illinois to take classes. They would have transportation funds available to their WIOA. How do we leverage so that they are able to use those funds? The trend is that more WIOA funds are going toward education for employment. This program connects people who need the services for education to provide real life skills and employment. The results show the program has been very successful in getting students funded through the WIOA Program, and those students are getting into high paying jobs. The program includes a complete package for the student including counseling, transportation, equipment costs, tuition and fees, and childcare. Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that the possibility of a local contract with Parkland College would draw down the federal funding.

B. Approval of Calendar Year 2016 RTAG Meeting Schedule -

Due to a conflict the new representative has with her monthly board meeting, Ms. Keller is requesting that the RTAG meetings be moved to the second Wednesday of the month.

Mr. Montgomery motioned to approve the second Wednesday schedule as presented, Mr. Harper seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

C. Vice-Chair Selection –

Ms. Morocoima-Black recommended that the committee appoint a Vice-Chair in the event that Mr. Reilly is unable to attend an RTAG meeting.

Mr. Harper nominated Mr. Montgomery as Vice-Chair. Ms. Sleeth seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

D. RTAG Vacancy – Advisory for Medical –

Ms. Keller advised that there is still one vacancy open on the RTAG Advisory Group which is a representative from the medical field. Carle has been unresponsive to date. Ms. Morocoima-Black indicated that she has reached out to Mike Billimack with no response. Mr. Montgomery commented that he will contact his board chair who was the former chairman of the board at Carle. Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that Carle would be a good candidate because they are the largest health agency in the community. The other approach would be to work with Francis Nelson. Mr. Reilly asked about contacting Presence Hospital, but Ms. Keller commented that there has been no response from Presence Hospital either. Mr. Reilly will contact Mr. Billimack.

E. Update of the Urbanized Area and Region 8 HSTP Plans –

Ms. Keller commented that she is working on updating both the Urbanized Area and the Region 8 HSTP plans. The urbanized area covers Champaign-Urbana, Savoy, Tolono and Bondville. The Region 8 (rural areas) covers the eleven surrounding counties. The urbanized area plan is scheduled to be adopted by the CUUATS Technical and Policy committees in June. The Region 8

draft will be presented at the August RTAG meeting for the committee to review and provide feedback.

Mr. Harper inquired about the purpose of the plan. Ms. Morocoima-Black explained that in addition to Ms. Keller overseeing the service for C-CARTS, she is also the HSTP Coordinator. The HSTP Coordinator provides support for all transportation and human services agencies that provide transportation in Champaign County as well as the eleven counties surrounding Champaign County.

As part of providing the support to the counties, a plan must be created that looks at existing conditions, what kind of transportation services are available, what kind of population is being served, and the socio-economic distribution of the population geographically. Surveys are distributed to the riders and providers to get input regarding different aspects of the service. The data is analyzed to determine what transportation issues there are in the community as well as what kind of opportunities there are to provide service. The surveys have shown that there are agencies that have the capacity to assist other agencies, thereby overcoming the gaps in service to serve more people. With the information collected, an analysis is prepared, objectives and goals are defined, and a plan is created.

F. Discussion of Proposed C-CARTS Employee Early Retirement Plan

Ms. Keller commented that Mr. Bargmann was working on an employee handbook for the C-CARTS employees. Mr. Bargmann stated that MTD currently has an early retirement program for full-time vehicle operators.

There are criteria that must be met:

- The employee must be invested in the IMRF (been with the district for at least 10 years),
- The employee must retire between the ages of 60-64. Once 65, the employee is no longer eligible for this program.
- The employee must be at the top rate of the wage scale. C-CARTS does not currently have a wage scale. Any information used is based on MTD's top wage. The benefit the program brings to the district is that an employee at a top wage rate would be allowed to retire a few years earlier than they might originally plan. There is a budgetary benefit in that it allows the district to bring in a new employee at a start rate. There is also a financial incentive for the employees to retire earlier. The benefit is better for the employee if they retire at age 60 as it diminishes as they retire later. The amount that they would receive is also dependent on their top wage. In recent years IMRF has changed some of their rules that when someone retires early, the employer is responsible for the loss contributions to the retirement fund. The benefit has shrunk in years past, but it still is better than break even.
- The employee would have to notify C-CARTS that they are going to retire at least two years in advance for planning purposes.

Mr. Bargmann is presenting this information to the RTAG Advisory group to determine if this should be offered to the C-CARTS employees. Mr. Bargmann commented that since the C-CARTS employees just completed their first year with the district, this would not affect C-CARTS for another 9 years.

It was decided by the group to postpone voting until a future date when there is more information.

Mr. Montgomery motioned to table the discussion until there is more information, Mr. Harper seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Audience Participation – None

IX. Announcements –

Ms. Keller discussed the Transit Planning for All Grant application due March 18th. The grant is centered on active participation from older adults and persons with disabilities that are using the transportation service. A requirement of the grant is to have an inclusive coordinating transportation partnership which RTAG would qualify. Ms. Keller has asked that the group let her know if there are any riders that are currently being served that might be interested in being an active participant.

The amount of the grant is \$86,000 ceiling and C-CARTS must create a budget for the project that is planned. The funding must be used for planning purposes, not operation expenses. The seniors and disabled people that would be participating would partner with RTAG to discuss the problems that exist with the service. A plan would be developed to address those problems. Ms. Keller indicated that although the funds cannot be used for the operational side of the service, the planning process would set a foundation for when the operational funding is available.

Mr. Reilly asked if there were any current known issues. The following issues were discussed:

- Lack of knowledge of the services that are available. This would be one issue that RTAG would hesitate to work on due to lack of operational funding.
- Travel training. In the past, travel training was set up and there was very little participation.
- In order for the C-CARTS transportation system to be more efficient in coordinating rides, an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) would have to be installed on the buses. An ITS system for one bus is approximately \$12,000. More funding would be needed.

Ms. Keller indicated that another stipulation of the grant funding would be that C-CARTS would have to be committed to keeping up with the process even after the grant funding is used. This is where the operational funding is needed.

Ms. Morocoima-Black informed the committee that Cameron Moore will be leaving Regional Planning Commission. The RPC Commission board will meeting on February 19th to discuss the next steps.

X. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.