



## Champaign County Rural Transit Advisory Group (RTAG)

**Date:** Wednesday, February 14, 2018  
**Time:** 3:00 p.m.  
**Place:** John Dimit Conference Room  
 Brookens Administrative Center  
 1776 E. Washington St., Urbana

**Members Present:** Nathan Montgomery, Pius Weibel, Mary Sleeth, Nancy Greenwalt  
**Members Absent:** Caitlin Hitzeman, Regina Crider, Seamus Reilly  
**Staff Present:** Kristen Gisondi, Rita Morocoima-Black, Debbie Peterik  
**Others Present:** Drew Bargmann

### MEETING MINUTES

Subject to Review and Approval

- I. Call to Order – Mr. Montgomery called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.
- II. Roll Call – The roll was taken by Ms. Gisondi and a quorum was declared present.
- III. Audience Participation - None
- IV. Approval of Agenda – **Ms. Greenwalt motioned to approve the agenda. Mr. Weibel seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**
- V. Approval of Minutes – **Mr. Weibel motioned to approve the RTAG minutes from the November 17, 2017 meeting. Ms. Greenwalt seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**
- VI. New Business
  - A. Approval of C-CARTS FY18 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter (October – December) Service & Fiscal Reports  
 Ms. Gisondi made the following comments regarding the reports:
    - There was an increase in total number of trips. The total number includes the deviated-fixed and demand-response routes in the Village of Rantoul.
    - The daily average has increased.
    - The main trip types continue to be medical and employment.
    - There was an increase in percent of lift use.
    - The number of trip denials for the quarter was 252. There were 249 trips that were denied because the time requested was not available and 3 trips that were denied because the rider had a same day or next day request.
    - Miles and hours are on track. There was a slight increase in trips per mile and trips per hour.

Mr. Weibel inquired why the trip denial number was larger in FY17 Second Quarter and FY18 Second Quarter, than in FY18 First Quarter. Mr. Bargmann commented that the fiscal year runs July through June. Part of the discrepancy in numbers is due to school being out of session. Those riders that are employed at school or attending classes, are not calling in and scheduling rides. In addition, there are those people that call in to schedule an entire month of trips for times that are not available. Those calls count as a denial for each date that is being requested, which, in many cases, is a round-trip ride.

Ms. Sleeth asked if the senior trips were down due to the weather. Mr. Bargmann commented that when the weather gets cold, there are more cancellations of trips that were previously scheduled.

Ms. Gisondi continued with presenting the Fiscal report:

- After the FY18 Second Quarter, 65% of the grant funds are available.
- Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that the agreement between IDOT and Champaign County was just executed by IDOT last week. The payment of \$250,000 for first six months has not been received.

**Mr. Weibel motioned to approve the C-CARTS FY18 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter (October – December) Service & Fiscal Reports. Ms. Sleeth seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

B. Update on Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Software Procurement

One of the major items of the Capital Grant proposal is the purchase of the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) software program. Currently, all of the trips are scheduled in dispatch using a handwritten process and excel spreadsheets. There is a certain amount of inefficiency using these methods. Following are some highlights of the software program:

- The ITS software would provide a computer-based scheduling system. The central computer in dispatch would have the ability to connect to all of the vehicles. Instead of receiving information over the radio, the vehicles would have a tablet on board that would update the operator with any changes throughout the day, such as a cancellation or a trip is added to the manifest.
- With the new system, more reports will be available to run.
- Vehicles can be tracked.
- The ITS software package includes an interactive voice response system. As an example, the evening before the consumer has a ride scheduled with C-CARTS, they will receive an automated reminder call of the upcoming trip, and also, the rider would have the option to cancel their trip at that time. The system will also be able to set perimeters by sending a second call to the consumer letting them know that the bus driver will arrive shortly. This system will help to reduce the number of no-shows and cancellations.
- The web portal part of the system will not be activated immediately, but in the future, reservations could be taken on-line.
- As part of the overall package, all of the service and maintenance fees are rolled into the first three-year period. The package includes the software, the service and the training.

The status of the ITS installation is that C-CARTS is waiting for the Budget Amendment to be approved by IDOT and returned to C-CARTS. The vendor will then be contacted via a letter of request that C-CARTS is ready to move forward with the installation. Mr. Montgomery inquired if the ITS system will be installed in all of the vehicles. Mr. Bargmann confirmed that the system would be installed in all C-CARTS vehicles.

Ms. Greenwalt inquired about the punch card, and if there was an electronic solution to the punch card process in the future. Mr. Bargmann commented that the expensive part of a solution is that there is a fare box on the vehicle for metering purposes. Mr. Weibel inquired if MTD would have the punch card system.

Mr. Bargmann commented that he did not believe MTD would have that feature on their buses as 90% of MTD riders use a prepaid pass card. Minimal cash is handled. C-CARTS has never offered any type of pass card. As cost is prohibitive at this point, C-CARTS will probably not go to a pass card in the near future.

Mr. Montgomery inquired if cancellations are currently tracked. Mr. Bargmann indicated that cancellations are not regularly tracked. There are policies in place if a rider is a constant cancel or no-show so that a space is available for another rider.

- C. Update on Amendment to State Capital Grant (Grant No. CAP-14-1060-ILL, Contract No. 4490)
- Ms. Gisondi discussed the breakdown of the Budget Amendment. The total amount to be received is \$150,605.
  - Mr. Weibel asked what the capital grant funds would be used for. Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that in addition to purchasing Intelligent Transportation System equipment and software, the funds will be used to purchase benches for the bus stops in the Village of Rantoul. Back in November when staff talked to the Advisory Group, the C-CARTS staff had not included the purchase of the benches as part of the amendment to the project because they wanted to retain some funding for the future. The budget amendment was sent to IDOT, and C-CARTS staff was told that if all of the allocated funds were not used, they would lose the funding. With that in mind, C-CARTS decided to purchase benches. Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that she has discussed the possibility of the village paying for the installation of the benches with the Village Administrator since the capital grant funds are only to be used for purchasing equipment.
- D. Update on Rantoul Service & Outreach Efforts  
Ms. Gisondi provided the following comments:  
As of January, there have been a total of 1,056 trips for the Eagle Express and Rantoul Connector service. The following tasks are planned for the future of the Rantoul Service:
1. Complete surveys to improve peak times, destinations and trip purpose data.
  2. Provide punch cards for riders instead of requiring cash.
  3. Create a video that will teach people how to read a schedule and use the service.
  4. Make some route changes to improve efficiency of the service.

Mr. Bargmann commented that the current contract for the deviated-fixed and demand-response services in Village of Rantoul is a two-year contract that runs through October, 2018. The staff has begun preliminary talks with Village of Rantoul representatives on what improvements can be made to improve the service. Currently, three vehicles are operating within the village at peak times. C-CARTS is proposing to break the village into different sectors. This would allow for continuing the use of the three vehicles. There would be small adjustments to the contract amount.

Currently, riders board the bus in the southern part of the village and ride the entire route to their destination west. By changing the route, C-CARTS could provide a more direct route so that the rider's time on the bus would reduce. The downside to the proposal is that the rider would probably need to make a transfer. The village is interested in completing surveys of their own to determine what type of service is



needed in the community. The proposed route would allow for service to the Carle facility in Rantoul that doesn't exist currently, and also, extend service further to the North where the lower income housing is not currently being served.

Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that the C-CARTS staff has already met with representatives from the Village of Rantoul to discuss the proposed route change. Based on feedback received, the village concurs that this will be a good plan. As a part of implementing the new route, the staff is proposing to complete surveys to find out which locations serve the highest number of riders, and their destinations, in order to have a better idea of when and where the riders would be transferring. The route change will most likely occur this summer in May or June. A public hearing will be held to get feedback from the public.

E. Approval of changes to RTAG bylaws

The change to the RTAG bylaws allows the members of RTAG to choose an alternate member to attend the meetings. The alternate that attends the meeting will be allowed to vote, and will count as part of the quorum. It is required by law to amend the bylaws when a change occurs.

**Ms. Greenwalt motioned to approve the changes to the RTAG bylaws. Ms. Sleeth seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

F. Discussion and approval of salary increases for C-CARTS operators

Mr. Bargmann commented that the goal for C-CARTS is to create a wage scale for C-CARTS dispatchers and operators. Up until the last year or two, C-CARTS has not had any service contracts in place that allowed for additional operating funds to achieve this goal. Mr. Bargmann discussed the process of the proposed C-CARTS operator and dispatcher salary increases:

The process for the salary increase is that a top wage is set and employees work backwards from a percentage base. As an example, if an MTD employee starts employment at 47% of whatever the top wage rate is, based on number of hours that the operator works and his/her availability within a given year, they could control their increase up to 4% movement on that scale. The top wage rate also is adjusted on a year-to-year basis depending on the cost-of-living adjustment that is approved by the CU-MTD Board. If an employee is working enough hours to move 4% up the scale, they will get the 4% plus the cost-of-living adjustment. C-CARTS is currently not able to offer any full-time operator positions. Since an employee is not allowed to work as many hours as they want to move up the scale, C-CARTS is proposing this wage scale that would allow the employee to obtain a reasonable increase each year. For the first round, C-CARTS is proposing a top wage of \$16.00 an hour for the operators and \$18.00 an hour for dispatchers. A new operator would come in at 72% of the scale. The current starting wage is at \$11.00 an hour so this proposed wage scale could help with recruitment of new employees in the future. It would take seven years to get to the top wage consistent with CU-MTDs wage scale. The top rate is also changing on a year-to-year basis based on what cost-of-living adjustment is approved. Next year's cost-of-living adjustment is supposed to be 2.5%.



Mr. Bargmann commented that the staff compared a number of other rural agencies in the area to assist in determining what the top wage would be for C-CARTS employees to keep C-CARTS competitive with other rural agencies in this region.

Mr. Bargmann provided a forecast on how the proposed salary increase will impact the budget over a three-year period:

C-CARTS has a Public Transit Account (PTA) that includes funds that are set aside. Most of the money in the account has come from the Rantoul contract. The service contract revenue is eligible, as a local match source, to match the state funding. This allows C-CARTS to draw down some of the funds that have always been left on the table. The first year, the potential impact to the PTA is about \$1,500. As a point of reference, at the end of this fiscal year, there will be \$116,000 in the PTA. After that, there are still a number of months left in the current Rantoul contract which will account for another \$45,000.

There will be a \$14,500 impact from the funds in the second year. Some assumptions made when creating the salary increase rate represents the worst case scenario - the same group of employees are moving up the scale, you never have someone leave and you are replacing someone else.

After the second year, it does plateau, and the third year impact is \$14,600. Over the three-year period, C-CARTS will be expending an estimate of \$48,000 under the PTA, and by the time the Rantoul contract runs out in October, 2018, it is estimated that approximately \$160,000 will be in the PTA. This is assuming that Rantoul is not interested in a service contract and there are no other service contracts. The current employees will benefit because, up until now, they have been only receiving a small cost-of-living adjustment. This will give the current employees mobility, and it will help with retention and recruiting of new employees. Ms. Greenwalt asked if C-CARTS competes with Head Start bus drivers. Mr. Bargmann commented that Head Start bus drivers are required to have a CDL because they are driving a larger vehicle. If you have a CDL license, an employee receives more salary. Mr. Bargmann gave an example Piattran adds an extra dollar an hour for a driver that holds a CDL license.

Mr. Bargmann concluded that C-CARTS has been working on the proposed scale for the last two or three years, and this has been the first time that C-CARTS has had funding available that would allow them to access the funds and make improvements.

Ms. Sleeth inquired if Ms. Morocoima-Black was of the opinion that the Village of Rantoul would renew the service contract. Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that it is the hope that the service contract will be renewed by the Village of Rantoul as it would be difficult for a community to remove a service once the service is in place, and an investment has been made in the service. Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that the previous Village Administrator was expecting a higher ridership. However, if you look at the trend, ridership has been increasing. It takes a long time for a community that has never had a public transportation to get used to public transportation. Mr. Bargmann commented early indications are that the village is working towards continuing the contract, and will determine what the new focus of the service will be. One of things that C-CARTS will be doing is to establish some service metrics so that the



expectations of the village are being met. Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that the proposed salary increase is fair for the drivers, and the information will be used for preparing the next fiscal year budget.

**Ms. Sleeth motioned to approve the salary increases for C-CARTS operators and dispatchers. Ms. Greenwalt seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.**

I. Announcements

None

II. Adjournment

Mr. Montgomery adjourned the meeting at 3:40 p.m.

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