

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY  
 RURAL TRANSIT ADVISORY GROUP (RTAG)  
MEETING MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday, November 9, 2016

LOCATION: John Dimit Conference Room

Attendee	Representation	Organization
Stanley Harper	*County Board	Champaign County Board Liaison
Seamus Reilly	#*Employment	Parkland College, Institutional Advancement
Caitlin Kost	*Person with Disabilities	Champaign Urbana Special Recreation
Mary Sleeth	*Seniors	St. Joseph Resident
Drew Bargmann	Transit Manager	CU-MTD
Rita Morocoima-Black	County (Planning & Community Development)	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 3:12 p.m.
- II. **Roll Call** - The roll was taken by Ms. Keller and a quorum was declared present.
- III. **Audience Participation** - None.
- IV. **Approval of Agenda** – Mr. Harper motioned to approve the agenda, Ms. Sleeth seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

## V. Approval of Minutes -

- A. Meeting of August 10, 2016 – Ms. Sleeth motioned to approve the RTAG Minutes from the August 10, 2016 meeting, Ms. Kost seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

## VI. New Business -

### A. C-CARTS FY17 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter (July-September) Service & Fiscal Reports -

Ms. Keller made the following comments regarding the service reports:

- Trip denials have increased due to the loss of bus operators during the month of August.
- In addition to the loss of the bus operators, industrial facilities in Village of Rantoul were starting other shifts causing a hiring boom.
- Mr. Reilly asked for the percent of capacity, i.e. the same number of hours and almost the same number of miles. Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that the service is adding riders without adding miles.
- Ms. Keller noted that C-CARTS is currently running six peak vehicles instead of the eight vehicles.
- There were 114 new riders in the first quarter.
- Ms. Keller commented that the fixed route in the Village of Rantoul does not account for the individual ridership due to the fact that people that are being picked up in front of their house which does not require registering with C-CARTS. Unless the riders are using the demand response, the riders will not necessarily be counted. Mr. Reilly inquired if tokens could be sold in order to count the riders. Mr. Bargmann commented that the service will still get a bulk count of passengers by using click counters, but the bulk counting will not be able to separate out trip type, where the rider is headed, the addresses or details, etc. Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that the token system will not be started until after a period of time, once it has been determined how the new system is working.
- Ms. Keller commented that C-CARTS will continue to keep track of new riders and also trip types for the demand response service. It was discussed that surveys should be done once more ridership is achieved within the Village of Rantoul to determine what trip purposes and frequency riders are using C-CARTS.
- Project income numbers per quarter are similar.
- There is currently no service contract revenue. The only contract for the current quarter was the Nursing Home. The new contract with the Village of Rantoul will be on the next quarter's report.
- The most frequent denial reason was that time requested was not available. Other denial reasons included same day or next day request, weekend trips and requests that were outside the service area.
- Overall revenues are down slightly from last quarter. Ms. Keller commented that revenues don't always align with number of rides provided; it depends on the breakdown of the actual ridership and the fares that are received. Nineteen

percent of the total grant funding for the year has been expended which is on track with what was expended last year.

#### **B. State Funding Delays –**

- Ms. Keller commented that the state funds come out of the Illinois Downstate Public Transportation Fund. The numbers Ms. Keller provided were from mid-October when the balance was \$47,000.
- The state of Illinois' current backlog payments as of October totaled \$140 million which includes \$17 million that is owed to CU-MTD.
- Ms. Keller explained the current issue with the balance. The comptroller's office hasn't been depositing funds into the Illinois Downstate Public Transportation Fund account since February. The funds are meant to be transferred every month into the account. Instead, the comptroller's office is making court ordered payments first. If there are any funds left over, the funds are transferred into this account for payments to be made to downstate transit agencies.
- Mr. Harper inquired how the state is holding federal money. Mr. Bargmann indicated that the funds pass through the state government.
- Ms. Keller indicated that RTAG has just received their federal grant which will be presented to the Champaign County board for approval November 17<sup>th</sup>. Once that is accomplished, RTAG will send IDOT a request for federal payment. IDOT does not anticipate any delays in the process.
- Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that CU-MTD guaranteed that they will provide funding for C-CARTS until June 30, 2017. Ms. Morocoima-Black also commented that C-CARTS is in a good position by working with CU-MTD. There are several transit agencies in downstate Illinois that are closing their agencies, including Bloomington.

#### **C. Operator Shortage –**

- Mr. Bargmann commented that CU-MTD is in the process of getting new operators on board.
- The current starting wage for C-CARTS is \$11.00 per hour. CU-MTD is having an issue with retaining individuals. People are hired and trained, which has some expense, and then they leave because they have received a better employment opportunity.

#### **D. Exploration of Operator Wage Increases –**

- It was suggested that the starting wage be reviewed to determine if a higher wage would attract new hires and retain them. However, with the state budget situation still uncertain, it was decided that it would not be a good idea to increase expenses while still waiting for funds.
- Mr. Reilly asked for a description of the current employment requirements. Mr. Bargmann commented that a bus operator must have a relatively clean driving

history and hold a Class D license. In addition, the bus operator goes through a two week training program.

#### **E. RTAG Annual Report for the County Board -**

Ms. Keller discussed the following points regarding the annual report that will be presented to the Champaign County Board at the December meeting:

- There were 418 new riders this year. Fourth quarter was higher due to a hiring event in Rantoul.
- There were 887 trip denials in total.
- Since the new Village of Rantoul fixed route service did not begin until November 7, information on the service will be included in the new fiscal year annual report.
- Average trips for the fiscal year were 83 which decreased slightly from 86 average trips last fiscal year.
- Employment type trips make up 50 percent which is up from 47 percent last fiscal year. Medical type trips are 21 percent, down from the previous fiscal year. 10 percent of the riders are using the lift and 27 percent are senior riders. There has been a 22 percent increase in registered riders this year.
- Surveys were attempted, but there were only 15 responses. Ms. Keller shared the following results of the surveys: six people would like to see Saturday service, four requested extended hours and one mentioned the registration policy. Approximately 50 percent of those surveyed use the service two to three days a week, one-third four to five days a week and about 20 percent used the service once a month. Overall satisfaction: over 50 percent are very satisfied and there was no one not satisfied.
- Mr. Reilly suggested completing the surveys in a different way such as email or texting. Ms. Sleeth commented that the elderly riders would not be able to do the texting. Mr. Reilly suggested another option might be via phone calls at the time they register for a ride.
- C-CARTS currently has 15 vehicles in their inventory; two of the vehicles are mini-vans and 13 of the vehicles are the 14 passenger buses. The average life of the vehicles is two and one half years, which is a very young fleet. The average use for the year of the peak vehicles is 8.
- Service barriers and areas for improvement listed are the same as last year. C-CARTS is still operating at capacity. Some of the barriers include the shortage of operators, the lack of an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS), which there is no funding in the near future, and the 48 hour call-head policy.
- Mr. Reilly asked if brochures are out in the community. Ms. Morocoima-Black indicated that at this time C-CARTS is not marketing because they are at capacity.
- Pursuit of new contracts will occur once the new Rantoul Service has been operating for a while.

Mr. Harper motioned to approve the RTAG Annual Report to be presented to the Champaign County Board, Ms. Sleeth seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

**VII. Announcements -**

Mr. Bargmann discussed how the new service has been. It has been a slow start from a ridership view. Some of the riders that previously rode with C-CARTS are finding that their schedules have changed. They used to be picked up door to door and now with the new system in place, they transfer from one vehicle to another.

**VIII. Adjournment - The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.**