

1 Champaign County  
 2 Rural Transit Advisory Group (RTAG)  
 3 **DRAFT Minutes**

- 4 **DATE:** Wednesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013  
 5 **PLACE:** John Dimit Room, 1776 E. Washington Street, Urbana, IL 61802  
 6 **Vice-Chair:** Michelle Ramage (\*RTAG Voting +Proxy Voting)

Attendee	Organization
*Stan James	Champaign County Board
*Michelle Ramage	Rantoul City School District #137
+Andrea Young	Parkland College
*Chris Bruns	The Pavilion
*Elaine Palencia	Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board
Rita Morocoima-Black	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, PCD Director
Eileen Sierra-Brown	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, HSTP Coordinator
Amy Marchant	CRIS Rural Mass Transit District
Kathy Cooksey	CRIS Rural Mass Transit District
Becky DeGeorge	PACE Inc.

8 Agenda

- 9 I. **Call to Order** – Mr. Ramage called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.  
 10 II. **Roll Call** – Ms. Brown called the roll. A quorum was established.  
 11 III. **Audience Participation**  
 12 A. **PACE Inc. – Becky DeGeorge**  
 13 Ms. DeGeorge, a representative of both the ridership and PACE Inc. {the independent living  
 14 center} described what it is like in a rural area when you cannot drive as a person who is blind. As  
 15 a native to Chicago and former University of Illinois student, she gave an account of her own  
 16 history of using public transportation in California and now as a resident of Rantoul. That how the  
 17 long distances between towns can have an isolating effect on persons with disabilities, which  
 18 results in even a greater need for rural public transportation in Central Illinois. When she started  
 19 to work for PACE in January, she could take CRIS into work in the morning. However, when she  
 20 got off from work at 5pm, Ms. DeGeorge would have to take a taxi back home each day, as  
 21 CRIS’s Champaign County operating hours do not run late enough to accommodate her trip  
 22 home. The cost of taking a taxi home to Rantoul ran about \$125 a week. The stress of finding  
 23 transportation options alone can be very frustrating. Luckily she was able to pay a local person  
 24 from Rantoul to get her home each day at a lower cost than the taxi. While this is a lower cost

option than a taxi, ride sharing limits her choices of when she leaves work and/or if after work she wants to run errands etc. Therefore, it is a big independent living and privacy issue as well as an economic impact on people's lives.

The group went around the table and introduced themselves as well as stated the organization and/or representation they were. Ms. DeGeorge asked if there were any questions. Mr. James asked how she came to move to Rantoul, if it was related to Generations of Hope – a program that pulls people from around the country to move to Rantoul; and he asked about the specifics of her work related transportation. Ms. DeGeorge responded that she had known about Generations of Hope for years and as an adoptive mother of two (with grownup children) and that it was the right time for her to make the move for the Rantoul based program. She works five days a week until 5pm from the Urbana PACE office. Mr. James agreed about the need for rural transportation but noted there are funding limitations considering the service is still fairly new in addressing the transportation gap in Champaign County.

In regards to Ms. DeGeorge leaving work at 5pm, Ms. Brown inquired what time the last bus returns to Rantoul from Champaign-Urbana. Ms. Marchant responded that the buses have to be back in the CRIS Urbana facility off of University Avenue by 5pm; therefore, the last bus from Champaign-Urbana going to Rantoul leaves at 3:45pm.

Ms. DeGeorge described the people who she has met through using CRIS transportation services later into the evening. Ms. Marchant responded that CRIS would ideally like to serve until 9pm at night, but to meet this need, need to find funding to expand service to the whole county and if the demand for later service to operate. Ms. DeGeorge agreed that many times more services come down to funding availability. She also noted that it is ironic that the more people can work – the better quality of life that goes toward the funding, and results in a more active and healthy life. Mr. James agreed regarding the importance of quality of life that transportation can provide.

Ms. Ramage thanked Ms. DeGeorge for coming today and for sharing the point of view of riders and noted how important it is to see that side of the ridership.

**IV. Agenda Approval** – The agenda was approved (Motion James, Second Palencia, Unanimous).

**V. Approval of Minutes**

*A. Meeting of November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012* – Prior to the meeting, Ms. Ramage pointed out a motion error for approving the meeting schedule. The minutes were approved as corrected (Motion James, Second Ramage, Unanimous).

**VI. Unfinished Business**

*A. Rural MTD Annexation (Non-Taxing) – Letter & Resolution*

Referring to the minutes from November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Ms. Black described how at the last meeting RTAG agreed to annex Champaign County into the CRIS Rural MTD (also referred to as the Rural Vermilion County MTD) and for RPC to draft a resolution with a recommendation letter from the RTAG chair to the Champaign County board. In mid-December 2012, the department that oversees the rural transportation funding (Illinois Department of Transportation-Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation, i.e. "DPIT") contacted Champaign County about concerns

64 regarding the current FY13 operating grant agreement as well as concerns over the  
65 intergovernmental agreement submitted by RPC back in July 2012.

66 Note: back in June when DPIT provided the FY13 grant application – there were no special  
67 requirements regarding the existing intergovernmental agreement and/or application. Therefore, the  
68 application was submitted by CRIS on behalf of the Champaign County in July and the  
69 corresponding resolutions were passed by the county board in August. DPIT took an additional  
70 four months to process the FY13 grant application. Ms. Black commented that originally, when  
71 IDOT contacted RPC they indicated they would process reimbursements to CRIS while the  
72 intergovernmental agreement was reworked by the County to address their new requirements  
73 (i.e. receive IDOT concurrence). However, by early January their staff came back with additional,  
74 non-specific concerns, and stated that the entire FY13 application and reimbursements were on hold  
75 until it was altered again and adopted by the county board. When RPC staff asked for further  
76 clarification and/or examples to address these concerns – various responses were provided by various  
77 DPIT staff members.

78 Therefore, Ms. Black, Ms. Brown, and Mr. (Cameron) Moore traveled to DPIT's Chicago office to  
79 resolve issues and move forward. During the last Monday's meeting, when asked what the  
80 underlying problem was, IDOT-DPIT's deputy director responded that their legal counsel had  
81 issued a legal opinion whereby the appropriation for the state funding requires the county  
82 (not the operator) to have signature authority, even though Champaign County has the  
83 CRIS's CEO as the authorized signature for fiscal requisitions. As a result, payments for  
84 transportation services to CRIS are eight months behind. During the meeting, Ms. Black  
85 pointed out how it had been over six months since the application was turned in, and that  
86 with such a delay could result in temporary stoppage in transportation services in the county.  
87 DPIT recognized that the Champaign County was the first grantee to address their concerns,  
88 which stemmed from the past templates IDOT use to provide give new grantees (hence there  
89 was no working example they could provide to the county). Other grantees would be required  
90 to make the same/similar changes as Champaign is making now. As the new requirements  
91 were related to state's funding, and in recognition of delayed application process with staffing  
92 shortages, DPIT agreed to "priority process in four weeks" the federal portion of the contract  
93 and get reimbursement checks moving as fast as possible.

94 While the possible MTD annexation would not go into effect until FY14 (July 1), the letter and  
95 resolution for annexing into the Rural MTD was postponed until the current fiscal year's  
96 agreement issues could be resolved. Ms. Black and Ms. Brown met with Ms. Marchant the day  
97 before. Ms. Marchant indicated that CRIS could continue service if the federal requisitions were  
98 approved.

#### 99 ***B. New Intergovernmental Agreement (Per IDOT) – FY13***

100 Based on the discussion of the new intergovernmental agreement, the group discussed the  
101 importance of CRIS clearly communicating to the county board that rural MTDs typically are non-  
102 taxing bodies, as CRIS is in Vermilion County. The next step will be to meet with Deb Busey once the  
103 new intergovernmental agreement for FY13 is in place.

105

106 **VII. New Business**107 **A. CRIS Service Report: FY13, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Prepared by CCRPC (Eileen Sierra-Brown)**

108 Ms. Brown prepared the quarterly report (green handout) and a new trend chart to compare trips  
 109 between 2011 and 2012 (see bar charts within the handouts). Highlights of the report were  
 110 reviewed by the group, which included: 75 newly registered riders that brings total ridership since  
 111 starting service to 1,014 persons; average trips per day peaked at 74 with a slight dip in  
 112 December of 57 (likely due to the cold and holidays meant less operating days; and with the  
 113 exception of December that was significantly colder than last December total trips and average  
 114 trips per day had increased in 2012.

115 During the discussion, a correction on the headers for the bar graphs was made (October through  
 116 December were not mentioned). Ms. Brown indicated she would make those corrections, email  
 117 that out to the group, and post the presentation online.

118 **B. Champaign County Rural Public Fiscal Report (Amy Marchant)**

119 Ms. Marchant reported for the current fiscal year (FY13), IDOT-DPIT has not reimbursed CRIS for  
 120 transportation services totaling the \$104,000 of state funds and a \$140,000 federal. However,  
 121 they are working with their banker, Frist Mid-West, regarding their line of credit close to the top  
 122 with anticipated revenue to be distributed soon by DPIT (as reported earlier in the meeting).  
 123 Additionally, Ms. Marchant reported that the audit for the year has just wrapped up. Audit is  
 124 complete, close to top. Ms. Marchant iterated the importance of moving forward with the MTD as  
 125 the top priority for expanding the service.

126 **VIII. Old Business**

127 **A. CCRPC Rural Mobility Transportation Plan & HSTP Update (Eileen Sierra-Brown)** - Due to time  
 128 restraints, this presentation was postponed until the next meeting.

129 **IX. Announcements – None**130 **X. Audience Participation – None**

131 **XI. Adjournment** – Meeting was adjourned at 5:02 PM. Next meeting is on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 4:00 PM in  
 132 the John Dimit Room.

133 {Since the meeting's adjournment a special meeting was needed to be called regarding changes in  
 134 transportation funding and services – the special meeting is scheduled for April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 4:00PM in  
 135 the Jennifer Putnam Room.}



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[www.ruraltransits.org](http://www.ruraltransits.org)

February 28, 2013

Dear Champaign County Senior Rural Riders,

Re: Champaign County Senior Passport Program Ending

You have been participating in a Senior Rural Rider Transportation Program that has been generously funded by East Central IL Area Agency on Aging (ECIAAA) so that we may provide affordable rides for Older Adults age 60 or over.

This means that you have been able to ride our bus system for the cost of a recommended donation of \$2.00 each way. However, effective March 1, 2013 the Champaign County Senior Rural Rider Program will no longer be receiving funds for the provision of affordable rides to seniors in Champaign County due to Federal Sequestration of funds. We are allowing a grace period through March 6, 2013, for you to continue to ride for a donation. On March 7, 2013 all rides will require a fair of \$2.00 each way for Older Adults age 60 or over and will now be under our 5311 general public transportation. If you have rides scheduled after March 6, 2013; these rides will require a fair of \$2.00 each way. If you wish to make changes to these rides please contact our Champaign office as soon as possible at the following number 217-344-4287.

It will be determined by RTAG (Rural Transit Advisory Group) if we will be able to continue the services after April 30, 2013. We will notify you about the services, after RTAG makes a decision regarding provision of transit services for Older Adults age 60 or over.

As always, we are pleased to answer any question you may have by calling 217-344-4287.

With warmest regards,

Amy S. Marchant  
CEO

CC: East Central IL Area Agency on Aging  
Champaign IL County Rural Transportation Advisory Group

Additional handouts will be provided onsite during the meeting regarding possible transportation service changes. All of these handouts will be made available following RTAG's approval.

Please contact Eileen Sierra-Brown directly at 217-819-4100 if accessible materials are needed during the meeting.