



CHAMPAIGN COUNTY  
REGIONAL PLANNING  
COMMISSION

### **Champaign County Rural Transit Advisory Group (RTAG)**

**Date:** Tuesday, June 16, 2020  
**Time:** 3:00 p.m.  
**Place:** Via Zoom  
**Chair:** Nancy Greenwalt  
**Members Present:** Mary Sleeth, Nathan Montgomery, Rachel Voss, Tawanna Nickens  
**Members Absent:** Aaron Esry, Lori Larson  
**Staff Present:** Kristen Gisondi, Debbie Peterik  
**Others Present:** Evan Alvarez

#### **MEETING MINUTES**

Subject to Review and Approval

I. Call to Order

Ms. Greenwalt called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

**The roll was taken by voice record and a quorum was declared present.**

<b>Nancy Greenwalt</b>	<b>present</b>	<b>Nathan Montgomery</b>	<b>present</b>
<b>Mary Sleeth</b>	<b>present</b>	<b>Rachel Voss</b>	<b>present</b>
<b>Tawanna Nickens</b>	<b>present</b>		

III. Audience Participation

None

IV. Approval of Agenda

**Mr. Montgomery made a motion to approve the agenda as drafted. Ms. Nickens seconded.**

**Voice Roll Call taken for votes:**

<b>Nancy Greenwalt</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>Nathan Montgomery</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>Mary Sleeth</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>Rachel Voss</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>Tawanna Nickens</b>	<b>yes</b>		

**Upon vote, the motion unanimously carried.**

V. Approval of Minutes

**Mr. Montgomery made a motion to approve the RTAG minutes from the February 12, 2020 meeting. Ms. Nickens seconded.**



**Voice Roll Call taken for votes:**

<b>Nancy Greenwalt</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>Nathan Montgomery</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>Mary Sleeth</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>Rachel Voss</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>Tawanna Nickens</b>	<b>yes</b>		

**Upon vote, the motion unanimously carried.**

VI. New Business

A. Presentation and Approval of C-CARTS FY20 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter (January - March) Service & Fiscal Reports.

Ms. Gisondi provided the following highlights of the reports:

Service Report:

- Ridership remained about the same as compared to last quarter.
- For the daily average, the numbers showed there were five fewer people riding.
- The employment trip type was still the top trip type and showed an increase.
- There was a slight increase in percentage for lift use and the senior trip percentage remained about the same.
- There was a decrease in trip denials but that could be attributed to a decrease in demand-response trips which dropped dramatically during COVID-19.
- Mileage and hours remained about the same.
- The third quarter is usually the strongest in ridership numbers, and even with COVID-19, the same trend remained.
- There were 245 denied trips which included 238 requests where the time was not available, six requests were not in the C-CARTS service area and one was a weekend request.

Fiscal Report:

- Expenses were different than usual which Ms. Gisondi will detail later in the meeting when the Cares Act funding will be discussed.
- The expenses included were during the period January 1 through January 20 for eligible expenses only unless it was not an eligible expense repair.
- Cares Act funding retroactively covers eligible expenses through January 20 so C-CARTS is waiting for the grant contract and will be submitting funding whenever the contract is received. Therefore, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter eligible expenses are far lower than usual.



- The Rantoul service increased significantly. The fixed-route especially had more riders since the factories did not close and they were hiring more employees.
- Ms. Gisondi showed a graph where there was a dip in the month of April when there were nine confirmed COVID cases among Rantoul residents. From March 2019 to March 2020 there was over 700 trip per month difference.
- Ms. Greenwalt inquired if drivers had concerns and were taking precautions. Ms. Gisondi commented that there will be a discussion later during the presentation.

**Ms. Sleeth made a motion to approve the C-CARTS FY20 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter (January – March) Service and Fiscal Reports. Ms. Voss seconded.**

**Voice Roll Call taken for votes:**

<b>Nancy Greenwalt</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>Nathan Montgomery</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>Mary Sleeth</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>Rachel Voss</b>	<b>yes</b>
<b>Tawanna Nickens</b>	<b>yes</b>		

**Upon vote, the motion unanimously carried.**

**B. Update on C-CARTS Service and Vehicles**

- Fares were free as of March 18 as a preventative measure for drivers and passengers allowing for less contact. The Public Transit Account was reviewed and it was decided that losing the fare revenue was something C-CARTS could consume, but then later discovered that the CARES Act actually covered loss revenue so C-CARTS will be reporting the loss revenue and will be reimbursed through the CARES Act funding.
- Mr. Alvarez made the following comments about the staff:
  - There were four to five operators on longer term self-quarantining. For a period, MTD did offer paid leave due to the fear that operators would be hesitating to call in sick if it was coming from their time; they felt like they needed to save up the sick time. With that, a good number of operators are back, but some are not, so the number of employed operators is still down from where they would like to be. C-CARTS is looking to hire one or two more drivers.
  - Business is as usual offering demand-response and fixed-route service. C-CARTS is also delivering meals to the school districts. Mr. Alvarez commented that MTD has a contract with the school districts, and as a favor to the Urbana schools, because so many students who would usually be in summer school or going to park district programs, they are continuing the free or reduced breakfast and lunches the



students would be getting during the school year. MTD has been delivering those meals as well as C-CARTS.

- Other staff tasks included analyzing the trips and making sure they were robust and completed a trip analysis of Mahomet to see where the service would work in that area.
  - Ms. Gisondi presented graphs showing ridership during COVID-19 which is a week by week comparison from 2019 to 2020. The fixed-route did increase during the pandemic, which had to do with employment in Rantoul. The demand-response ridership dropped significantly by 66 percent, contributed to the fact that there was a stay-at-home order and people were not wanting to be out in public. This data has been submitted to the Governor's office and they are using this data to make decisions on potential funding.
  - Service hours have dropped because the demand-response dropped as it does take longer to provide demand-response service.
  - The total ridership overall has decreased, but the ridership is increasing.
  - The State of Illinois has shared the award to C-CARTS of three medium-duty buses. They will be picked up this Friday. All three of the buses will be replacements meaning they will replace a current existing bus that is in the fleet, it will be disposed and no longer in C-CARTS possession.
  - IDOT announced that they will soon receive award funds for FY19 for the 5339b funding which will be transferred over to C-CARTS. This is a competitive fund of grants through the Federal Transit Administration. With this funding, C-CARTS will be purchasing four buses which will be three replacement buses plus one expansion bus. C-CARTS will be deciding if they will be using the expansion bus to expand the demand-response route or if C-CARTS wants to explore doing a fixed-route for Mahomet. There are currently 12 vehicles. This will bring the fleet total to 13 vehicles.
  - Ms. Greenwalt inquired about the useful life of the buses. Ms. Gisondi commented that the useful life of a bus is 120,000 miles. Once the replacements are made, there will just be one or two buses that are slightly over the benchmark of 120,000 miles that IDOT uses on replacement of buses.
  - Mr. Alvarez commented on how often the buses are sanitized. The C-CARTS buses are cleaned every day with fogger machines with disinfectant cleaning. C-CARTS is also sending backup vans on the fixed-route service to maintain social distancing.
- C. Update on FY2021 DOAP and 5311 Grant Applications
- DOAP funding is the state funding and Section 5311 are federal grants. These are the grants that we apply for every year and they are formula grants that we can anticipate for operations funds. Grants were submitted April 24.



- Ms. Gisondi presented the comparison of funding from fiscal year 2020-2021. The federal amount does not change from year-to-year, but the state grant request can increase by ten percent.
- The service contract revenue (Village of Rantoul) increases one percent each year.
- Fair box increased as greater ridership is anticipated.
- The rest of revenue covered will come from Public Transit Account.
- Generally, C-CARTS does not spend down all the funds; this is how the budget is set up with the state.

D. Update on FY2021 CARES Act and FY2020 REBUILD Grant Applications

1. FY2021 CARES ACT

- On top of the formula grants C-CARTS usually applies for, they had the opportunity to receive CARES Act funding. They were initially informed by IDOT that they were going to get three times their regular Section 5311 funding. They ended up getting almost four times. The funds from the FTA have no expiration date and require no local match. This is at 100 percent that they are giving C-CARTS. The FTA is being quite generous on what is considered an eligible expense. There are some extra costs with sanitization or staffing, like sick banks or loss of revenue. Those are all eligible expenses that C-CARTS will put towards the CARES Act funding. C-CARTS has been directed by IDOT to use this funding first so once we receive the contracts, they will retroactively include all of the eligible expenses from January 20 to present.
- The Champaign County Board approved the application on May 21<sup>st</sup>.
- C-CARTS submitted the application the next day.
- IDOT received the go ahead from the Department of Labor to receive the funds from the FTA. They are working on putting together contracts and as soon as contracts are received, C-CARTS will present it to the County Board so we can get those funds as soon as possible.
- With the state and federal grants, the budget usually consists of salaries, fringe benefits, maintenance and supplies. Whatever is left over will go towards lease and utilities, media promotion, etc.
- C-CARTS did request the full appropriation of \$759,840.

2. FY2020 REBUILD

- There was also an opportunity to apply for the REBUILD Capital Grant Program. At the beginning of the year, there was an increase of funds to public transportation



and infrastructure improvements in capital purchases that were included in the increase of the motor fuel tax in the Governor’s overall capital plan.

- As a rural grantee, C-CARTS was eligible to apply for these capital funds so C-CARTS applied for these funds for one expansion bus, bus cameras and a wireless download system that would outfit 14 buses.
- The amount came out to \$107,000. It is unclear on the timeline of when the funds will be rolled out. There is no local match required for this grant.
- This was approved by Champaign County Board on May 21<sup>st</sup> when the CARES Act was approved.
- The number for the bus cameras and wireless download system was based on reaching out to three different companies that other local rural transit agencies use.
- The expansion bus cost was based on how much it cost IDOT to purchase buses. It would be the same type of bus that we currently have.
- C-CARTS also opted for the wireless download system because it is something like what MTD already uses.
- Mr. Alvarez commended Ms. Gisondi for a job well done on the application and commented on the operators and how they have done a fantastic job during this time. Spirits are high, and C-CARTS is really pleased that they have been able to step up and support the communities the way that they wanted to. Ridership is returning toward normal numbers. The next stage is determining when to start back enforcing fare collection. When they do want to return to fare collection, they will have to determine what the advance notice to the passengers will look like if they booked a trip when fares were not being charged, what the grace period will be and how implementation will go.

VII. Announcements

None

VIII. Adjournment

**Ms. Sleeth made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Montgomery seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.**