

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, June 16, 2015
10 am – Noon
Next Stop Center – Eugene Station
1099 Olive Street – Eugene, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Pete Barron, Chair	Ruth Linoz
Annie Saville, Vice Chair	Bill Morganti
Paul Blaylock	Eleanor Mulder
Aline Goddard	Ed Necker, ex officio
Josh Haring	Tim Shearer
Rachel Jacobsen	Scott Whetham
Stefan Kwiatkowski	

STAFF:

Susan Hekimoglu	Cosette Rees
Richard Belcher	David Braunschweiger
Kris Lyon	Beth Mulcahy
Fred Stouffer	Janice Friend, captioner

I. Call to order

Mr. Barron called the meeting of the Accessible Transportation Committee (ATC) to order at 10:03 a.m.

II. Introductions, Announcements, Agenda Review

Those present introduced themselves.

III. Audience Participation

No members of the public were present.

IV. ACTION: Minutes Approval April 21, 2015

MOTION: Ms. Mulder moved, seconded by Mr. Morganti, to approve the April 21 minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously, 11:0.

V. Membership and Bylaws Review

Ms. Hekimoglu reviewed the membership roster. She announced that Ms. Brazell had resigned due to other responsibilities and staff would follow up with the Department of Human Services about finding a new person from that agency. She noted that the positions of

rural providers were assigned and permanent and not subject to term limits. Ms. Mulder was completing her third term in 2015 and Mr. Morganti and Gail Lundeen would complete their third terms in 2016. A bylaws change would be required for them to continue in fourth and consecutive terms.

Ms. Hekimoglu proposed forming a membership committee to meet once or twice during the summer to consider changing the term limits and to look at membership recruitment. Mr. Morganti, Mr. Barron, Mr. Blaylock, Mr. Haring, and Ms. Linoz volunteered, and Mr. Kwiatkowski said he might be available depending on the meeting time.

Ms. Hekimoglu asked the group about changing the membership start date from June to September since the committee did not meet over the summer and it made more sense for new members to start when meetings were happening regularly. There was general agreement that September to June should be the committee's membership cycle.

Suggestions for recruiting members included seeking someone from DD services and placing ads in buses.

Ms. Hekimoglu called attention to the bylaws included in the agenda packet and pointed out the proposed changes to the commencement and expiration dates of membership terms.

Mr. Necker recommended deleting Article VII, Section 2, a) 3) that charged the Chair to appoint chairs of all committees and instead allowing committees to elect their own chairs. The RideSource Call Center (RSCC) Advisory Committee already was doing this so the bylaw sections referring to it also should be changed to match practice. Ms. Hekimoglu commented that the election of officers should be changed from June to September to be on the same cycle as membership. Ms. Lyon agreed to assist Ms. Hekimoglu with revisions to the bylaws relating to the RSCC.

Tim Shearer arrived at the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Ms. Linoz asked about the definition of quorum. She wanted to ensure that a quorum was not based on designated positions that were not filled and that the 51 percent of members for a quorum was 51 percent of the positions that were occupied.

VI. Program Updates

a. Lane Transit District

Ms. Rees reported LTD was participating in looking at the gap in public transportation services between Yachats and Florence which the state had identified as a priority to be filled in order to complete public transit all the way down the coast. Meetings including service providers,

ODOT, tribal representatives and members of the councils and staff of Yachats and Florence as well as their Mayors had been convened. In a few meetings, the group had identified some possibilities and was applying for a Transportation Growth Management Project through ODOT to do some analysis, and to look at options and funding sources which were likely to be local. The idea was in very preliminary stages and it likely would be a year before a preferred option was chosen. The primary focus was on transportation between the two cities and secondarily on enhancing transportation within those cities and the surrounding communities. Using private providers of taxi services, public vans or extensions of the Rhody Express or the Yachats provider were all possibilities.

Ms. Rees confirmed that Yachats was in Lincoln County and there now were several models of public/private partnerships that successfully worked across county lines.

Ms. Mulder asked whether there was conversation about connecting with Amtrak. Ms. Rees said LTD's fixed route served Amtrak and the Diamond Express also had Amtrak service connections. There was some interest in a Florence-Eugene service connection but that was not part of this project.

LTD had launched its new website on Sunday. It was a major overhaul that increased customer convenience and included real time information and real time trip planning capability. Ms. Rees encouraged committee members to use the site and to let her know about any problems they encountered.

Mr. Shearer liked the idea of real time but wanted it to be inclusive by indicating whether there was space for wheelchairs on the bus or if the spaces were full. Other members agreed but Mr. Barron pointed out that this situation could change with each stop so would be complicated to implement. Saying this would require additional programming of the GPS system and may not be possible for some time Ms. Rees said that by exposing its data to the public, LTD hoped people might build their own applications for such information. Ms. Hekimoglu suggested using a light on the exterior of the bus to indicate all wheelchair spaces were full.

Mr. Necker mentioned in the past it had been possible to record the number of times a ramp was deployed and Ms. Linoz responded that some people may use the ramp but not the wheelchair bay. Mr. Barron observed that the problem could be solved by adding more wheelchair spaces. Ms. Rees said that in looking ahead, LTD had learned some new bus layouts accommodated three or four mobility devices at a time.

Mr. Shearer asked about rear loading for larger buses. Ms. Saville explained that would require every stop to be laid out to accommodate rear loading which was not realistic. Mr. Morganti commented that passengers sometimes had to get off the bus to allow chairs to exit.

Ms. Rees reported LTD would begin receiving some new EmX vehicles in late June or July and she hoped one would be available during a future meeting so members might tour it. Based on committee feedback, all the new vehicles would have pull cords instead of just buttons and retrofitting the existing fleet with pull cords was being considered. Answering a question Ms. Rees said the new vehicles would not have bicycle accommodation but two companies wanted to provide a quote and a demonstration of what they could do to accommodate bikes. That retrofit would happen later. Ms. Rees said the 6100 series vehicles were not being replaced and the new buses were for the West Eugene EmX.

Responding to a question, Ms. Rees said the problem with the door opening not aligning correctly had been resolved.

Ms. Rees described the new phone system's phone tree that would be implemented August 21. It would allow callers to self-select the destination of their call instead of waiting in a queue. This would reduce wait times, direct calls to the appropriate staff more quickly, and reduce the work load at Customer Service. The first level on the tree would include RideSource as an option. RideSource also was moving to a phone tree system and tripling the size of its queue so calls could get to staff more quickly. The system would be set up to function with rotary phones as well as touch phones. For people trying to plan a trip, both the Customer Service and RideSource systems would allow them to hang up and have their place in the queue saved for a call back.

Mr. Morganti reported he had lost his wallet on the bus twice and gotten it back due to the help and honesty of drivers and passengers.

b. *RideSource* Call Center Advisory Committee

Ms. Lyon reported the remodeling had begun. All staff would be out of the building for three weeks during demolition and rebuilding to accommodate growth. Completion was expected in mid-July.

c. *RideSource* Call Center

Mr. Belcher said the center was extremely busy, especially on Mondays and Tuesdays. The expansion would allow better service to be provided. He looked forward to having the new phone system's call-back feature. Answering Mr. Barron's inquiry about why Security First had come to pick him up Mr. Belcher said private providers were helping with the overflow.

d. *RideSource* ADA paratransit

Mr. Braunschweiger reported the schedulers had moved yesterday and the changes would create a better work environment. Some RideSource staff would migrate to the Call Center after the expansion. He said demand was fairly flat but the Medicaid program continued its growth. This was the first month for the new Operations Manager after Glen's departure and the driver supervisor position was yet to be filled. Some vehicles would be retired soon.

Answering Ms. Linoz's question about whether the sale of Trillium was producing any changes. Ms. Lyon explained that Trillium had been purchased by the national insurance company Centene and some changes were being made to private and Medicare insurance products. She said most changes would not be seen for about a year while Centene became familiar with the CCO system for Medicaid. Ms. Lyon was meeting with transportation providers later this month about some changes in the payment cycle and performance measures. She said it was hard to predict whether future changes would be positive or negative but for now things were status quo.

e. South Lane County (Cottage Grove)

Ms. Linoz reported South Lane also was getting a new vehicle and it was the first one in the area equipped with a 1,000 pound lift. Ms. Linoz had found it beneficial to attend the Transit Day at the Capitol and it enhanced her understanding of the challenges and complexities of funding. She said South Lane had stable ridership and was not growing too much. She looked forward to hearing more about changes resulting in the change to the Medicaid brokerage.

f. West Lane County (Florence)

Mr. Haring reported there had been few changes and he was closely following the Florence-Yachats gap discussions.

Ms. Hekimoglu said an effort was underway to encourage older adults to try riding the bus and there would be a media campaign on the Bus Buddy program. Mr. Barron commented that many people's fear about riding the bus was that the driver would start before they were seated.

Ms. Mulder asked if there were seasonal ridership swings in Florence. Mr. Haring said there were more bicyclists and tourists riding and more pick-ups in the summer.

Ms. Linoz asked if Cottage Grove could borrow any good marketing tools that were developed for Florence. Ms. Hekimoglu offered to discuss ideas further with Ms. Linoz and said the Bus Buddy program was very helpful. Answering Mr. Necker's question, Mr. Whetham said Alternative Work Concepts had done some training with seniors and had worked with people in Florence and Cottage Grove. He said travel training and Bus Buddy were essentially the

same thing but in Florence the buddy only needed to ride along with the rider and because there was only one bus it was not necessary to provide training on finding the correct bus.

Ms. Rees said an earlier LTD Bus Buddy program had targeted older adults but any new rider could benefit from it. When it became difficult to manage the volunteers and meet the needs, the program had transitioned to the travel training program provided by AWC. She commented that while the Bus Buddy was a great program, any community thinking of creating their own needed to have a large number of committed volunteers.

Mr. Morganti said he had helped several people navigate the bus system, and Ms. Rees said that was one of the best ways for people to learn.

Mr. Kwiatkowski observed that School District 4J would benefit by having transit education for kids in 3rd and 4th grades. Ms. Hekimoglu said an effort was underway to revive the student bus pass program. She noted that LTD offered two free field trips per classroom every year. It was becoming harder to accommodate these trips but they were still happening.

Mr. Whetham said AWC did presentations at 4J, Springfield and Cottage Grove schools. Ms. Rees added that the Smart Ways to School Program worked with all three local school districts and the program's point person in each district made an effort to connect people with others in their area to get kids safely to school. Reaching out to elementary and middle school kids was the most effective way to establish youth as transit users.

g. East Lane County (Oakridge)

Ms. Goddard reported things were busy in Oakridge. One of the long term drivers had quit. She shared a story about Highway 58 being closed for several hours due to an accident and the Diamond Express being unable to get through. It was a rainy night and several people had to wait at the LTD lobby, passengers missed their flights out of Eugene, and one driver ended up watching ballgames at the Pleasant Hill pizza restaurant. Ms. Hekimoglu commented this was an example of doing the right thing when unforeseen situations arose by getting the word out and taking care of customers.

Ms. Linoz observed that having to be flexible and willing to stay late or start early when conditions required it were part of the reason it was difficult to find drivers.

h. White Bird Clinic: Ms. Hekimoglu announced that April Georgi had assumed a new position and Darrien would be at the September meeting as her replacement.

i. Alternative Work Concepts: Mr. Whetham had stepped out of the room

j. Senior and Disability Services

Ms. Jacobsen reported a generous bequest had been received and was earmarked for Florence Senior Connections transportation only. Case-managed clients of Senior Connections aged 60 and over without other transportation options could apply for up to six months of emergency taxi rides not to exceed \$500. She said Senior Connections tried to piece together rides from various sources to meet a person's needs and this funding was only used for gaps. Mr. Haring pointed out that River City had three accessible vans and could accommodate wheelchairs. Two rides had been provided to Eugene that day.

Answering a question, Ms. Lyon said Crucial Connections provided urgently needed rides on a case-by-case basis and it had no age or income requirements. The program was designed to fill a gap in the system that prevented someone from receiving service. Responding to Mr. Morganti's question of whether Crucial Connections would provide a ride for him to take his cat to the vet, Ms. Lyon said it was for urgent needs only so that probably would not qualify.

Ms. Rees pointed out that Crucial Connections funding was allocated through the discretionary grant process and evaluation of cases was as objective as possible but an effort was made to stretch the small pot of money as far as possible to serve the most people who most needed it.

Ms. Jacobsen had been contacted by a UO professor who would teach a class next spring in which students were to design products to help older adults (aged 60+) with mobility, vision, or hearing impairments better utilize the transportation system. The professor had asked for help from Rachel in identifying and contacting appropriate organizations. In addition to LTD and AWC, suggestions included a research and development corporation. Ms. Jacobsen said an unsuccessful effort had been made previously to work with TriMet on this project. She and Ms. Rees would meet with the professor.

Ms. Jacobsen announced that as of July 1, FOOD for Lane County would take over as the contractor provider for Meals on Wheels in Eugene. Lane Council of Governments would continue as the provider for Springfield and the rest of rural Lane County. The transition should be seamless for recipients of the service. More volunteer drivers were needed. Responding to a question, Ms. Rees clarified that Glenwood was now considered part of Springfield.

Ms. Jacobsen passed around a copy of the popular state-produced "Family Caregiver Handbook" resource guide. She agreed to bring a case of the books to the September meeting and said she could also place an order if members wanted more and they could pick them up at S&DS.

k. LILA

Mr. Shearer announced LILA and the City of Eugene were hosting a celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the ADA on July 25 at Hilyard Center. More information would be available soon.

Mr. Shearer reported things were moving ahead with the Sounding Board and the first planning session to look at sites and what was possible would be June 30. Ms. Hekimoglu said she would add a report on that to the September agenda.

VII. Adjourn

The next regular meeting was scheduled for September 15 at 10 a.m. at the Next Stop Center.

The meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

(Recorded by Mary Feldman)