



## PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD

*Advisory committee to the Mayor on public transit issues*

Meeting Minutes

for the meeting on August 18, 2014

### **Members present:**

Minnie Bell  
Jean Crowe  
Philip Jacobson  
Megan Myers  
Deb Nelson

### **Staff present:**

Dennis Erckfritz, Operations Manager  
Amber Gibson, Planner II, SECOG  
Tierza Lanham, Paratransit Manager  
Eric Meyerson, General Manager  
Sam Trebilcock, Transportation Planner

### **Members absent:**

Erik Gaikowski  
Greg Johnson

### **Public in attendance:**

Bob Bohm  
Debbie Eberhart  
Macie Eberhart  
Mike Lynch  
Chad Powell  
Terry Paulsen

### **Call to order**

Deb Nelson, Chair, called the Public Transit Advisory Board (PTAB) meeting to order at 3:48 p.m. and made introductory comments.

### **1. Approval of June 23, 2014, PTAB Meeting Minutes**

Philip Jacobson made a motion to accept the June 23, 2014, PTAB meeting minutes. Megan Myers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **2. Public input on non-agenda items:**

There was no public input.

### **3. Public Hearing: Proposed Program of Projects – FTA Section 5307 Program**

Chair Deb Nelson announced that this was a public hearing for the Proposed Program of Projects – FTA Section 5307 Program. Sam Trebilcock reviewed the proposed program of projects for the FTA Section 5307 funds. Terry Paulsen informed the Board that he had contacted Senator John Thune regarding transit funding and asked the Board about the viability of the FTA Section 5310 Program. Amber Gibson explained that the 5310 funds are for non-profit agencies that serve seniors and persons with disabilities and that SECOG was in the process of reviewing applications for the 2014 5310 funds. Megan Meyers made a motion to close the public hearing for the Proposed Program of Projects – FTA Section 5307 Program and was seconded by Jean Crowe. The motion passed unanimously. Megan Meyers commented that it was good to hear that people are contacting Federal delegation regarding the need for transit funds. Jean Crowe made a motion to approve the Proposed Program of Projects – FTA Section 5307 Program and was seconded by Philip Jacobson. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **4. New Business:**

##### **a. 2015 Sioux Area Metro Budget**

Sam Trebilcock reviewed the 2015 Sioux Area Metro Budget including \$10.8 million in operating expenses and \$1.6 million in capital expenses. Sam stated that the Council would consider the budget in September. Sam also reviewed potential service changes for 2015 including a modest fare increase, additional travel training, and reduced paratransit trips outside of the required ¾ mile service area. Terry Paulsen asked how grandfathering would work for existing paratransit riders. Sam stated that the goal is to not increase the number of trips outside the ¾ mile service area and that there would be a phasing plan to allow time for people to adjust to the changes. Debbie Eberhart asked how much is billed to Medicaid for transit rides. Tierza Lanham stated that it is around \$12-\$14 per trip for non-ambulatory rides and around \$3 per trip for ambulatory rides. Sam added that Sioux Area Metro has a low number of Medicaid eligible rides. Chad Powell asked when citizens would have the opportunity to provide input on the proposed changes. Sam stated that the changes would go before PTAB in September or October before going to Council. Jean Crowe asked how the Council could be depended on to increase the general fund contribution to the transit budget each year. Sam stated that the Council needs to know that the increase is needed to stabilize the transit fund. Philip Jacobson asked if the schools are starting to add the school routes to their budget. Sam said that yes, the school district has already taken on two of the routes and SAM is down to four routes. This was informational only.

#### **5. Old Business:**

##### **a. Transit Task Force Report**

Sam Trebilcock reviewed the tasks, goals, objectives, and recommendations of the Transit Task Force Report. Deb Nelson asked when this report was presented to Council and what their impressions were. Sam said that it was presented to Council last week and that the message that they are trying to get across is that they are trying to do things differently, that it isn't just about making cuts, and that there were some concerns about the fare increases. Bob Bohm stated that he was glad to see that the City would be contributing more to the budget, and that the paratransit services changes would affect Dakotabilities and LifeScape the most. Bob also stated that he understands that it would be difficult to raise sales or property taxes, but an increase to the hotel occupancy tax should be looked into. Sam said that the Transit Task Force attempted to find solutions with existing funds, but that it could be considered. This item was informational only.

##### **b. Transit Coordination Activities**

Amber Gibson reviewed the status of the 5310 grant program and transportation services directory booklet. Three 5310 applications had been received and the committee would be reviewing them on Wednesday and recommending projects for funding at the September MPO meetings. The MPO would then make a recommendation to the State. The transportation services directory has been printed and the Transportation Coordination Committee would discuss distribution of the directory at its meeting on August 27<sup>th</sup>. This item was informational only.

#### **6. Reports:**

##### **a. June and July Operations Reports**

Eric Meyerson provided a report on the ridership statistics of Sioux Area Metro for June and July. In June, fixed-route ridership was down 8.01%, and paratransit ridership was down 4.57%, compared to June 2013. In July, fixed-route ridership

was down 12.65%, and paratransit ridership was down 6.94%, compared to July 2013. Eric noted that fixed route ridership is down due to SAM no longer providing the trolley service. Eric credited the decrease in paratransit ridership to Jean Crowe and the Lifescape staff for making adjustments to their clients' use of paratransit. Megan Meyers asked if the new bus stop signs have had a good impact on ridership. Eric stated that it is too early to tell. Jean Crowe stated that she has heard good things about the signs. This item was informational only.

**b. Transit Marketing Committee**

Dennis Erckfritz stated that the Transit Marketing Committee met earlier this month and rode on the fixed route to a coffee shop to discuss marketing strategies. Dennis added that SAM staff also had a booth at the public high school orientation, all but three to four of the new bus stop signs have been installed, and that staff is continuing to work to have the bus routes posted on Google Transit. This item was informational only.

**7. Other Business:**

**a. FTA Triennial Review**

Sam Trebilcock stated that the SAM system had recently undergone its FTA triennial review. Megan Meyers suggested that the public should contact State delegation, in addition to Federal delegation, for increased transit funding. This item was informational only.

**b. Augustana Pilot Project**

Sam Trebilcock stated that staff is working with Augustana College to begin a pilot project to provide students with better fixed route access. Sam added that this project could be a springboard for similar projects with organizations such as the University of Sioux Falls and Citibank. This item was informational only.

**8. Adjournment**

Philip Jacobson made a motion to adjourn and Minnie Bell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and Deb Nelson adjourned the meeting at 5:08 p.m.