

PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD

Advisory committee to the Mayor on public transit issues

Meeting Minutes for the meeting on May 21, 2012

Members present:

Chris Schlitz
Jim Madsen
Deb Nelson
Jean Crowe – *left at 4:30 pm*
Megan Myers
Julie Johnson Dresbach

Public in attendance:

Chad Powell
Terri Jordan
Evon Spencer
Lynda K. Kniffin
Lynn Shattuck

Members absent:

Greg Johnson

Staff present:

Karen Walton, General Manager
Dennis Erckfritz, Operations Manager
Randy Hartman, Assistant General Manager
Tierza Lanham, Paratransit Manager
Sam Trebilcock, Transportation Planner
Bill McCarty, Maintenance Manager
Colleen Moran, Human Relations Office
Carol Garry, Human Relations Office

Call to order

Deb Nelson, Vice-Chair, called the Public Transit Advisory Board (PTAB) meeting to order at 3:45 p.m. and made introductory comments.

1. Approval of April 23, 2012, PTAB Meeting Minutes

Jim Madsen made a motion to accept the April 23, 2011, PTAB meeting minutes as written. Megan Myers seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Public input on non-agenda items:

There were no public comments offered.

3. Old Business:

a. Transit Operation Study Update

Sam Trebilcock updated the Board on the latest status of the Transit Operations Study including an Open House for the draft study at the Downtown Library that will occur on June 13th from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm with a presentation at 5:30 pm. All citizens are encouraged to attend this open house and provide input. This item was informational.

4. **New Business:**

a. **Election of Officers**

Chris Schiltz nominated Greg Johnson to be Chairman of PTAB for the term June 2012 to May 2013 contingent on his acceptance of the position. Megan Myers seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Chris Schiltz nominated Deb Nelson as Vice-Chairman of PTAB for the term June 2012 to May 2013. Megan Myers seconded the nomination and the motion passed unanimously.

b. **Paratransit Eligibility Process and Occupational Therapist**

Karen Walton provided an overview of Paratransit service. It was stressed that the paratransit system is to be parallel to the existing fixed-route service. Fixed route buses are now all handicapped accessible. Karen also stressed that eligibility for paratransit should be determined on mobility rather than on a medical determination. Tierza Lanham provided the Board with information on the assessment process used by the Occupational Therapist to help determine eligibility that again helps determine in what situations, if any, a person can ride a fixed-route bus. Colleen Moran discussed the process to appeal the decision of Sioux Area Metro for paratransit eligibility. The appeal may include a hearing which allows the applicant to bring more information forward that may not have been considered during the assessment process.

Linda Kniffin asked when someone would be able to reapply for a changed eligibility if their mobility situation changes. Tierza Lanham said that anyone can reapply at any time. Jim Madsen stressed that it is very important for there to be a separate assessment process for the visually impaired to determine mobility. Carol Garry from the Human Relations Office stressed that all visually impaired people are conditionally eligible for paratransit services based upon their limitations for their travel training. Karen Walton said that Sioux Area Metro is working with the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind to help determine a separate assessment process for the visually impaired.

Chris Schiltz would like to see Sioux Area Metro market this effort as providing greater freedom to persons with disabilities. Karen Walton said that the transit system is thinking about forming a marketing/training committee comprised of persons that have disabilities who ride the fixed-route system. This committee would then help determine methods to make others with disabilities feel more comfortable riding the fixed-route busses. The Board agreed that this committee will be very important to reaching the goal of greater travel freedom and independence for the disabled.

5. **Reports:**

a. **April Operations Report**

Karen Walton presented a report on the April operations at SAM. She said that fixed route ridership was up 1.5%, compared to April of last year. Also, SAM has met with Southeastern Behavioral and the Siouland Association for the Blind to discuss ways to improve services. Also, SAM trainers worked with a number of organizations including Harms Transport, SD Achieve and the YMCA to provide training for their drivers. Julie Johnson Dresbach and Chris Schiltz encouraged SAM staff to market this driver training effort further. This item was informational.

b. Transit Marketing Committee Report

Walton asked if anyone has heard the most recent radio ads with PTAB member Megan Myers featured. 605 Magazine included SAM buses in a television ad for their upcoming 605 Summer Classic event. Also, Walton showed this year's Dog Days of Summer poster. This item was informational.

- 6. Other Business:** Jim Madsen asked if there can be bus shelters or benches added to all bus stop locations to help with way finding for the visually impaired. Karen Walton indicated that it would be very difficult to do because of right-of-way. Lynn Shattuck asked PTAB if the paratransit service area could be expanded to allow a disabled rider to visit her house because she is acting as his guardian. PTAB and SAM staff all indicated that it would be difficult to add paratransit service area because it would then set a precedent that would allow anyone to request additional paratransit service coverage. PTAB encouraged Ms. Shattuck to keep informed about any future service changes and to attend the June 13th Transit Operational Analysis Open House to provide additional comments.

Adjournment

Deb Nelson adjourned the meeting at 4:55 p.m.