

Helena Transportation Advisory Council
Helena Area Transit Service
1415 N. MT Ave.
November 19, 2013
3:00 PM

Members present: Vivian Crabtree (Chair), Steve Larson (HATS), Patrick Sanders (DPHHS), Jenny Ekwortzel (RMDC), Bob Allen (Citizen at large), Judy Harris (Citizen at large), Elizabeth Andrews, (Current Transportation/E Andrews Community Engagement Services), Brian Persons (MILP), Les Clark (MILP), Lloyd Sparks (MILP), Susan Pesta (Westmont), and Barbara Sheridan (HATS).
Conference Phone: Amy Tenny (Pre-Release).

Introductions: The meeting started with introductions.

Approval of minutes. **The minutes from October were accepted by majority.**

Old Business:

- East Valley Bus Service/L&C County Senior Transportation Funds
- ADA Complimentary Plan update & Transit Functional Needs Evaluation
- Meeting Attendance
- Leadership Elections – By Law change

East Valley Bus Service/L&C County Senior Transportation Funds: Steve Larson told the group, HATS is continuing to work with RMDC to determine how much funds will be available for FY15. The East Valley Bus service has been working under the JARC Grant with the match under the County Senior Transportation Mill Levy. He said about 1 year ago the State of Montana disallowed reimbursement of the “Meals on Wheels” portion of the Mill Levy. We have been working to get this back into play and it is not going to happen. Steve said the Senior Transportation Levy is \$130,000.00, approximately \$63,000.00 of that goes to the Senior Transportation Operation. HATS will be eligible to recoup approx. \$30,000.00 from the State of Montana under the JARC Grant. The East Valley Bus Service will need to make changes and or find additional funding to continue the service. The group discussed the funding, who will be effected, and developing a questionnaire survey.

ADA Complimentary Plan & Transit Functional Needs Evaluation: Steve said he is working with a sub- committee group working on the Plan and Functional needs. When the group has the Plan and Functional Needs finished, the information it will be presented to the TAC. The group discussed “In-Kind” percentages as money for match. Elizabeth Andrews asked for an acceptable list of “In-Kind” providers and percentages. The group also talked about the HATS bus fares, in comparison to Bozeman MT. It was suggested to have David Kack of Bozeman to explain the no fare bus system.

Vivian Crabtree requested to table the discussion of bus fares until after the first of the year: Bob Allen seconded. Elizabeth Andrews and Les Clark were opposed to tabling the issue. Les would like this issue addressed. **It was decided a subcommittee will be formed to work on this issue. The subcommittee will report back to the HTAC in January 2014, or when ready to be presented.**

Meeting Attendance: Steve talked about the Greater Helena Transportation Coalition grant, and the round table meeting made up of Citizens and Advocacy groups. Steve said the TAC should be part of the Greater Transportation Coalition. Vivian said the Coalition is an option that we can use to recruit more members or a volunteer to our TAC group. Further clarification, Steve said the HTAC is a 501 (3) – (c) with its own by-laws and structure.

Leadership Elections – By-law change: Steve reported Cindy Baril, Susan Pesta, and he met and worked on the by-law Election section. The language in Article V was cleaned up and made clearer in Section A **“Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson are eligible for re-election and may serve multiple terms”** was added. Clarified section C **“If an Executive Committee is needed either the Chairperson or the Vice Chairperson shall serve on the Committee and be its chair.**

The other two members shall be HTAC members in good standing. The HTAC members will select the two members who make up the Executive committee. The HTAC Executive committee will serve as an ad hoc committee”.

Vivian Crabtree made a motion to accept the changes to the by-laws as written.

Les Clark seconded the motion.

Elizabeth asked for definition of member in good standing. The question was answered to satisfaction

All were in favor - motion passes.

By-laws will be updated.

Ridership update: The total ridership for October was 7,899. Breakdown – East Valley 1,167, Head Start 881, HATS Checkpoint 2,192, HATS Curb to Curb 3,062, Rec-connect 0, RMDC 597.

New Business:

Transit Planning for All Stakeholder meeting review. Elizabeth reported she has sub-contracted with Lisa Ballard of Current Transportation Solutions to work on the broader CTAA grant. Lisa wanted everyone to know there will be a County Commissioner meeting Thursday November 21, at 10:00 AM. 316 North Park, 3rd floor Commission Chambers. This will be a presentation to share what she has learned and a show of support for disability mobility limitations at the County level. She encourages people from the TAC to attend if possible.

Bob Allen suggested making changes to the current HATS policy that would cost nothing.

- Bell cords inside the bus to have it stop on demand
- Passenger counters instead of documenting pick up and drop off locations
- Enforce the 24 hour call in service unless it is an emergency. The current system is being stressed by last minute calling.
- Raise the fares

Elizabeth suggested HATS to purchase a kneeling down bus for the mobility impaired. The pros and cons were discussed of the kneeling down buses.

Lloyd Sparks asked if there have been any past efforts by either the TAC or HATS to build contracts like Bozeman has done. If the effort has already been done there would be no sense in pursuing this again. He said if no one has attempted to build contracts this could explain why there is no money. He asked why Helena is putting out so much more money than Bozeman.

The group talked about the TAC becoming more proactive, prioritize as a group, and self-assessment. They talked about the other cities in Montana and what they have done to increase their funding.

Elizabeth asked, concerning funding for HATS, what about the possibility of MDT giving a presentation of the Federal funds available to put sidewalks infrastructure to and from bus stops. She said she called Tom Stuber who is the Northern Regional Planner with MDT, and he said he would be happy to explain the sidewalk infrastructure at a TAC meeting. Elizabeth asked if she should invite him to December's meeting.

Elizabeth would also like to invite City Commissioner Elsaesser to our meeting because he is promoting a sidewalk effort. Maybe this could be used to leverage money for HATS. She would like City Commissioner Elsaesser to update the TAC group. Elizabeth will contact Tom Stuber, and Commissioner Elsaesser to attend the December 17th meeting.

Next meeting: December 17, 2013 at 3:00 P.M. in the City County Building, 316 North Park Ave. Room 426 fourth floor.