

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

**DATE:** Wednesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012

**PLACE:** John Dimit Room, 1776 E. Washington Street, Urbana, IL 61802

**Chair:** Andy Kulczycki (\*RTAG Voting)

Attendee	Organization
Chris Bruns*	The Pavilion
Andy Kulczycki*	Community Service Center of Northern Champaign County
Stan James*	Champaign County Board
Michelle Ramage*	Rantoul City School District #137
Rita Morocoima-Black	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, PCD Director
Eileen Sierra-Brown	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, HSTP Coordinator
Ryan McCoy	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, Planning Intern
Amy Marchant	CRIS Rural Mass Transit District
Seamus Reilly	Parkland College

*Agenda*

- I. **Call to Order** – Mr. Kulczycki called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.
- II. **Roll Call** – Ms. Brown called the roll. A quorum was established. Mr. Reilly introduced himself and time was taken to introduce everyone and the organization they represent on RTAG. Mr. Reilly is a new RTAG appointee and will be a voting member during the next meeting.
- III. **Agenda Approval** – The agenda was approved (Motion James, Second Bruns, Unanimous).
- IV. **Approval of Minutes**
  - A. **Meeting of August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012** – Prior to the meeting, Ms. Brown had provided grammatical corrections to the minutes. **The minutes were approved (Motion James, Second Bruns, Unanimous).**
- V. **New Business**
  - A. **Proposed Annual Meeting Schedule**  
 RTAG approval vote was needed in order to post one legal ad for the year. **The proposed 2013 quarterly meeting schedule provided in the handouts (2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the Month at 4:00 PM) were approved (Motion Bruns, Second James, Unanimous).**

***B. CRIS Service Report: FY13, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Prepared by CCRPC (Eileen Sierra- Brown)***

Purple handout provided is the FY13 first quarterly report. Ms. Marchant reported with August having 23 service days that a corresponding increase in overall trips provided. She also noted that in the trip breakouts, medical trips are the primary service being provided, however, personal, shopping, and employment trips are growing as well, and are equally important. There were 1,300 to 1,400 average trips per month with August being the busiest with 1,700. Having some difficulties with dispatchers being unable to convey to riders what can and cannot be booked. While the dispatchers try to squeeze in as many rides as possible there are always safety factors to consider.

Ms. Marchant also noted that number of trips requiring the lift to be utilized do appear to be quite higher than she would have anticipated.

Ms. Marchant also indicated that the Indigo contract is coming to a sunset, and that in August the vehicle for that service contract could be used in the month of August. Indigo Apartment bought their own vehicle and will no longer be contracting CRIS for the service. The vehicle may be used for another project to be determined at a later date.

Ms. Brown noted a transposing error occurred on the chart she prepared (see monthly comparisons between 2011 and 2012 for the same fiscal quarters and the drop in totals for the month of September). Mr. Kulczycki also pointed out that July 2011 was repeated twice. Ms. Brown stated she would have this chart corrected and emailed to RTAG after the meeting, as well as posted online.

Mr. James noted that overall the total number of trips has increased steadily and the highest in the winter months as anticipated, even though this winter was fairly mild. Mr. Kulczycki requested that once enough data is available, it would be beneficial to have a month by month comparison from year to year. Ms. Marchant reiterated that there are so many factors as to why one month is higher than another. Mr. James inquired if the average per day in the red bar was the number of persons. Ms. Brown responded and stated the average per day was total trips within a month divided by total number of service days within the month (M-F); therefore, the blue bar was total trips and the red bar was the average per day (refer to trend chart from handouts). Ms. Marchant noted that the even and odd number of total trips provided is a reminder that not every person takes two trips as they may use other methods to return home.

***C. Champaign County Rural Public Fiscal Report (Amy Marchant)***

Ms. Marchant updated that CRIS applied for both a Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom grants for Champaign County. CRIS was notified that they were awarded the grants; however, the bad news is that IDOT only awarded operating funding and not vehicle funding for those grants. Ms. Marchant noted that there is a lot of analysis about how to run varying routes and when/where vehicles can be pulled from to make up for the gap in the rolling stock that was not awarded with these grants. On a brighter note, Ms. Marchant received word from the Veterans

Administration that they have ordered the vehicle, which was going to be used as local match for these grants. However, there is no known schedule on when that will be delivered. Ms. Marchant is hopeful it will be delivered sooner than later. Essentially, the JARC will allow for a deviated fixed route running a loop four times a day starting in Rantoul to Parkland to medical facilities on University Avenue then back to Rantoul. Ms. Bruns clarified that the award notification had been provided to CRIS and inquired when the JARC route would begin. Ms. Marchant indicated the route would begin based on when the contract from IDOT was delivered. Ms. Sierra confirmed that they were definitely awarded the grants based on the State Oversight Committee (SOC) scores. Mr. Kulczycki inquired how many vehicles were applied for in the grants and how this would impact the delivery of services. Ms. Marchant responded that two were applied for and that they would have to look into various ways to redistribute the vehicles from the current fleet that is being overbooked at this time. Ms. Bruns inquired if the two vehicles are not provided then would the grant award be given back. Ms. Marchant said they would try to still deliver the service, however lining up the resources and spending down the grant will be difficult and will impact operations. The Consolidated Vehicle Procurement (CVP) funding was discussed regarding the start-up vehicles for Champaign County.

{Ms. Ramage entered the meeting at this time.}

Ms. Marchant described how the New Freedom would be focused on medical rides on county-wide in Champaign County. The same is true for the Vermilion County New Freedom grant. Plus, this award will allow direct routes between the counties for people traveling to the VA hospital. Currently the county line is an invisible barrier for connecting trips between the counties, even though medical trips are often interchanged between the two counties. Ms. Brown described other various projects throughout Region 8 that were awarded JARC and New Freedom grants including CRIS' Vermilion County Corn Cruiser JARC route.

Ms. Marchant also reported that in October CRIS received Champaign County's fourth quarter {FY12} payment from IDOT. The first quarter {FY13} requisition for payment was submitted to IDOT; however, CRIS is waiting on IDOT to execute Champaign County's FY13 contract {note: requisitions cannot be processed until the executed contract is in place}. Ms. Marchant noted that technically CRIS is operating in Champaign County without a signed contract, which is a standard practice for IDOT, as it takes them typically longer to execute a contract than operational requisitions accrue and are submitted; although that is a concern for the CRIS MTD Board.

#### *D. CCRPC Oversight & CRIS Rural MTD (Rita Black & Amy Marchant)*

A month and a half ago, Ms. Black received a letter from IDOT-DPIT stating that CCRPC can no longer provide oversight of CRIS on behalf of Champaign County and continue to be contracted to facilitate the regional rural transit coordination for HSTP Region 8 (12 counties). This change by IDOT-DPIT is a result of the changing compliance responsibilities of the coordinator. However, county staff is not willing to facilitate the pass-through funding activities (i.e. reviewing requisitions and facilitating the RTAG meetings). Therefore, the only option to continue with operations, as they

are now, is to transition from CRIS, as the operator, to becoming the Grantee by annexing into their Rural MTD (refer to the attached steps letter provided in the handouts on the back table).

Mr. James spoke of how well the service has gone and how well CRIS has operated it and doing this for the right reasons, for the community. He has communicated this to the County Board; however there might be some resistance on the idea of annexing into the MTD. Ms. Black also outlined the recent changes in the County Board, which could prove difficult when changing the grantee status and transferring the liability to CRIS Rural MTD. The hope is this transition could be complete within six months' time. Ms. Black continued to describe how annexing into the MTD would result in Champaign County MTD board members being appointed. Those appointees could be RTAG members and/or could be comprised of county board members. Mr. James noted his recommendation would be for them to look first at the advisory board for appointees and then go from there. Likely, a county board member will be on the Rural MTD board, as well. Ms. Marchant will be working with her MTD board to adjust bylaws for the transition. Politically, right now, there are many ongoing changes on the County Board. Committees are currently being formed and Mr. James may not necessarily be reappointed to the RTAG – although he has expressed his interest in staying involved.

Mr. Kulczycki recapped the discussion by stating that: 1) IDOT (the state) sent a letter stating RPC cannot be administratively involved in oversight functions of the grantee due to possible conflicts of the HSTP Region 8 contract with compliance responsibilities assigned to Ms. Brown; 2) the county was responsible for all grantee oversight, (passing through the funding) but they were not agreeable with it, resulting in RPC filling that role on behalf of county; 3) based on the operational and administrative issues involved, the proposed solution is for Champaign County to annex into CRIS Rural MTD (Vermilion County) - as its not a taxing body and it will reduce the liability of the county. Currently, the county is not receiving any administrative funds. RPC is being reimbursed for staff time spent on monitoring the fiscal end of the pass-through and facilitating RTAG. Therefore, no funding losses for the county would occur with this change. Logistically, MTD board members could participate in conference calls to reduce the burden. During the November 8<sup>th</sup> CRIS MTD board meeting, they gave Ms. Marchant the green light to adjust the bylaws as needed and would be willing to meet 50/50 in both locations; however, CRIS' attorney advised not to adopt the new bylaws until everything for the annexation was in place. Mr. Kulczycki inquired if this was her agency's board or if this was an MTD board that gave her the green light. Ms. Marchant responded that they are two separate boards between the Center for Healthy Aging and the CRIS Rural MTD; although the MTD board is comprised of members from the Healthy Aging Board. The CRIS Center for Healthy Aging's board has 15 members and the CRIS Rural MTD board includes 5 of those 15 members, therefore they serve on both boards. This group used to be the transportation committee that became a board when the MTD was established, and they intentionally made it a small board in anticipation of Champaign joining their board. Ms. Marchant noted this was a recommendation also made by Dave Specke, IDOT-DPIT Deputy Director). Mr. James inquired if there were other counties currently doing this, and Ms. Marchant confirmed there were.

Mr. James described items needed, which included Ms. Marchant providing bullet points concerning what this entails, (similar to the letter provided) concerning the no taxation aspects); then calling Ms. Busey (County Administrator) to provide updates and request the state's attorney review all documents, such as the needed resolution.

Mr. James noted that this is done with a lot of other groups, so they should be familiar with what is involved. It is hoped to include this on the agenda by January and completed by March to help with the transition. The group discussed all the political issues involved and the county board process. The documents need to be worded to help explain how it works, and provide examples when submitting to the board. Mr. Kulczycki asked if there was any other reasonable option besides annexation. The group concluded that this was the best way to move forward.

The annual service report as described in the bylaws will go before the Champaign County Board in November on the Thursday after Thanksgiving.

There was a consensus that RPC proceed in this direction to annex into the Champaign County Rural Public Transportation Grant into CRIS rural MTD. Mr. Seamus recommended adding language as to where the funding is coming from. A letter from RTAG, signed by Mr. Kulczycki, will be prepared and sent to the Champaign County Board.

## VI. Old Business

### A. *Update – CRIS Rural Rider Letter (Amy Marchant)*

The CRIS letter (tan handout) was distributed, explaining the changes in the Rural Rider program, now referred to as the Senior Passport Program. The changes for the rural rider program are going into effect on December 1<sup>st</sup>. This letter was sent to all riders and the response was fairly quick. In particular, the Circle of Friends (COF) riders wanted no fares be required for the transportation of their five clients. The fare is \$5 each way. Ms. Marchant is looking at the possibility of using the New Freedom grant to cover the cost of these trips. The cost is currently being paid by the riders and the COF is not interested in entering into a service contract to cover the cost of the transportation. However, COF could get the cost reimbursed by the state if they enter into a service contract. In doing so, they would have to pay for it and wait for the state to reimburse. COF did contact East Central Illinois Area on Aging (ECIAAA) regarding the changes and they confirmed the changes to the program. Ms. Marchant also requested the East Central Illinois Area on Aging if the funding that was turned down by Piatt County could go toward the large demand of seniors for transportation in Champaign County.

### B. *CCRPC Rural Mobility Transportation Plan & HSTP Update (Ryan McCoy & Eileen Sierra-Brown) –*

Due to time, this item was tabled until the next meeting. The presentation was going to cover months added since the last meeting to the origin and destination hot spot maps (same as presented last time, just with new data collected). All of which can be emailed to RTAG after this meeting.

- VII. **Announcements** - Ms. Marchant announced that the bike rack CCRPC referred them to (a spare one CUMTD had acquired) was, in fact, installed and available for any riders at this time.
- VIII. **Audience Participation** – There was no audience participation.
- IX. **Adjournment** – Meeting was adjourned at 5:09 PM. Next meeting is on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 4:00 PM in the John Dimit Room.