



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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

DATE: Thursday, August 29th, 2013

LOCATION: Lyle Shields Room (POD 300), 1776 E Washington St., Urbana, IL 61802

+Proxy #Chair *Voting

Attendee	Group Representation	Organization
Stan James	*County Board	Champaign County Board Liaison
Chris Bruns	*Medical	The Pavilion
#Andy Kulczycki	*People with Low Income(s)	Community Service Center of Northern Champaign County
Elaine Palencia	*People with Disabilities	Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board
Seamus Reily	*Employment	Parkland College, Institutional Advancement
Mary Sleeth	*Seniors	St. Joseph Resident
Debra Busey	Administrator	Champaign County
Rita Morocoima-Black	Executive Director	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Amber King	Planner	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Eileen Sierra-Brown	HSTP Coordinator	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Amy Marchant	Public Operator Staff	CRIS Rural MTD & CRIS Healthy Aging
Kathy Cooksey	Public Operator Staff	CRIS Rural MTD & CRIS Healthy Aging
April Brown	Public Operator Staff	CRIS Rural MTD & CRIS Healthy Aging

Agenda

- I. Call to Order – Mr. Kulczycki called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.
- II. Roll Call – Ms. Brown called the roll. A quorum was established.
- III. Audience Participation – None; therefore, the group went around the room and introduced themselves.

IV. Approval of Agenda – The agenda was approved (motion James, second Bruns, and motion carried unanimously).

V. Approval of Minutes – *Meeting of May 8th, 2013*

Ms. Palencia requested that lines 18-19 are phrased in a way that doesn't indicate her as the responding person to Ms. Bruns questions; as its not clear who actually provided the response to Ms. Bruns question. Ms. Bruns motioned to approve the minutes as amended, Mr. Kulczycki seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

VI. New Business

A. *Champaign County 4th Quarter & Annual FY13 CRIS Service Report*

Ms. Brown reviewed the draft 4th Quarter FY13 (tan handout) Service Report she prepared based on data received from CRIS. Two additional handouts were prepared by Amber King, the primary planner working on the small rural plan; these handouts included: 1) *Overall Trip Trend* chart breaking out total trips per month along with the average trips per business day that dates back to the first month CRIS operated rural public transit in Champaign County (February 2011); and 2) type types, overall, and average trips a day 4th Quarter 2012 vs. 2013 comparison charts. Last page in the handouts was the updated Demand Response Zone map that had changed per committee's request from three to four zones.

Ms. Brown said on a side note that the new "*Trip Request Denials*" column listed (first page) comprises of total trips denied at the time a person requested to schedule a trip. Therefore, the total of denials listed here is greater than, the total individuals denied the service requested as people commonly ask for round trips. It's important to distinguish this, because in the IDOT quarter requisitions submitted – they ask operators to report individuals denied and not total trips denied. While collecting both sets of data, the report shows trips denied because it is more reflective of possible volume of services that were not accommodated. However, note it also is an approximate because its based on the request at the time and excludes any future resulting trips if the one request had been accommodated (example, employment one-time trip request could of resulted in more daily trips requested from the one person once they start utilizing the service).

Ms. Palencia inquired about how trip denials are defined and categorized. Ms. Brown further explained that CRIS used their own trip denial log sheet titled *Refused Ride Sheet CRIS Rural Mass Transit District* when someone calls in requesting a trip that could not be accommodated within an hour (before or after) requested time then that trip requested is classified as a denial and recorded as required and defined by IDOT for any public transit operator (including the urbanized Paratransit service). For CRIS's denial log, there is a column for *Date of Denial, Name, Date requested for Ride, Destination, and Reason for Denial*. Ms. Brown noted that the denial log data was collected and is being analyzed as part of the small rural plan.

Quarterly Service Report highlights included:

- A total 4,198 trips provided

- Two 6-passenger mini-vans and two 14-passenger medium duty vehicles driving a total 57,459 miles for 2,465.5 hours (excluding driver and dispatcher office hours);
- Over a total of 62 business days (Mon-Fri). She noted that rural general public transit service expanded to countywide on May 1st;
- Previously, County-wide rural transit service was only available to seniors (i.e. Rural Rider and later Senior PassPort Programs) with public transit only available to residents within the Rantoul High School District;
- Conversely, average trip service provided per day decreased between May to June, although overall trip totals have flat lined and are consistent;
- There were no new areas served in Champaign County since the last quarterly report as seen in the new registered rider breakout chart; and
- In the quarterly comparisons on the last page, medical trips continue to

Ms. Palencia referring to the minutes approved today, the comments regarding needed outreach to Broadlands and Foosland. She inquired if anything additional had been done or was planned. Ms. Brown responded that while there are awareness programs available that is a question for CRIS regarding their outreach efforts. Ms. Marchant responded that additional marketing efforts had been done through outreach to human service agencies. Ms. Bruns indicated that Broadlands and Foosland population is likely not that large and has less zero vehicle homes. Ms. Brown indicated that outreach was recommended for those areas in the last report, based on the US Census demographic information that indicated a concentration of people with disabilities and seniors live in those towns and therefore, new demand was more likely if outreach efforts were marketed to those villages. Further, Ms. Brown noted that at the last RTAG meeting members agreed to do a soft marketing campaign after hearing of CRIS' concerns regarding Champaign's system capacity and expanding county-wide. Ms. Marchant confirmed and noted their surprise regarding the June service numbers as CRIS had anticipated there would even be more of a decrease in demand as expanding to county-wide entailed altering how the vehicles were distributed to different areas. She indicated that once the system changed, frequent riders adjusted their schedules, and since then the numbers have gone back up in July. Ms. Cooksey also pointed out that with the Rural Rider Program being cut by the sequester – seniors continue to travel at the discounted fare but its no longer a suggested donation and this change results in seniors traveling less often. Mr. Kulczycki suggested adding the trip denials and new registered riders to be added to the Overall Trend Chart to better compare changes in service and impact on riders. Ms. Brown confirmed this could be added.

The quarterly report was approved to be placed on file (motion James, second Bruns, motion carried unanimously).

A. *FY13 Champaign County Fiscal Close Out Report*

Ms. Cooksey reviewed the *Fiscal Year End Operating Close Out Report* for Champaign County, an annual data report required by IDOT that CRIS prepares and submits, which covers all system operating expenses and service numbers throughout the year. In FY13,

first broken out are the average wages and total salaries paid for one full-time and seventeen part-time drivers (i.e. "Operators"); at the bottom total Other Salaries paid per job title for dispatchers for managers is outlined. Mr. James inquired about the large amount of overtime accrued by the full-time operator listed in the first section. He additionally inquired if CRIS had considered hiring another part-time driver to reduce the amount of overtime occurring and/or if that was a special route or something where the overtime could not be avoided. Ms. Cooksey responded that full-time position was a driver-trainer and overtime hours occurred when he was training new drivers. However, the driver-trainer is no longer on staff and the position is not going to be filled as the Director of Transportation (Marcus Hancock) has taken over training the drivers. Mr. James further inquired about the report's structure regarding average salary. Ms. Cooksey confirmed it was a report form created/required by IDOT.

Continuing onto the second page, service delivered for FY13 and operating expenses. Highlights included: Actual Vehicle Miles = 231,684; Actual peak hours how many vehicles were used = 7; Actual Vehicle Hours = 9,268. The ridership breakout reflects the total trips provided to a specific demographic for the total 16,972 trips provided in FY13. Ms. Brown pointed out that Paratransit Service category is something stipulated by IDOT and not really applicable to rural ridership numbers. Then at the bottom of the second page, operating data for the averages is provided. Mr. Kulczycki asked what does this section really mean. Mr. James responded it was an average and then inquired about vehicle devices that inform the driver of their driving performance. Ms. Cooksey indicated the vehicles do not current have that kind of device onboard. Farebox revenue is out pocket expense paid by individual riders. Ms. Cooksey indicated there was no deficit because grant reimbursement covered all operating expenses, although this doesn't reflect the delayed IDOT reimbursements timeframe. . Ms. Brown inquired how much of the total grant award was spent down. Ms. Cooksey responded \$318, 667 of the \$525,100 awarded for Section 5311 and Downstate funding. Ms. Marchant pointed out the additional vehicles that should be delivered and will allow more ability to spend down all awards. Mr. Kulczycki asked if any action needed to be taken on this report. The report is for RTAG member reference and does not require a motion. Short discussion on the need for local match to pull down grant awards was held.

VII. Old Business

A. *Update on Rural MTD Creation* –

Ms. Busey and Ms. Black recapped the new PCOM requirements starting on January 1st, 2014 and how that has resulted in: the ongoing MTD formation discussions and the June meeting held between staff and governing board chairs from Champaign County, Vermilion County, and CRIS Rural MTD. During the June meeting, concerns outlined by IDOT regarding joining CRIS Rural MTD were discussed and proposed solutions were provided to CRIS and Vermilion County. The issues included the Trustee appointment process and authority, distribution of trustees per population vs. service, the name of the

new MTD, and the location of the facilities. The main concern communicated by IDOT was the separation of CRIS Healthy Aging Center from the Rural MTD as a unit of government, in particular separation of the governing boards and facilities. At the conclusion of the meeting, Vermilion County was going to take the proposed solutions and discuss these with the CRIS Board and let Champaign County know their decision. Several weeks later, Ms. Black received a phone call from Ms. Marchant confirming that the Vermilion County Chair was calling the Champaign County Chair to state their response and that the main decision was to not separate but strengthen the relationship between CRIS Rural MTD and Healthy Aging boards. IDOT was informed of this decision; they were not pleased with this response, and advised reaching out to Piatt County Public Transportation (Piattran) to provide the service given the requirements for January 1st. Then, Ms. Black and Ms. Brown met with Piattran to see if this was a possibility to provide Champaign's rural transit service. Piattran indicated that they would have to take the issue to their county's Transportation sub-committee as a department of that County. When the issue was brought forth to the Piatt County Transportation sub-committee, given the new PCOM requirements at this time, Piatt felt it was not possible to provide Champaign's service by January 1st. However, they were open to working with Champaign County and would be interested in discussing doing so at a later date. Ms. Bruns asked for clarification about why forming an MTD with a different operator was being considered. Ms. Black responded that to bring the PCOM onto Champaign County's staff who is not an HSTP Coordinator, and continue with relationship as is with CRIS would be difficult. There is a general preference to form an MTD, given the PCOM requirements. Ms. Marchant responded that the separation between CRIS Healthy Aging and MTD involving auditors etc. was provided concurrence on that change. While CRIS has been provided rural transit for 30 years, they do not want to lose the CRIS piece of the service. She additionally noted that IDOT has been back and forth about what is and is not permitted for separating and housing the aging and MTD in one facility. Ms. Marchant indicated that CRIS wants to see the Champaign County service continue and does feel the MTD formation is the best option for Champaign, given the governing style of Champaign. Mr. James inquired about getting IDOT to put in writing their concerns regarding governing conflicts of interests between the boards. Ms. Black described that IDOT-DPIT deputy director, Dave Spaecke, was attending the June meeting between the chairs and stated in that meeting and confirmed that the list of concerns provided during the meeting were an issue including direct vs. indirect cost issues, and if Champaign County should establish its own MTD. The group discussed all possible solutions regarding MTD governing structure and housing PCOM, including: oversight, staffing burdens, Trustee appointments and associations/branding. RTAG directed RPC staff to request from IDOT for an extension of PCOM requirement waiver for 6 months to a year; and to further see if there are other solutions such as having CUMTD house the PCOM to oversee the Champaign County's services.

Ms. Brown forgot to discuss the annual report that was provided in the handouts. The group reviewed the annual report (green handout). **The annual report was approved to be placed on file (motion James, second Seamus, motion carried unanimously).**

B. Update on JARC & New Freedom Grant Routes & Transportation Services – Ms. Marchant summarized the meetings between Mike Roce regarding possible service contracts. Additionally, for the New Freedom grant for the route between Rantoul and Parkland, vehicle leasing options were being conserved and ongoing conversations with Mid-West Transit are taking place.

C. Rural Mobility Plan (Amber King & Eileen Sierra-Brown, CCRPC) – Due to time constraints today, Rural Mobility Plan presentation was tabled until the next regular quarterly meeting.

VIII. **Announcements** –

Ms. Palencia announced that the Disability Expo is coming up on October 13th at the new Fluid Events Center [After the meeting, the Disability Expo had to move locations due to ongoing construction].

Mr. Kulczycki announced that Tom Ramage had called about the United Way fundraiser event following this meeting.

IX. **Audience Participation** – None.

X. **Adjournment** – Meeting was adjourned at 4:24 p.m.