

MINUTES
GREEN BAY TRANSIT COMMISSION
Monday, March 19, 2014
901 University Avenue, Commission Room
8:15 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Roger Kolb, Chair; John Withbroe, Vice Chair; Scottie Corrigan, Secretary; Kevin Kuehn, Ron Antonneau, and David Harp

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Alderman Jim Warner

OTHERS PRESENT: Tom Wittig, Transit Director; Patty Kiewiz, Assistant Transit Director; Essie Fels, Recording Secretary; Jason Drake, Mechanic Foreman; Lisa Conard, Brown County Planning; Vincent Caldara, MV General Manager; Alderman Timothy DeWane, District 4; Ned Dorff, Julaine Schmidt, Larry Juley, and April Herlache

1. Call the meeting to order.

Chair R. Kolb called the meeting to order at 8:16 a.m.

2. Approval of Agenda.

K. Kuehn made a motion to approve the March 19, 2014 agenda. J. Withbroe seconded the motion. Motion carried.

3. Approval of the minutes of the February 19, 2014 meeting.

K. Kuehn made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 19, 2014 meeting. J. Withbroe seconded the motion. Motion carried.

4. Presentation: *Green Bay Metro - 2014 Annual Route Review and Analysis Report*, by Brown County Planning Commission.

L. Conard stated that route reviews are conducted on a quarterly basis to determine the operational efficiency of the system and the effectiveness of each fixed route. They are done every quarter to illustrate how the routes perform on a seasonal basis (during cold and warm weather, when school is in session and is not in session, etc.). BC publishes a comprehensive overview every spring. The detail is shown on Tables 1-5.

L. Conard noted system changes from 2012 to 2013:

- Fixed route ridership was only slightly lower
- Metro implemented a number of route structure changes on the west side
- Metro did not increase fixed route fares
- The Oneida Tribe of Indians discontinued its partnership/financial contribution
- The limited service routes, Green Saturday, and Game Day Service continue to produce good ridership

- The paratransit program agency fare was increased from \$7.00 to \$8.00
- The number of paratransit rides was well managed by staff

L. Conard also noted that paper transfers were eliminated, Google translate was available on website, and staff used YouTube for public service announcements.

L. Conard referred to page 27 of the report and stated that federal, state, and local dollars continue to be tight. This will continue to impact staff's ability to acquire capital items, particularly buses. Buses have been retired without being replaced. L. Conard reviewed the table below:

Bus Quantity	Year	Make	Length	Age of Vehicles in Years
removed 6	1982	GMC	40	0
removed 6	1986	FLXBLE	35	0
1	1995	Gillig-Phantom	40	20
removed 5	1995	Gillig-Phantom	40	0
removed 6	1998	Gillig-Phantom	40	0
3	1999	DuPont Trolleybus	34	15
9	2003	New Flyer	30	11
3	2004	New Flyer	30	10
9	2009	New Flyer	35	5
10	2011	Gillig Low Floor	35	3
3 approved	2015	TBD	40	
Average Age of the active 35 buses:				7.69

J. Withbroe asked if staff would recommend the elimination of bus routes #17 and #18 if ridership remains low. L. Conard stated that is a decision the affected participating communities and the Transit Commission would have to make. At this point, the locals are willing to support the routes financially.

K. Kuehn suggested Metro staff provide an overview of the service to the Brown County Board as soon as the new Board is seated this spring.

T. Wittig agreed to do so.

The Commission thanked L. Conard for the report.

5. Discussion: 24-Hour Transit Service for Green Bay Metro.

T. Wittig stated he was pleased that Ald. Tim DeWane encouraged Green Bay Metro to think outside the box at the Common Council meeting to explore 24-hour bus service. He also stated he would rather have elected officials thinking about how to expand public transportation rather than cutting services.

Tom invited Ald. DeWane to talk a little bit on what he has heard out in the community and some of the ideas he has been thinking about.

Ald. DeWane, District 4 stated he was at the Brown County Library to attend the Debate Forum for District 4 and 7. While at this Forum he spoke with former Ald. Ned Dorff and other people who asked questions regarding having 24-hour service, such as: if we can gather as much information as to whether it would be one (1) bus or one (1) route, how much would it cost? They suggested doing a study to see if it would be beneficial to the people of the City of Green Bay.

K. Kuehn asked Ald. DeWane if they were looking for something specific, such as 2nd and/or 3rd shift, or a geographical area. He said if there is anytime we can improve our service we would want to look at it.

Ald. DeWane stated groups such as the St. John's Homeless Shelter, NEW Community Shelter, and other homeless areas as well as those without cars would benefit, as some of those people do have jobs and need transportation all hours.

K. Kuehn stated he would like to gather information from St. John's and/or NEW to see where service is needed as he is in favor of getting people to work but not necessarily picking up at bars at 2 o'clock in the morning.

Ald. DeWane stated one way we could possibly do this is tap the media, as there is an area of comments for all the channels and stations; the Press Gazette.

K. Kuehn stated Metro could take comments and suggestions from our existing riders via comment cards on the buses or through the website, regarding 24-hour service and that we need to know where specifically service is needed. He also suggested that Ald. DeWane provide Metro with contacts or giving individuals the number to phone Patty or Tom, so they can provide some feedback.

L. Conard stated that staff has conducted numerous passenger and non-passenger surveys over the years. The number one request is for Sunday service, primarily for home-church trips. The second most requested service is for 24 hours.

L. Conard mentioned the local Mobility Manger and corresponding transportation program. The staff person and service is covered by a grant and contributions from a non-profit foundation. The Mobility Manger is available to work one-on-one to help solve employment related transportation issues. Vanpools and no-interest car loans may be available. The Mobility Manager can be contacted through the Wisconsin Job Center on Cherry Street.

L. Conard also discussed a program offered by Valley Transit (Appleton area) called "The Connector". The Connector is a demand-response shared-ride program. Service is provided by a for-profit-transportation company under contract with Valley Transit. The United Way Fox Cities

covers a portion of the cost of the program. The Connector extends the bus routes beyond boundaries and bus hours. The service is designed around those who work second and third shifts who need travel either to a fixed route or directly to the employer. The Connector costs up to \$5.00 per one-way trip.

L. Conard suggested that a demand-response shared-ride program similar to The Connector may be the best option if the Transit Commission is looking at meeting this need.

T. Wittig stated we are going to investigate what we have just talked about. In order for the Fixed Route System to be really efficient 24-hours you need to be sure it is connecting throughout the entire system with each municipality. I believe we will spend a lot of concentration on how "Demand Response" will work in the Green Bay area. Especially as we build these partnerships that we intend to do with some of the cab companies going forward. We are going to look at it both ways Fixed Route an infrastructure of using smaller vehicles other private companies to partner to get people to work at midnight instead of running your entire public transit system. We will look at both angles but more going to be focused on Demand Response.

J. Withbroe inquired if Metro had any cost factors?

T. Wittig stated we have looked at the Fixed Route just for the City of Green Bay alone would be approximately \$1.4 million in local share dollars to do the additional hours as proposed; the other municipalities portions would also go up significantly.

J. Withbroe inquired if there is any grant money out there for Metro to receive.

T. Wittig stated no, not at this time. Metro would receive more state dollars because we would be providing more service. Federal dollars are fixed for Metro.

Ned Dorff-1321 Emily Street

Thanked Ald. DeWane for bringing this topic up.

He fully supports expanding as much as Green Bay Metro Transit can and hopes that will include 24-hour service as he works with a lot of families that do not have vehicles or have limited mobility, and rely on Metro for transportation. He stated that as a taxpayer he would be ok paying his share of the \$1.4 million burden on the City of Green Bay because if we're looking at 100,000 people in Green Bay it would only cost \$14.00 per person. Ned appreciates Mr. Kuehn's idea of looking into what businesses might be able to sponsor some of this and seeing if some of the bigger employers in town, who have the third shift, would be willing to assist in order to get those employees to work. Thank you for your consideration.

R. Kolb stated he would like a report on additional information on the 24-hour service brought back to the Commission.

T. Wittig stated he would have additional information with some numbers for the June agenda for further ideas.

T. Wittig stated we need to look at the "Demand Response" and use our financial resource where it is actually needed.

Ald. DeWane asked Tom if he would also be able to look at other cities similar to ours that possible have the 24-hours and the demand response service.

R. Kolb commented it would be interesting knowing what Appleton's cost for their demand response service is.

6. Directors Report.

T. Wittig stated he wanted to go over a couple of things that was handed out on the operating expense reports. He stated ridership is down due to a brutal winter but the farebox revenue is higher.

T. Wittig announced the February employee of the month, Julaine Schmidt. Julaine has been with Metro since 2006. She does an awesome job. She has excellent customer service and a great safety record.

K. Kuehn asked Julaine what is your favorite part of the job.

J. Schmidt stated she has been State of Wisconsin this is my 30th year. She was an employee for Brown County before she came to Metro. J. Schmidt stated she has worked with many colorful individuals over the years. She thanked everyone for her award.

T. Wittig gave a brief overview of the Paratransit service and MV Transportation. First off they continue to do an excellent job. Our 60-minutes have been down significantly, as well as their safety record. He stated that Metro will need to put out for RFP in the next couple of months as MV has approached us to look at other pricing models as our ridership continues to decrease.

R. Kolb asked what the status of the contract with MV Transportation is.

T. Wittig stated the contract goes to 2016. MV is in their first year of their two year options. He stated the Paratransit service continues to decrease for numerous reasons; Patty and Essie have done a great job of reviewing the applications and conducting ADA assessments thoroughly, and more people by choice are using Fixed Route as they are now qualified to ride for free. For the tax payer a \$24.00 subsidy turns into a \$3.95 subsidy. It is a win-win situation for the rider, for the tax payer, and for the transit system.

K. Kuehn asked if we are going to put out an RFP somewhere else. He also inquired about the length of the current contract with MV.

P. Kiewiz stated it was three (3) year contract with two (2) one year renewal options.

K. Kuehn asked whether the (2) one year renewal options were for Metro or MV.

P. Kiewiz stated yes either way. She stated we are into our first 1 year option now.

K. Kuehn asked if we go with a different vender what will MV do with all those vehicles that have been branded to Metro.

T. Wittig stated in yesterday's meeting with MV Transportation if Metro does go out for an RFP and the contract was awarded to a different vendor MV has made it very clear they would make the transition very good. The equipment and vehicles are MV Transportations.

P. Kiewiz stated MV is very willing to work with Metro to give us the time to go out for RFP.

J. Withbroe asked if he can get a copy of the current contract.

P. Kiewiz stated yes, absolutely.

7. Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business.

P. Kiewiz stated in your packets you will find the operating expenses report for January and February. She gave a brief overview of the revenue and expense reports. P. Kiewiz stated if the Commission would have any questions, Pam or I would be happy to address them.

P. Kiewiz stated Tom Karman from Schenck will be here in a month or two to do a presentation on the 2013 Annual Financial Audit for Green Bay Metro.

R. Kolb asked how is our ridership compared to the rest of the state; Wisconsin overall is down.

P. Kiewiz commented riderships in some areas have had increases; others have been status quo, and some areas have been down.

T. Wittig stated Metro had a triennial review a couple weeks ago and it went very well. I want to thank Patty for all of her efforts. Of course, Patty made that happen and everyone on staff; Cindy, Essie, Pam, Karen, Jason and Lisa from Brown County Planning. It is a really good reflection with the Federal Transit Administration that we are organized up here.

R. Antonneau commented when he was in Milwaukee about a month ago they had did a media story regarding the overall nationwide transit ridership being down. They had interviewed some people to figure out why in a poor economy, when people have less money, and the cost of travel is more; why ridership for mass transit continues to slide national. We are not the only ones seeing the decline in ridership.

T. Wittig stated a lot of people have their opinions, but nationwide transit is up and Wisconsin is down in general for specific reasons: some of it is because of the local level, some of the decision they have made and others is the climate.

L. Conard stated often times those articles doesn't address the level of service. Many properties in Wisconsin have gotten smaller over the last few years, including Green Bay Metro the last hour of the day was eliminated making our system smaller. In some areas systems have grown and other has contracted. That is where some of those articles fail to address.

P. Kiewiz stated Metro had pretty quiet days due to having had a colder winter than we have had in a long time and school closings were higher than normal.

S. Corrigan asked if there is anything new with the Greyhound situation.

T. Wittig stated he had sent out further communications to Greyhound. We have not received any response that is in terms satisfactory for both parties. No news to report at this time.

D. Harp acknowledged the training the drivers receive and their courtesy for others when signaling lane changes.

P. Kiewiz thanked the Commissioner and commented the drivers do a great job.

8. Establish the date of the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Transit Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, May 21, 2014 at 8:15 a.m.

9. Adjourn.

Motion made by K. Kuehn second by R. Antonneau, to adjourn at 9:00 a.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Essie Fels