

Johnson County Paratransit Advisory Board

Minutes

August 17, 2007

1410 South First Ave., Iowa City

Present:

Members: Lynne Stamus, Terrence Neuzil, Sally Stutsman, Mike O'Donnell, Brian Buelow, Vicky Robrock, Dee Vanderhoef, Valerie Scher

Ex-Officio: Roger Goedken, Marc Rahe, William Gorman

Others: Tom Brase, SEATS Director, Ben Young, Bionic Bus, Angie Conard

Absent:

Members: Chris Reynolds

Ex-Officio: Dave Purdy

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1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m.

Chairperson's Report:

- a. Tom and Lynne met with Loeb sack on August 10, 2007 to ask about the progress on funding for the Johnson County SEATS facility and if there was any possibility of getting the money awarded during Representative Leach time in office. The money awarded spring of 2006 (\$250,000) was not authorized in the October legislative session, so Tom and Lynne were there to follow up on the \$600,000 that was recently requested. Tom noted that he received an e-mail (see e-mail below) on August 14, 2007 stating we did not get anymore funds awarded for the facility. *See e-mail below:

Mr. Brase, thank you for following up on the Johnson County SEATS Para-Transit Facility Program. Please be aware that after examining this project thoroughly, Congressman Loeb sack believed it to be a great project and very beneficial to the community and requested funding through the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development FY2008 Appropriations bill. We also submitted the letter from Robyn Jacobson with the East Central Iowa Council of Governments to show just how much support there is in the local community (attached).

Our office also spoke with Iowa Department of Transportation to ensure they were supportive of the project, and they were, which was also noted when we submitted the request for funding to again show the support and importance of the project. Further, we noted this project had received funding in the past and was supposed to receive funding for FY2007.

Unfortunately, this project was not funded in the House or Senate Transportation, Housing and Urban Development FY2008 Appropriations bill. While our office did the most we could to prove the merits and necessity of the funds, it did not make the final bill.

I apologize this project was not chosen to receive funding this year and offer our offices assistance in the future. As a side note, have you examined any grant opportunities for funding?

Thanks, Tyler Wilson.

Office of Congressman Loeb sack (IA-2)

- b. **Lynne:** Would like to know about return trips in the manifest for drivers.
Tom: The manifest was custom built so it will be installed Monday night.
Lynne: Went to Maryland Paratransit site. They put out a newsletter with cost, lost and found, and bus stops. Can we come up with a newsletter?

Tom: Yes, we have been working on getting an e-mail subscription letter put together for vendors and riders. They would be able to sign up for the updates at the Johnson County website.

2. Director's Report:

- a. New facility design:** Still in progress. Tom contacted Loeb sack's office, Tyler Wilson in Washington said they sent it through but it didn't go through. \$100 thousand went through but \$250 thousand did not go through due to lame duck session. Harkins office said they will look at it again but we are still waiting for a call.

Dee: How critical is this to move ahead?

Tom: Working with Richard Claborne on it.

Terrence: A little background - \$800 thousand commitment. Garage and office space will be a shared service with Secondary Roads. Additional funds will go through the rural general fund.

Tom: We are applying for a grant and funds through Neumann & Monson, which is looking to see if we can apply through the white group (go green). There are concerns about wetlands and the drainage into the pond near the future location. It is important to us that the new facility doesn't affect the environment in any negative way. SEATS will share equipment and maintenance and will save by having a fuel station on site. Fiber optic and radio towers are also on site so this will eliminate tower rent. Part of the new facility will have storage space for the county.

Vicky: Is there RIF funding? ECCOG can put in an application for this.

Tom: Will look into this. Timeline – End of September. Bid by March 15. The current landlord of the SEATS facility said SEATS can stay longer if needed.

Terrence: The garage part is not complicated, administration building will take longer. The land is lined up but they need feedback from all departments.

August 25 – Finalize drafts

Public hearing – Go before the board to set everything up

Send out bids – Get started ASAP after getting bids

Dee: Will it be Geo Thermal? How soon will we find out?

Tom: Already got the go ahead from consultants for the Geo Thermal.

Dee: Is this the kind of stuff that there are problems with heating in the floor after pouring cement?

Terrence: Funding is what is slowing it down. Lost one million from Coralville because it is located in Iowa City. Still trying to find funding.

Brian: Will there be heat in the garage?

Tom: Yes

Brian: Don't want diesel to gel.

Dee: Will they do the repair on vehicles at this facility?

Tom: Yes, Secondary Roads will share bays to do maintenance.

Dee: Ventilation concerns are not a problem because maintenance is in a different building?

Tom: Yes, but we want to build with that in mind

Terrence: Tom Brase and Greg Parker will look into cost effectiveness of having a fleet manager versus sending the work out. Secondary Roads is through the rural fund and SEATS is through the general fund.

Vicky: Have you considered the difference in the Drug/alcohol testing for maintenance workers?

Lynne: Is everyone in support of Geo Thermal/OSHA standards?

Tom: No – basic studies.

Dee: Iowa City has gone a step further. If it is local government money they are putting in the basics.

Terrence: Projected cost is \$1.6 – \$1.8 million.

- b. Tornado Procedures:** ES and SEATS are working together so there is a policy that is compatible.

Tom: What does Vicky do?

Vicky: Coralville has designated places.

Roger: Is there a criteria?

Tom: Basement if possible. Ask if there is a safe area wherever they are. Should our drivers help?

William: More warnings are being called now, do we leave it up to the drivers or do they go by the warning for the county? Need to make it clear who is legally responsible.

Dee: There are warnings on t.v. and radio for hours. By the time sirens go off in the city or county it is imminent.

Tom: It is hard with a large county, it could be fine in one part and not another.

Dave: What is the definition of warning? Do they go by national weather or local?

Dee: We need a legal opinion.

Tom: They said go by national weather service but he will check again.

Lynne: Who do we contact?

Tom: Scott from the attorney's office said that once a warning is sounded you better go by it.

Terrence: The Cities do a separate warning anymore.

Tom: What if it is the same distance to home vs a safe area and they want to go home?

Dee: They need to go to the safe place to protect us, besides what if they have multiply passengers?

Sally: Some of the safe areas listed are only open 8-5. Do we need alternate places for other hours?

Tom: We are only in those areas between 8:30 and 4:30.

Dee: City Hall is available. Need to move people fast, how about keeping collapsible wheelchairs on each bus?

Tom: We have considered that but our buses have so little space anymore and they could be considered dangerous projectiles if not secured properly. We have fire blankets if they need to put them on the blanket and drag them.

William: We need to find out what a warning is and who declares it. When is it over and how do you know it's over.

Vicky: Any directions from office staff (in the policy)?

Tom: It is vague but it is in there.

- 3. Old Business:** Approval of last meeting's minutes with a clarification by William. He would like to clarify that the Systems building CAN NOT open their windows, because in a Geo-thermo environment you need control of the humidity. We will not know if the building is more efficient unless someone is hired to check this. Approval by Sally with William's clarification noted. Seconded by Dee.

4. New Business:

5. Open Discussion: Bridge collapse.

Dee discussed the proposed changes for transportation.

Time 21 is a state program that released a study in January. No action was taken at that time and an interim group was formed. Suggested changes were: License fee, transfer fee, and application fee. All fees are related to cost of doing business (cost for service being provided). New dollars coming in from new sources will be divided in a new method. 20 % County, 20% City, and 60% to State for state highways.

6. Next meeting is set for, November 16, 2007 at 10:30 a.m.

7. Adjourn 11:28 a.m.