

**Johnson County Paratransit Advisory Board**  
**Minutes**  
**March 3, 2006**  
**1410 South First Ave., Iowa City**

**Present:**

**Members:** Lynne Stamus, Valerie Scher, Terrence Neuzil, Sally Stutsman, Brian Buelow

**Ex-Officio:** David Purdy, Nancy Snider Overstreet, Marc Rahe

**Others:** Tom Brase, SEATS Director, Jen Samek, Bionic Bus

**Absent:**

**Members:** Dee Vanderhoef, Tom Gill, Mike O'Donnell, Chris Reynolds, Brian Buelow

**Ex-Officio:** William Gorman, Systems Unlimited

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1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 11:00 A.M. by Vice-Chair, Lynne Stamus
  2. **Chairperson's Report:** The Chair was out of town at a League of Cities meeting. There was no report.
  3. **Director's Report:**
    - a. **New Vehicle Presentation:** The director brought one of the new vehicles to be viewed by the committee after the meeting. SEATS is getting nine new buses. The purchase of the buses was publicized by the Press Citizen and pictures were shown on Channel 9, TV.

Purdy asked what was different in the new vehicles. Brase said the vehicles have a special RL suspension system from Mor/Ryde which is a better suspension system making the ride smoother and the buses last longer. The buses also have an emergency door warning sound for the emergency door when unlatched and the lift can be opened from the inside or outside when in operation. The new lifts are sensitive to weight so they cannot move up and down on the inside panel. Basically there are more safety precautions on the new buses.

Neuzil said that while it is good that all the new buses have come in, it may be a problem when they need to be replaced again. It would be better for the replacement buses to be staggered so they are not all retired at once.

Brase expressed appreciation to the county for setting funding aside each year toward the purchase of new vehicles in the future. The county pays 17% and the rest comes from Federal Grants that come through Iowa City, Coralville or ECICOG. Hopefully, with new preventive maintenance programs now in place and the vehicles being diesel, SEATS should be able to stagger the replacement of these

vehicles since they will last longer. The suggested life of the vehicles is 5 years and 100,000 miles, but with the available funding it has been closer to 200,000 and ten years. At the suggestion that perhaps two or three of the new vehicles be kept back awhile, Brase answered that SEATS is keeping three of the old diesel vehicles for use, but other factors such as the cost of maintenance for them may make using the new ones more economical and better for customer service. But he agreed that it would be good to stagger the use of new vehicles for a longer life. He added that another way lengthen the life of vehicles is to be able to keep the vehicles inside in a new facility.

- b. **Rider's Guide Revision:** The committee members received copies of the new Rider's Guide and Brase asked them to look it over and ask the Director questions or make changes. Brase said there are two changes. First, the guide was condensed and reorganized with a lot of the extra verbiage taken out. The second significant change is in the missed ride policy. The new software will allow the users to charge for unexcused missed rides. Some major riders' guides (San Francisco, Chicago) have very vague policies on missed rides; the ADA also has a vague statement that one could be suspended for missed rides. Brase would like to go to having riders pay \$1.50 for an unexcused missed ride. SEATS is willing to excuse the occasional missed ride if there is a good reason for it, but the director would like to stop the repetitive offenders from having frequent missed rides. The director would like a subcommittee formed to review and rewrite the missed ride policy. Overstreet, Stamus, Scher, and Rahe volunteered to be on the subcommittee.

Stamus had a question on the section on Medications and other medical needs under Safety Policies. Would the drivers be able to help if there is an emergency such as a heart attack, can a driver perform CPR? Brase said they would depend on protection under the Good Samaritan Law and the drivers would do what they could.

#### 4. **Old Business:**

Neuzil asked the Director for an update on the proposed new facility.

Director said they are exploring all paths toward funding. Stutsman and Lehman went to Washington D.C. to request more funds. The meetings went well and SEATS was one of the top agenda items. The funding will go to the cities that in turn will fund the SEATS facility and the county will donate the land.

The funding brings up political issues that may differ from source to source. \$100,000 is already earmarked to use for a facility feasibility study and possibly for equipment purchase. Brase is still exploring all possibilities. Neuzil asked about the time line for getting the new facility. Discussion followed on how long it would take and all agreed that SEATS will need to extend the lease on the current facility or find temporary quarters for at least another year.

On the need for radio towers, Brase said that turning to the use of cell phones along with the Mobile Data Transmitters would be the most economical way to go. The

rate for cell phones he has been told is \$200 per month for 20 phones which is significantly less than the current payment for an analogue radio tower and transmitter. For the voice radio there is a tower at Secondary Roads that could be shared.

Stutsman said the big decision will be whether to wait for the Federal Funding before building or to just go ahead with it. A discussion followed on funding and the length of time it takes for Federal funding to come through. Information has been submitted for the funding request. Brase mentioned that the office part of the facility could be built sooner than the vehicle storage building, which could be built later with Federal funding.

Neuzil said it would not hurt to go to see Leach, Grassley or Harkin, to talk to them and their staff, thank them for the money they have given us in the past and ask them to help us a little more. Also, e-mails can be sent to the representatives and staff to ask for funding, e-mail messages are far more effective than telephone or U.S. Post.

Stamus asked the Director if he could compile a report of what has been done so far to prepare for getting the new facility. It was settled that a summary would be prepared for the next meeting.

**Approval of Minutes:** Neuzil moved to approve the minutes; the motion was seconded by Overstreet and carried unanimously.

#### **5. New Business:**

Brase brought to the committee's attention that the Chairperson position has no expiration date. He asked the committee to decide on a rotation date for Chair. Neuzil said to put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

Stamus brought a copy of "A Guide to the Basics of Emergency Preparedness" developed by the Johnson County, Iowa Safety Coalition. This pamphlet is an excellent source for information on how to prepare for any possible disaster or emergency. It covers all kinds of emergencies: medical, storms, what you should have on hand at home, who and how to contact help.

#### **6. Open Discussion:**

Samek told the committee that this would probably be the last time she would be attending the meeting as she will be going to Spain soon. Another representative from Bionic Bus will be attending the next meeting. She thanked the committee for the experience of attending the meetings.

Tom Brase expressed appreciation to Jen Samek for her participation and for the Bionic Bus Service.

Stamus expressed appreciation to all the people on the Paratransit Advisory Board for their participation and work to better the transportation service.

- 7. Next meeting date: June 30, 11:00 – 12:00 at the Goodwill Industries Plant Conference Room. Please note that this date was changed after this meeting.**
- 8. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 11: 30 and those in attendance were invited to go out and see the new SEATS bus. Brase took photographs of the group with the new bus.