

Johnson County Paratransit Advisory Board

Minutes

August 18, 2009

4810 Melrose Ave, Iowa City

Present:

Members: Vicky Robrock, Brian Buelow, Marc Rahe

Ex-Officio: Roger Goedken, Dion Williams, Ann Trotter

Others: Tom Brase, SEATS Director, Angie Conard, Nick Pacha, Gina Johnson, Mary Wiemann

Absent:

Members: Rod Sullivan, Larry Meyer, Mike O'Donnell, Nancy Ostrognai

Ex-Officio:

Others: Shelby Francis, Bionic Bus, Barb Morck

1. Call to order at 10:39
2. Chairperson's Report

- a. Easter Seals Institute in Washington DC

Mark: Group of five went in July. The group focused on identifying unmet needs for transportation and overcoming physical barriers in transportation. Our community focused on local unmet needs and working with different transportation providers in the area. Different transit groups and the taxi companies. After those meetings the next step is meeting with different agencies like nursing homes and Systems to talk about what we can do together as a community to work on those things. The next step is to work with transportation providers and that will happen next month.

Tom: The Easter Seals Institutions will contact us for support.

Mark: One of the things they looked at was an assessable taxi cab to help meet some unmet needs locally.

Tom: You can send any ideas to Mark or me.

Roger: In regards to cabs, are you talking about para-transit or are you talking about person who use wheelchairs?

Mark: Just speculating solutions for unmet needs. Having taxi cabs that are wheelchair accessible. Right now I don't think any of the taxi's is wheelchair accessible. It just seems like that might be a solution. We don't want to necessarily approach a taxi cab company without discussions.

Roger: Some have vans. Not sure about the criteria but some allow half fare rides for people that can't otherwise use the city transit.

Dion: Cedar Rapids has a cabs program; they are struggling with budget cuts. Partially funded through MHDS and the City.

Roger: I think Iowa City still has that program.

Tom: I think they discontinued it but I'm not sure. It had three or four rides per year.

Tom: Other unmet needs are "door through door" instead of "door to door" service. We have clients on board that can't be left alone. If there was a volunteer program where people could go with patients to appointments inside the hospital that would help. We are looking for ideas or input.

Mary: There certainly is a demand with our population. What we see with our nutrition program is the elderly we are serving now receive meatloaf and mashed potatoes and they love this. The new "younger" menu is chicken enchiladas and refried beans and it is not as popular. The new generation is not going to accept the system, they are going to demand that cab and not wait an hour or half hour.

Roger: Is there any possibility to have the city bus come to CV Goodwill more often. This might decrease the burden on SEATS.

Vicky: That is incorrect; we are servicing that location twice an hour.

Roger: Where is that?

Vicky: Right at your store.

Roger: I consistently hear that it is 9ish and 3ish. I will check on that. It will help to get the word out.

3. Director's Report

- a. Introduction of Nick Pacha as new Billing Supervisor**
- b. Missed Rides:**

Comparison numbers, this has always been a concern.

Nick: This is something I would like to stay more on top of now. July was busy with trying to learn the system so now in August I went out and did a report and have already sent out letters for more than three missed rides. Just for comparison:

July 2008	392	July 2009	353
Aug 1- 15, 2008	187	Aug 1 -15, 2009	158

I will check them weekly and send out letters.

Mary: Are you targeting categories on those missed rides? Are they all missing rides for the same reason?

Tom: We have medical and excused missed rides that we don't track at all.

Nick: Medical missed rides do not show up in the report I run. When letters are sent out appeal forms are sent with it. If they feel the missed ride was an error beyond their control i.e. doctor was late, they can fill out the form and return it.

Mary: Do you track when it is a missed ride if it is at their house or where it is?

Nick: I don't really track that; we can do more in depth reports.

Tom: A lot of the doctor's offices cancel rides and make new rides so a missed ride is not counted.

c. Service Animals

Tom: I went to a meeting where they said the law has been changed to where we can ask for certification. We have a few riders that have pets that come on board they say they are service animals and there have been some concerns.

Dion: Where do you get certification, who decides weather it is?

Tom: Animals that are service animals now go through a certain type of process and that is all we are asking for.

Vicky: This is sort of a gray area; it is my understanding that you can not force them to produce certification.

Tom: At the last IPTA thing they said it has changed. That is why we are looking into it.

Vicky: We have had complaints on the fixed route. Customers have called asking about it because some of the animals are not very well behaved.

Dion: Do you have complaints from passengers who are allergic?

Tom: With one animal we have had a complaint because it scared a rider. Is it a behavioral issue?

Dion: Some of the people I work with it doesn't matter if it is aggressive. If it is a dog they are terrified of it.

Tom: That is why we are looking into it.

4. Old Business

a. Approval of minutes by Mary, second by Brian.

5. New Business

Ann: Supported employment that is funded my Medicaid. Medicaid states that they have to prove they have exhausted all other avenues for transportation so the coaches have to drive them. Alert you that you might receive calls saying they need transportation.

Dion; It might sound odd but what they need is a letter from SEATS to say no we don't have a ride available. It is in the person's best interest.

Tom: I have never sent a letter like this. I have done it when someone has requested a vehicle. Are you saying that we should send the letter saying that it has not been exhausted?

Dion: No, say we have a person that needs a ride to this business at this time and from this business at this time because that's their job. You send us a letter saying we (SEATS) can not accommodate that at this time. Then this is documentation saying that they asked and they can't get it so the job coach is the one that does the driving.

Vicky: How does that work with ADA?

Dion: If there are times you can't do it's because truly your rides are full. Other times you can say as providers we are interested in trying to facilitate all of this and would rather use public options.

Mark: So you just want to give Tom a heads up that you will be trying to schedule rides for clients to jobs.

Tom: If you could leave SEATS out of it would be better for us.

Dion: We can't leave you out of it. We have to ask.

Tom: Like Vicky said, we can't deny rides. They might get there early but they may not get there at the same time.

Dion: A lot of times that would work too, you could say we can't get you there at this time but we can get you there at this time. From providers stand point they can say does this work for this person with this level of disability. Can they be left along for that amount of time?

Vicky: In that instance you would use your "window" and then we are still okay with ADA.

Ann: If a rider can not be left alone then it will not work.

6. Open Discussion

Set next meeting, 10:30 does not work for several people.
Would like to move to Goodwill Plant instead of SEATS facility.

Friday Nov. 20 at 11:30 Goodwill Plant

Adjourn 11:07