

The St. Cloud Metro Bus Rider Advisory Committee (RAC) held a meeting on Tuesday, March 20, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the Mobility Training Center, 700 W. St. Germain St, St. Cloud, MN

The following individuals were in attendance: Kim Hoff, Ryan Daniel, Dave Green, Doug Diedrichsen, Suzanne Driessen, David Williamsen, Bruce Benner, Jenny Svihel, and Brenda Severson. Visitor: Jerry Schmitz, fixed route operator.

Welcome. Ryan welcomed everyone. He mentioned there was a new member in the group as well as being a new staff member (Doug was introduced a little later in the agenda).

Public Open Forum. Jerry mentioned he had a customer who asked about the day pass. They were wondering if it could be valid for 24 hours similar to what Metro Transit offers. Ryan felt it would need to be called something else because it's currently good for "the day" of our normal operating service. If it was a 24 hr. pass, we would have to charge a higher fare and possibly call it a different name. Jerry also had a request for later Saturday service. Ryan said as the routes are being looked at, we can also look at later service hours. Jerry commented that a lot of people are from out of town/ different states and they are surprised by the short service hours.

Old Business.

- 1) RAC email. Kim stated there weren't any emails. Ryan mentioned there are two openings on the RAC committee and that there should be a new member next meeting. Kim mentioned that Alexis from United Way apologized for not being at the meeting but she had an out of town conference that she had to attend.
- 2) Operations Updates. Dave mentioned that the stop announcements have been updated. Bruce commented that Route 33 leaving the hospital is still off. It announces the Technical College too late (almost to the YMCA when it makes the announcement). Bruce also mentioned that people are requesting that the Route 1 schedule be in the bus shelter by the Al Loehr apartments (even though the stop is across the street). Dave stated that was brought to the attention of the Marketing department and it will be taken care of.

Dave announced that accidents, both preventable and non-preventable are down significantly as compared to the same time frame the last year. Suzanne asked Dave what he gives credit to for the reduction in accidents. Dave said it's a lot of things: the safety and operation departments, safety committee and communication and how remedial training is being done. He mentioned in regard to accidents there is a progressive system. First there is a verbal warning, a written warning, a three day suspension and a five day suspension. With the verbal warning, it is up to the training department to analyze the accident and look at the situation and at a minimum, there will be two hours of remedial training. With a written warning, the same thing happens. When it gets to a three day suspension, the person will spend eight hours with the training department. If they get to a five day suspension, they will spend sixteen hours with the training department and a requalification for driving again.

Dave stated that bus delivery dates are beginning, one is pending but hopefully more will be delivered next week. Specifically in the Dial-a-Ride division, there are additional Champion buses.

Kim gave an update on the baby stroller situation that Jerry brought up during the previous RAC meeting. She mentioned that she spoke to residents at Journey

Home and also asked the staff to post something regarding the passengers not putting their children in the stroller until they have gotten down the back steps of the bus. Dave mentioned he has talked with the operators and asked them to try to be more flexible with rules on strollers, skateboards, etc. He stated, yes we have the rules, but there is always a gray area. If we're asking that person take the child out of the stroller and we say it's for safety reasons, we have to be careful because the adult could have balance issues or has something wrong with their arm, so we need to be flexible.

New Business.

- 1) Bruce mentioned the Boys Scout/Eagle Scouts always want to do something for the community so he was wondering if they could adopt a shelter, to keep it clean of garbage and snow, etc. Doug mentioned the problem is that most of the shelters are on large, busy roads, and there are youth protection rules so the scout leaders would have a problem with taking a group of thirteen to fourteen year old boys out on a busy street.
- 2) Bruce also mentioned when looking at promotions for Metro Bus, if we had looked at selling miniature toy buses. Ryan stated he had looked into it but there are rules for this type of thing also in regard to copyright issues and patents.
- 3) Bruce brought up that the buses aren't being cleaned at night. They are still coming out dirty. He mentioned for over a week ago there was a pop bottle in the bus. He couldn't remember the bus number. He mentioned the operators and the customers are saying they aren't being cleaned. He also mentioned snow removal and asked if it could be more of a priority at the Transit Center and the Mobility Center. Ryan mentioned the priority is always safety first. The facilities person was out shoveling the Mobility Center first thing this morning. He stated the Operations Center, Mobility Center and Transit Center are all high priority areas and they can't prioritize one of those buildings as being higher than the other. They all have internal and external customers. There is a team that shovels as soon as soon as they can. Dave mentioned that snow removal is always a hot topic and it's a thankless job. Everyone has the impression that as soon as a snowflake hits the ground, the snow should all be gone. Doug mentioned there was a time recently when the maintenance team was working all night long.
- 4) Ryan introduced Doug Diedrichsen, Metro Bus new Planning Manager. He started with Metro Bus about 2 ½ weeks ago. He was a former employee of the St. Cloud Area Planning Organization (APO). He went to Tech High School and St. Cloud State University and graduate school in Virginia, then came to his home (St. Cloud).

Doug stated there are several priorities he will be working on. 1) Software training to help streamline routing, blocking buses and run cutting for drivers to help make the process more efficient. 2) Route restructuring which is what he has been primarily working on since he started. He is looking at routes, not only where they go, where people want to go, where people are coming from but also how the different routes are lining up with one other. One of the biggest comments he has heard is that you ride one bus and then get to the Transit Center and have to wait 45 minutes for the next bus.

Bruce asked if Doug if he had heard about his pet peeve yet – Route 33. (Laughing - Dave said that Bruce wants every route to go to Wal-Mart.) Doug stated

that the St. Cloud area is very spread out and there are commercial districts and so trying to hit all of the commercial centers will be a challenge.

Bruce mentioned eliminating the second stop at the hospital so with the extra time they could go all the way down to Taco Bell and turn there. Jerry mentioned a lot of people utilize the second stop at the hospital a lot. Jerry also mentioned he has talked with customers about the Crosstown Express that Jim brought up last month and they are very excited about it, especially users of Route 6 and 7 because of the layover times at the Transit Center.

Open Discussion.

- 1) Suzanne brought up the stroller situation and asked if it was an option for them to put the stroller in the area where a wheelchair would go. Dave explained they are able to sit there until a person using a wheelchair boards, then they would need to move.
- 2) Bruce mentioned some of the operators have been talking about the lights in the back of the new buses put a lot of glare on the windshield at night and they can't see the people at the bus stop. Jerry stated he liked having a brighter light so he can watch the activity in the back of the bus at night.
- 3) Jenny mentioned the yellow cord doesn't work in Bus #711 and the front door doesn't close properly. She said the driver had to restart the bus and had to go in the back of the bus and restart the battery. She also mentioned the transfer cards get stuck in the farebox. Jerry explained the operator needs to push buttons within five seconds or it will get stuck. Ryan explained they are old and they are aware of the problems.
- 4) Jenny mentioned the trip planner isn't giving more than one option the past few days.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 10:02 a.m.