

The St. Cloud Metro Bus Rider Advisory Committee (RAC) held a meeting on Tuesday, September 18, 2018 at 9:05 a.m. at the Mobility Training Center, 700 W. St. Germain St, St. Cloud, MN

The following individuals were in attendance: Ryan Daniel, Kim Hoff, Nicky Lahr, Doug Diedrichsen, David Williamsen, Brenda Severson, Bruce Benner, Jenny Svihel, Suzanne Driessen, Alexis Lutgen and Aisha Bah. Visitor: Vicki Johnson– St. Cloud APO.

Welcome. Ryan welcomed everyone and read the purpose of the RAC. Everyone introduced themselves.

Public Open Forum. Open Discussion. There was none.

#### Old Business.

- 1) Operational Update. Nicky gave an operational update on Dial-a-Ride. She mentioned that she has worked for Metro Bus for 21 years and is currently an Operations Manager. She started her career as a Dial-a-Ride Operator before moving into management positions. She co-manages the fixed route service with Dave Green. Metro Bus's paratransit operation (Dial-a-Ride) is a door through door service but technically it is a door to door service. We do not go into the door but go up to the door and make sure that the passenger can get through it safely and walk them to and from the bus. She mentioned there are currently two part time operator positions open. She explained that all new operators are trained on the larger fixed route buses when they are hired, even though the Dial-a-Ride buses are a little bit smaller. There are currently 29 Dial-a-Ride operators. There are 16 Arboc and 13 Champion style buses. They are all low floor buses with no lifts. There are five more buses on order. She mentioned that new regulations require that all seats are facing forward which slightly decreases the total number of passengers we can transport. We have 22 buses out at peak time which is approximately 1 to 2 pm on a weekday. Nicky shared some statistics with the group. She explained that Dial-a-Ride transports several large groups nearly every weekday which are called agency trips because the rides are billed to each of 3 different agencies (Wacosa, VA, and Independence Center - ICI). The number of rides billed to each of these agencies in August: Wacosa – 902, VA - 521 and ICI – 512.

Nicky also oversees both dispatch staffs (both the fixed route at the Transit Center and the Dial-a-Ride Call Center). She shared some telephone statistics as well. From October 1, 2017 to the date of the meeting (which is just a couple of weeks short of a full fiscal year), the Call Center received 78,000 calls and the Transit Center received 59,000 calls. The average wait time at the Call Center was 21 seconds and the Transit Center was 35 seconds. The average length of an

actual call is 1 minute 37 seconds at the Call Center and about 1 minute 10 seconds at the Transit Center. There are 14 total dispatchers.

August ridership for Dial-a-Ride is 12,449 rides which was up from last year at 11,595 – a difference of 854 rides which is substantial. Passenger per hour is at 2.95. On time performance: if a passenger asks an operator why are they late, we have a window of 10 minutes prior and 15 minutes after a scheduled pick up time to not be considered late. If the operator arrives within that window, they are not considered early or late. Bruce mentioned that a couple of operators have an issue with no shows. They give a no show and leave but fifteen minutes later they get a call from dispatch asking to go back and pick up the person. They end of being behind then for their next pick up. He said there are about five people that do this on a regular basis. Nicky stated we have an obligation to provide a ride, and if they miss the ride, we look for the operator that is closest to the location of the pick up and often times it is the operator that was supposed to pick them up. She stated they are looking into options on how to handle this. She explained the no show policy and the progression of suspensions.

#### New Business.

- 1) RAC Email. There was no email.
- 2) Executive Update: a) Ryan mentioned that one CNG Champion bus has arrived at Hogleund Bus Company in Monticello for its final inspection. This bus should be ready for service in about 30 days and will be used for the fixed route service. There are also two MCI's on order and should be in service the first quarter of next year. These buses are used for the Link service. b) Pumpkin Fest will be October 19<sup>th</sup> at Lake George. He mentioned the Marketing department will be reaching out for help from the RAC committee members to help with the haunted trolley at the event. c) The Board room renovation is in process. A future RAC meeting will be held there. d) Ryan mentioned he won't be at the October RAC meeting. He will be attending the Minnesota Public Transit Association conference in La Crosse, WI. Doug will be running the meeting. Dale Abraham will give an operational update from the Maintenance Department. e) P.O.D. trainings (Professional Organization Development) are being held for all employees.
- 3) Ridership: Doug reported that all of the SCSU routes are back in service (Routes 91, 92 and 93). He mentioned the ridership report shows a drop of 135 service hours from last year to this year. The majority of those hours are at SCSU because they started almost 2 weeks later than last year. He mentioned Route 8 is really down but its ridership is driven by SCSU. Routes #1,2,4 and 6/7 have the highest ridership. Route 32 (Sartell) continues to be the lowest performing route. Doug discussed a proposed demand response system for Sartell which will be similar to Dial-a-Ride but will be available for the general public and will run on a

fixed route fare. It will use the Dial-a-Ride service area on the west side of the river and to the southern edge of Route 32. This will replace Route 32 and it will be demand response. People will be able to call the same day for a ride. It is hoped to have a 20-30 minute response time; off-peak should be even better. The hope is to go to an app based service where rides can be scheduled online. It's a pilot program that will start January 2<sup>nd</sup> and end on June 30<sup>th</sup>. It will be a point to point service within Sartell. Route 31 will also be extended to the clinics and CentraCare Health Plaza. There will be two primary connection points at Country Manor and Wal-Mart for connections to the fixed route system.

Doug will be presenting to the Sartell City Council on October 8<sup>th</sup> and following the meeting there will be an opportunity for the general public to ask questions. Bruce brought up snow removal at both of the Wal-Mart's. Doug explained there needs to be a sit down meeting with Wal-Mart and have something put in writing. Doug mentioned he has recently gone to Fargo and met with staff about their similar pilot program they are running on the NDSU campus. He stated it is a much smaller service area – a deviated fixed route service similar to our Sundowner SCSU service but it is demand response. Doug will also be visiting a similar service in Sacramento, CA.

Open Discussion. Bruce mentioned that some of the female operators have a problem with their uniforms, pants are men's sizing and jackets don't fit right. Nicky explained that women operators are able to get women's sizes in pants and the jackets are unisex. Julie in Human Resources is working on changing the uniform vendor. Jenny asked if we could post information on the fixed route buses about passengers being on time at the bus stop because there are certain people that are always running to the bus by Catholic Charities (usually between 2 and 3pm) who are never at the bus stop on time, and then the Transit Center calls the operator and tells them to go back for them.

Doug explained that Costco will be served by the Burlington Coat Factory bus stop and there will be a lighted pedestrian crossing. Route #12 will be serving the new Tech High School three times a day (similar to #21 to Sauk Rapids High School – morning, mid-day and afternoon). When it goes to Tech H.S., the route will not go out to the McStop area. They are close to getting the shell of the school done and it's projected for inspection in March or April of 2019.

Suzanne asked if we could review the RAC committee terms at the October meeting.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 9:59 a.m.