

5/4/2020 ECRTCC Meeting Minutes/Notes
Via ZOOM Meeting

Meeting opened at 10:02

Statement by Karen re: CoVid issues.

Future unknown.

Transportation issues will continue for those it's our responsibility to assist.

We will move ahead with our tasks with the knowledge that our efforts/approaches may be altered and I trust that's acceptable. I believe that everything that we plan to do for the 2020/2021 grant year is adaptable to change. We have built relationships over the past 2 years, where personal understandings of situational changes will not break the bonds achieved. I believe that these bonds will strengthen as we work through responses needed together, as our future is reshaped.

Attendance:

Beth VanderPlaats, Tim Schmutzer, Amy Christensen, Sue Siemers, Rebecca Perrotti, Bob Voss, Ben Byker, Brandy Herbst, Jeannette Kester, Mark Schermerhorn, Monique Mendyke, Tom Gottfried, Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver, Tina Neary, Ashley Eckdahl, Karen Onan

Welcome by ECRTCC Chairman Tim Schmutzer:

Tim wished us all well as we are all coping with the pandemic. He reflected on the changes that have transpired over such a short period of time. He accentuated the importance of our grant applications taking into consideration a time frame of actions and goals that are aimed towards uniqueness of immediate goals (next 6 months), short term (12 months) and long term (18 – 24 months) goals.

Approve February 27th, 2020 minutes:

Motion – Monique

Second – Rebecca

Motion, Second, Passed (MSP)

Approve May's agenda:

Motion – Monique

Second – Amy

MSP

Updates from staff:

The RDC staff is in and out of the office, most of us working from home. We are following the Governor's rules. Staff Zoom meetings every Monday at 2:15. Some internet issues but we are doing our best.

This meeting is primarily set to discuss the tasks decided upon for the Phase 3 Implementation Grant Application.

Task subcommittee concentration areas for Phase 3 Implementation:

2020/2021 Implementation Phase.

All ECRTCC subcommittees have met and have discussed tasks for upcoming grant application, all of which are provided on additional document.

The 2020/2021 Tasks are: 1. Transportation Exploration, 2. Policy Action, 3. Volunteer Driver Program Development, Coordination and Training, and 4. Transportation Management Coordination Center Development (TMCC).

Additional Meeting Comments:

Transportation Exploration:

- *Growth of grocery shopping on line and the need for delivery options to homes. Keep this in mind as we proceed. Do an inventory of grocery outlets that will deliver.*
- *Become aware of bicycle usage and needs in the region. Know where bike racks would serve the most purpose.*
- *Work on involving Uber and/or Lyft drivers into our RTCC.*
- *In light of CoVid, be aware of who needs assistance. Keep lines of communication open. Share with Sue the comments from those who have responded to inquiries for help: Lisa Lovering, Kathy Burski, Penny Messer, Amy Christensen, Kevin Peterson.*
- *Amy has been in contact with Lakes and Pines and Mille Lacs County Human Services and at this time, there is no need for special assistance yet in Mille Lacs County.*
- *Heartland Express is helping out in Isanti County.*

Discussion on Safe Transportation:

Vehicle partitions – separate front and back seats (could be designed/installed by Safariland)

Police car set up – where one can disinfect the back seat

Tom: Protected level of transportation service where people need to travel alone such as:

Mental Health issues

Corrections

Social workers are currently doing this work utilizing correction services vehicles. Need for PPE.

Consider 1 -2 vehicles with in RTCC for this use.

Ben: Are there apparatus's in Public Transit Service vehicles?

Amy: Tri-CAP has been building and installing Plexiglas partitions that are being cut and put into place. Each vehicle is unique and standard sizes don't exist. Moving forward, having partitions will be a standard practice. Protecting drivers with these partitions, riders are sectioned off for social (6') distancing. Disinfecting every hour at least. Doing essential rides only. Masks are not mandatory for riders, difficult to get PPE.

Tom: Trail Blazer design.

Policy Action:

Some comments provided from Policy Action subcommittee meeting for clarifying purposes:

Bob Benes:

- *Current Situation is due to Covid19 and future changes related to the unknown:*
- *Volunteer Drivers are not only transporting people. Volunteer drivers are needed now for transporting food, meals, educational materials, things other than medical and people transport.*
- *The issue is the regulation makers - namely insurance providers don't want to see the rate change because they don't want to see volunteer drivers in general.*

Tim Schmutzer:

- *Mentioned that Beverly (Arrowhead RTCC) is requesting that public transportation providers be released to utilize their transit providers to allow for use in other capacities. For example, transporting food, supplies, etc. – not medical related. AEOA's volunteer driver program is only for medical rides. Is this something that she is working on changing? Rides are paid through insurance programs at the federal reimbursement rate. The issue is, who pays for the volunteer drivers who are delivering food, supplies, etc.?*
- *Volunteer drivers are needed to bring people home from the hospital who have been diagnosed with the virus. Who will do this?*
- *Is there any organization developing a narrative specific to finding volunteers during the pandemic? The list of volunteer drivers is already low, more will be lost for fear of spread of the virus. What will be done about this?*
- *Automated cars?*
- *Passenger/Driver partitions? Costs?*
- *Sanitation Methods? Costs?*
- *Utilize those people who have been deemed as immune?*

Tim stated that this is the time to capitalize on a congressional level, an Action Alert issue. Promote an important issue to attach to legislation moving ahead. It is vital now, that we figure out how to recruit and retain volunteers – how do we build their confidence in their safety? Questions to be posed to Volunteer Driver Coalition – invite Tim to the June 26th meeting.

- *Letters of support for the Volunteer Driver issues must be sent out to legislators – current letter templates will be sent out to Advisory Board members very soon.*
- *PHASE has 50+ vehicles outside of the 5310 program located all over: Mora, Pine City, Sandstone and Cambridge. Possible to build a vehicle sharing program with them?*
- *Discussion of CoVid and need for CAV. Issues with high speed broadband in the rural areas.*
- *Need to be ProActive and Flexible!*

Volunteer Driver Program Development, Coordination and Training:

The question whether to ask volunteer drivers who drive for Public Service Providers (PSP) to also volunteer to drive for other PSPs in region.

- Amy stated that none of her volunteer drivers have agreed to be publicly known. She wasn't sure if that was due to CoVid or not, but they don't wish to be a part of an inventory for RTCCs. She asked if Timber Trails or Heartland's volunteer drivers have agreed to this idea? The ECRTCC has no inventory of volunteer drivers at this time. She mentioned that if we had others, maybe hers would consider it as well.*
- Regarding training, Sue mentioned that RTAP (Rural Transit Assistance Program) may have available some of what we need for training.*

Transportation Management Coordination Center:

- Our region covers Pine County which is also in the Arrowhead RTCC. Charlie Moore (Arrowhead RDC) is developing a GIS map for Pine County.*
- The survey for expanding Tri-CAP's coverage area around Onamia is complete and agreed upon by Tri-CAP. It now needs to be distributed online and physically (halted by CoVid) in order to find out service needs. Amy, Ashley and Karen have been working on this together. Amy's assistance has been invaluable.*
- The Mobility Resource Guide is an ever-evolving piece. Ashley is learning through Facebook of many providers that were not currently known. She is building a guide that will be complete up until the time produced and realizes that this will be a fluid document. Included will be Park and Ride lots, Car Charging stations and information for bike riders. Park and Ride lots mapped will include those that are informal and normally undocumented as we have many here in the rural region – as well as those documented by MnDOT.*
- The Mobility Management Center will be a HUB that will include an inventory of transportation access. Elliot McFadden is working for MnDOT and is applying for an FTA grant to build a Shared Mobility Service that will decipher each provider's software into a universal software that will be readable by the TMCC software. He is asking for RTCC's input. We will be working with him.*

Updates from board:

Ben asked about other RTCCs in the state. Sue stated that there are 9 RTCCs going into Phase 3 – Implementation (as the ECRTCC is). This is an ongoing process that will build and strengthen over time.

There are 3 regions moving into Phase 2 – Implementation.

Olmstead and Central MN are not ready yet to move into Phase 2.

2020/2021 Grant Requests for Phase 3 require a 10% match which, for the ECRTCC has been approved to be paid by the ECRDC. Grants are due to MnDOT by May 15th.

Other discussion:

Karen asked for a motion to approve the tasks as written and described.

Motion - Brandy

Second - Monique.

MSP

Meeting adjourned at 11:40am.

Next meeting:

Wednesday, July 8th, 2020 via Zoom 10am – 11:30

As of 12:51 today (May 13, 2020) the 2020/2021 grant application has been submitted.

Thank you for your letters of support.