

Policy Action Subcommittee Meeting Agenda

12/21/2020 10am

Topics and discussion:

Heartland Express update: Contracted with Arrowhead. No lapse in service, starting up Feb/March.

Volunteer Driver Forum Series update:

Volunteers Driver Forum Series

- Completed Stops 1 & 2
- 130-183 people attending
- Positive feedback on content and engagement
- Technical issues with dual screen showing speaker and ASL interpreter have been figured out
- Next Stop January 20th- Volunteer Driver Recruitment and Promotion
- Main speaker- Martin Lepak, Recruiter, Arrowhead Transit Volunteer Driver Program
- Invited speakers Margaret Anderson Kelliher, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Transportation and Whitney Oachs, Center for Rural Policy and Development

Real people, Real situations, Real compassion.



Volunteer Driver Coalition:

Volunteer Driver Coalition

Platform for 2021

1. Clearly **define a volunteer driver** in law as not “for-hire”,
2. Create a state income tax subtraction for volunteer drivers to **reduce their tax liability** in Minnesota,
3. **Cap the liability** of nonprofit organizations that offer volunteer driver services at \$1.5 million,
4. Protect volunteer drivers from **increased insurance rates**

For the 2021 session will introduce a bill to address #1 and a bill to address #2. Points #3 will be addressed later and will see if point #4 is needed.



Legislative Adjustments

The bills have been simplified to include only two of the four asks:

1. *Volunteer Driver definition (policy bill primarily going to the Commerce Committee)*
2. *Income Tax Subtraction Initiative bill (this is primarily going to the Tax Committee)*

Strategy:

- **Contact legislators now to say that you support volunteer drive legislation**
- **Expect bills to be introduced early in the session**
- **Watch for action alerts**

For more information: <https://volunteerdrievermn.org/>



NEXT STEPS:

The Volunteer Driver Coalition is asking all of us to step up and build this initiative.

- Highly suggesting that your legislators be contacted and be made aware and support these two bills.
- Email a personalized letter and then make a phone call to remind them to support the bills.

The Volunteer Driver Coalition is also asking us to reach out and broaden the coalition's outreach by including health care providers, community agencies, grocery store chains, chambers of commerce and other significant businesses to the network.



Discussion on Insurance Issues with local insurance agencies:

This is a very “touchy” subject. Our policy states “no livery service”, although “sharing the expense” is acceptable. Where my office has had difficulties is with folks who are given a 1099 for reimbursement. Given it is an official tax form, it appears to be income, so that is where the problem arises...

Ride hail, like Uber and Lyft cover the drivers when transporting passengers, we have an endorsement to add for the time they are traveling to pick up riders when they are on the clock. (and the company insurance has not kicked in) So they are viewed differently than “volunteers”.

UBER:

Talks with PHASE-Industries/Tim Schmutzer

On-Demand / Closed Fleet

First and Last Mile / Before and After Hours

Use of UBER App, their driver check service, education, training

But is it Cost Prohibitive for us?

Tim and I met with Gregory of UBER in New York. Started out well – at first meeting. Seemed like it moved into more of a promotional opportunity for UBER.

Tim clarified that Dakota Co. is in partnership with Lyft – offering transportation for those with disabilities to/from places of employment. Lyft handles background checks, passthrough billing, waivers...

Clients use the Lyft app to provide and utilize the rides.

In the UBER discussion, Tim and I wanted to use drivers to utilize Tim's vehicles during the vehicle's down time in order for their use in other applications. An interested driver (independent contractor for uber) has a specialized app on their phone - that is different than the regular app - to check out one of PHASE's vehicles to take rider to where they need to go. Once the use is done, the driver will drop off the PHASE vehicle where it was utilized from.

Take insurance off the table - there may be a way to get something going in rural areas.

Problems lie with legalities -

who acts as fiscal agent?

who acts to reimburse to the driver?

How does the organization supplying the vehicle, not be the employer of record?

Insurance issue. Expensive up-front cost. Insurance barrier.

Could we be a Pilot program for UBER?!!

20-30K\$ to implement, \$300 per vehicle per month.

Application to Tim and I - we need to discuss. Cost for PHASE/Industries would be really high.

Fiscal Agent, admin. Cost.

VIA - similar project, sales pitch. LYFT

Buy into their program and they will develop it for us. Very expensive.

GIS/GTFS - ECRTCC & Region 5 RTCC to pilot the GIS/GTFS mapping program being designed by MnDOT. We are underway.

Volunteer Driver Brochure - Tom Gottfried is looking to the RTCCs Advisory Boards and Service Providers to read over the newest draft for edits, comments, additions. The commerce department has been working on this brochure. This brochure will be published asap. It will be available online. This brochure is being written by the Commerce Department to give more clout to the Insurance Companies. Backed by other MN state organizations as well: Board on Aging, DOT, Attorney General's Office Charities Division.

Karen to send out the brochure to the Policy Action subcommittees.

Personal Stories: scenario of a person that had trouble with - or could not get- transportation. To share at the Advisory board meeting to discuss and come up with solutions.

Covid Status quo...

\$\$ given to the states at a block grant form. Stimulus. For Transportation. Lobbying state reps. Not a targeted fund. CARES act federal subsidy question 80 - 85% match.

Covid positive transportation funding is not included to move forward.

Karen made a point about the .14cents/mile to coincide with the federal mileage rate of .58cents. Make a point to Jack Friebe. Can he help us? Insurance issues - 1099, official tax form, appearance of income. He as agreed to meet with me. First he and I, then for me to meet with the Congressman. Zoom meeting - YES! Shoot Jack an email.

Transportation and Infrastructure - Congressman Stauber is on this committee. Who else is on this committee? - from both sides. Angie Craig - on T & I (southern MN) contact her as well as Congressman Stauber. Re: .14cents/mile.

Question from Tim about committees on transportation. Commissioner Matthews - Transitional Transportation committee. Other new committees? Get a bug in their ear now, before they get rolling in early January.

Sherry Munyon is doing transportation lobbying.

Update on Northern Mille Lacs surveys.

Next meeting towards the end of January.