

East Central Regional Transportation Coordination Council

4/1/2021 ECRTCC Advisory Board Meeting as a Whole

This meeting was recorded for use in creating meeting notes.

Tim Schmutzer - Chair

Penny Messer – Vice Chair

Bob Benes

Nick Zelle – Jefferson Lines

Bob Voss

Helen Pieper

Michelle Lichtig

Mike Moilanen

Beth Sumner

Brandon Nurmi

Jamie Root-Larson – Mille Lacs Health System

Natalie Matthewson

Nicki Klanderud

Tina Neary

Victoria Guitierrez - MnDOT

Bob Benson – Director Chisago Co. HHS

Tom Gottfried

Shane Peterson – Kanabec Cab – Kanabec, Pine, Isanti Counties – *Working with Mille Lacs too.*

Ashley Eckdahl

Introductions:

Name, Organization, Title

Welcome new members and visitors of Advisory Board.

Spreadsheet of Advisory Board information. Please fill this out with current information – edit as necessary.

To be put onto ECRDC website.

Current topics of interest:

What are you wondering about?

Information on government financing available. Funding: CRRSSA (Covid R, CARES), available. Volunteer driver program funding possible. Tom says there are funding sources for public transit to help them get back to par. Levels of access to vaccination sites. Most vac sites are built on transit routes. Most public vaccination transportation is fare free. More to come.

Tim at PHASE asked about the subsidizing for 5310, 5311 – Tom mentioned that there is not very much \$\$ available.

He's looking for more info. on policy action → legislation. More info from Tom below:

Service Provider update below: from Brandon.

MCOTA Update:

Tom Gottfried

Please join in the meetings if you're interested. MCOTA link: <http://www.coordinatemntransit.org/MCOTA/>

May 26th, is the next meeting.

Work Teams include RTCC members.

Definition of a volunteer driver has gotten very good hearings in the house and senate. Language in MN tax subtraction is also moving along, relatively well.

Definition of a Volunteer Driver: **HF586 (Murphy) /SF748 (Jasinski)** – Clearly defines a volunteer driver in law as not “for-hire.”

State Income Tax Subtraction: **HF1716 (Koegel) /SF1766 (Howe)** – Creates a state income tax subtraction for

volunteer drivers to **reduce their tax liability** in Minnesota.

Link: <https://volunteerdrivermn.org/>

MCOTA working with DHS to keep dialogue open about vaccine locations and how transportation can be utilized.

Tim asked a question of Tom – Does MnDOT have a position a timing of a change in Covid related safety measures? Tom replied that they are taking their lead from the Federal Level/CDC input – no changes at this point.

Service Provider Updates:

(include information about current volunteer driver program services)

Arrowhead – Pine, Chisago, Isanti counties: Brandon Nurmi - Arrowhead proceeding and things are going along well. No service changes for a while. Covid precautions are being addressed. New Volunteer Driver recruiter, Martin has retired. Scott Olson is new recruiter. Volunteers are being recruited. Scott will be also recruiting bus drivers.

Natalie – question: Is there a best way to send comments or questions to Arrowhead? Brandon: Julia or Brandon will answer questions and direct comments.

Declined rides/requests should be directed to a specific place. 30 day minimum public notice before any changes are made in routes. Accommodating route schedule – deviated route must be planned for.

Timber Trails – Kanabec county: Helen Pieper - More energy, more people wanting to get out. Kanabec County getting vaccinations out. Social distancing is difficult in a Class 400 bus. Volunteer drivers are not returning. Core number of faithful drivers who are doing multiple trips/day. Hopeful that once vaccinations are out, people will reconsider coming back to volunteer.

Tri-CAP – Mille Lacs county: Amy has left her position at Tri-CAP. No representation today.

Kanabec Cab: Shane Peterson – Not to be an Uber clone, 2 vehicles, 2 more recently purchased. Medical transport rides focus. Website/Marketplace/Facebook. \$5 rides around town. Working to purchase 2 more vehicles per month.

Karen will put together a list of contacts and links to provide after the meeting.

Jefferson Lines: Nick Zelle as new Advisory Board member. Lowered capacity - working to get ridership back. Honing in on Community Colleges in the area to cut back on car use. Looking to coordinate for first / last mile in intercity travel. Not expanding routes in foreseeable future. Karen will put Nick in touch with Joe Mulford, President of Pine Technical and Community College.

Staff Updates:

- TMCC (Transportation Management Coordination Collaborative): Networking, keeping directory current. Survey at a standstill with Tri-CAP situation, GIS mapping.
- Policy Action: Moving into Volunteer Driver subcommittee/task – Volunteer Driver Coalition, MCOTA, 5310/5311 funding available, smaller vehicles possibly become available, ride sharing with PHASE as partnerships.
- Transportation Exploration: Alternative modes, stay abreast in updates. First/Last mile automated vehicles would be advantage.
- Volunteer Driver Program Development, Coordination & Training: TRY folding, work with new Arrowhead recruiter, volunteer brochure through MCOTA in the works. Volunteer Driver Forum Series encouraged. Karen will send the link to the Forum.

Phase 4 – Logic Model – use of this in building Work Plan for 2021 – 2023 Grant Application:

Let's take a look... **Go through the Tasks.**

Karen will send out the completed logic model. We would like the Advisory Board members (YOU) to be loud voices and your ideas to be key components in a variety of the upcoming tasks.

Michelle gave us details of our upcoming reasoning and content: MCOTA Operations Committee were charged with looking at the work of the RTCCs and how outcomes can be measured. What tool/process can be utilized to see what work is being done? Logic Models were introduced. Actions -> Outcomes. Point is for all RTCCs to arrive at similar points after 2 years in order to build a TMCC that could be a statewide entity. She provided us the big picture of what (and why) we are developing.

Reassignment of Subcommittees:

Phase 4 has updated tasks, please give some thought as to where your interests lay?

Subcommittees will morph a bit moving into Phase 4.

Virtual Volunteer Driver Forum Series <http://www.coordinatemntransit.org>

November 18th - Series overview.

December 9th – Real World Stories, Policy Action

January 20th – Volunteer Driver Recruitment and Promotion

February 17th – How to Start a Volunteer Driver Program

March 17th - Person-Centered, Cultural Diversity and Equity Training

(2 sessions)

**April 21st - 9:30 – 11:30 Trauma-Informed Care Training and
1:00 – 3:00 Providing Community Education About People Who Are
Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

(2 sessions)

May 19th - [Best Practices for Volunteer Driver Programs to include: Safety, Security,](#)

June 2nd [Crisis, Medical, Passenger, Resiliency & Boundary Issues](#)

(4 sessions over 2 days)

May 19th – 9:30 – 11:30 Module 1: Safety and Security &

Module 2: Emergency Preparedness

1:00 – 3:00 Module 3: Passenger Assistance and Safety

June 2nd - 9:30 – 11:30 Module 4: Dealing With Difficult Customers
& Self Care

1:00 – 3:00 Module 5: Ethics and Boundaries &

Module 6: Best Practices and Summary

Further Discussions:

Upcoming Task: Emergency Preparedness question from Brandon – how much involvement will the RTCCs have with this task?

The RTCC will only be a conduit. Working with whatever is already in place in each county and assess transportation needs, fill gaps. RTCC will coordinate and come up with a plan. Working with the state for alignment with emergency

management process. To add more capacity if needed with information. EOC partnership with RTCC. Help bring awareness to the EOCs of transportation availabilities.