

Champaign County
Rural Transit Advisory Group (RTAG)
Meeting Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, April 22, 2015

LOCATION: John Dimit Conference Room

Attendee	Representation	Organization
Stanley Harper	*County Board	Champaign County Board Liaison
Regina Crider	*Youth	Youth and Family Alliance
Seamus Reilly	#*Employment	Parkland College, Institutional Advancement
Nathan Montgomery	*Person with Low Income	Salt & Light Ministry
Rita Morocoima-Black	County (Planning & Community Dev.)	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Drew Bargmann	Transit Manager	CUMTD
Tina-Marie Ansong	Champaign County PCOM	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Zoe Keller	Future Champaign County PCOM	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission

#Chair

**Voting*

- I. **Call to Order** – Ms. Morocoima-Black called the meeting to order at 4:12 p.m.
- II. **Roll Call** – The roll was taken by written record and a quorum was declared present.
- III. **Audience Participation** – None.
- IV. **Approval of Agenda** – Mr. Harper motioned to approve the agenda, Ms. Crider seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.
- V. **Approval of Minutes** –
 - A. **Meeting of April 22nd, 2015** –
Mr. Reilly motioned to approve the RTAG Minutes from April 22nd, 2015 meeting, Mr. Harper seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.
- VI. **Old Business** –
 - A. **Corrections to Service and Fiscal Report for FY15 Q2 (Oct-Dec)**

Ms. Ansong discussed corrections made to the errors on the FY15 Q2 Service & Fiscal Reports. The errors were due to calculations and formulas in the spreadsheet. The total revenue did not change. C-CARTS received updates from IDOT on categorizations, so some of the income was reclassified. The changes made were based on the allocation/categorizing of the funds; whether funds are counted as fares, project income or service contract revenue. The mileage recorded and hours total was also adjusted.

VII. New Business

A. **RTAG Chair Selection** – Mr. Harper made a motion to nominate Seamus Reilly as Chair of the RTAG committee. Mr. Montgomery seconded. The motion to nominate Seamus Reilly as Chair of the RTAG committee carried unanimously.

B. **Champaign County FY15 3rd Quarter (Jan-Mar) Service Report** – Ms. Ansong reported on the Service numbers showing comparisons between the current FY15 Third Quarter, last year's FY14 Third Quarter and the previous FY15 Second Quarter. Following are highlights of the discussion:

- FY15 Third quarter total trips were 5,337. Although there are 220 less trips from the previous quarter, the trip number has increased significantly from FY14 Third Quarter.
- Employment remains the major trip type. In FY14, the main trip was medical.
- Lift use has remained about the same. This is due to the reduction in senior trips. The reduction is not uncommon since employment has become the major trip type. The percentage of senior population in rural areas is only about 15%.
- Although trip denials are significantly high, the number is much better than last year. Some efficiency in scheduling and changes in policy account for the high number. Mr. Bargmann gave reasons for the trip denials to include: time that was requested to travel, previously scheduled passengers, vehicles were not available in the area, the ride was being requested outside of the service hours of the day or the weather was a factor.
- The advanced ride request has been 48 hours, but the demand has grown such that it is requested that rides be booked in a month advance.
- There are capacity issues with C-CARTS, but six new vehicles have been ordered from IDOT which should eliminate those issues.
- Mileage has increased from last year. Hours have increased due to efficiencies since CUMTD has taken over the service.
- It was suggested that total number of people serviced be included in the report, as well as age limit of population serviced and the communities being served. Mr. Bargmann indicated there is a scheduling and dispatching software program in place at CUMTD which includes more comprehensive data reporting. C-CARTS is hoping to incorporate the software program in the future.

C. **Champaign County FY15 3rd Quarter (Jan-Mar) Fiscal Report** – Ms. Ansong discussed the following:

- Since CUMTD took over the service in October of 2014, more detailed fiscal data is available which allows C-CARTS to break out revenues by fares and service contracts.
- Since the start of service with CUMTD on October 1, 2014, total revenues have decreased due to the service contract revenue.
- To date, total revenue in fares is \$13,961.31 for the third quarter. The service contract revenue is \$272 for the third quarter. Mr. Reilly questioned the decrease in fares during the beginning months. Mr. Bargmann commented that November and December were

impacted by the holidays as well as issues with the weather. There were snow days where service was suspended entirely, which affected ridership.

- Ms. Ansong discussed the two grants – the federal grant which stays the same at \$153,871 and a state grant - Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP) which is \$587,000 for total grant funds of approximately \$741,000. Total remaining grant funds: \$447,217.

D. Health Alliance Service Contract and other Service Contracts – There were two service contracts – Champaign County Nursing Home and Health Alliance.

Health Alliance changed their policy stating that in order to provide service for their clients; C-CARTS must be a designated Medicaid provider. Some of the bills C-CARTS sent were only reimbursed a fraction of the expenses that were incurred. Therefore, the service contract no longer exists.

The Champaign County Nursing Home service is minimal due to the fact that they have their own vehicles. C-CARTS is only used as a back-up service.

Until the current capacity issues are resolved, it would be difficult to pursue other service contracts. The question arose about becoming a Medicaid provider. Mr. Bargmann explained that all of CUMTD would have to become a Medicaid provider which is not realistic for that to occur at this time.

Service Contracts are needed to provide local match for C-CARTS to be able to draw down the state funding allocation. Ms. Black commented that Rantoul is the biggest market for C-CARTS. Ms. Black discussed the possibility of working on a service contract with the larger employers in the Rantoul area to provide transportation for their employees. The companies would provide the local match for C-CARTS to draw down the state funding once new vehicles have been received. With the local contracts in place, C-CARTS will be able to use more state funding to be able to operate six to seven additional vehicles.

The Committee discussed possible contacts for service contracts:

- Conair, Eagle Wings and Easton-Bell Sports, as well as some schools are currently using the C-CARTS service.
- Other people come from Champaign to Rantoul on a daily basis.
- There are not many riders for the University of Illinois. Ms. Black indicated that the University of Illinois is hesitant due to the cuts from the State of Illinois.
- A suggestion was made to approach the Union at the University of Illinois.
- Other suggestions made were hotel/motel associations, restaurant associations, Worknet Center on Mattis Avenue, Francis Nelson Health Center (Nancy Greenwalt) and Community Choices.
- It was also mentioned that juveniles who have difficulty getting to court from the rural area may benefit from the service. It might be worthwhile to speak with probation or the state's attorney offices.
- Mr. Reilly stated that Worknet provides for transportation reimbursement for unemployed people who are taking courses. He suggested getting in contact with Samuel Byndom.

Service contracts vary. One contract might be set up on a per trip basis with a time and fare. Another contract may pay a certain fee on a monthly basis which guarantees that a vehicle will be there at designated times during the day. Ms. Ansong commented that when a company has a service contract, the rides are generally guaranteed; the fare is at a premium cost. With Health Alliance, there was a flat fare for drop off and they were also billed for per loaded mile for the individual, i.e. 80 cents a mile.

Ms. Black summarized the discussion by stating that the local funding will be necessary to operate the new vehicles that are on order.

- E. Deviated Fixed Route Feasibility Study** – Based on ridership patterns with high demands around and between Rantoul and in the urbanized area, the system is being proposed to be changed from on demand response service where people call and reserve rides ahead of time to a more reliable and scheduled service. Deviated fixed route is a hybrid between urban fixed route transit and rural typical demand response. The idea would be to follow a fixed route on demand, and depending on whether a rider has a disability, the bus driver would make a deviation in his/her route. If the rider didn't have a disability, he/she would pay a per mile rate.

To implement this plan, C-CARTS applied for a grant through IDOT Department of Public and Intermodal Transportation (DPIT) to fund a feasibility study to determine where routes should be, and whether it should be a demand response or deviated fixed route. Ms. Black made the following comments regarding the grant:

If the grant is approved and the funding is received in July, the study will begin, analyzing all of the routes, with the idea of having a final report at the beginning of next year which will be discussed with RTAG. However, there is a possibility that the grant process could be longer due to the fact that the governor is looking at the long list of grants to determine which should be approved.

- The report would then be presented to the County Board to be approved. Once approved, the changes to the service would be implemented on July 1st or October 1st.
- If a system is put in place similar to what is in Champaign-Urbana that is a specific route, C-CARTS would operate more efficiently, and ridership would increase. The question came up on changing the hours as a result of the feasibility study. Ms. Ansong indicated that RTAG is in the process of completing their annual rider survey which would give feedback from riders on what time slots would be of benefit to them.
- Service to Parkland College was discussed as a possible route for C-CARTS. It would be an opportunity for high school students in the area to take classes at Parkland College. Ms. Black asked if a service contract with Parkland College for a route from the college to Rantoul would be possible. Mr. Reilly indicated that further cost information would be needed.
- Another suggestion was made that contact be made with the Mental Health Board to provide service to families that require transportation to appointments associated with their mental health. The Pavilion was also mentioned as a possible source for a service contract.

- F. Implications of Proposed FY16 Budget Cuts** – The governor has proposed two strategies: The first strategy is to cut the total amount of funds that are allocated to C-CARTS. The proposed cut is approximately \$200,000. Ms. Ansong indicated that in previous years, \$200,000 has been left

unused from all allocated grant funds. Each year the cost to operate the service is between \$450,000-500,000, operating eight vehicles. When more vehicles arrive, budget will become a challenge. The second strategy is to cut the reimbursement percentage for state funding. The current reimbursement rate is 65%. The new proposed rate is 55%.

G. FY16 Grant Application – The application was received on April 12th, 2015. The staff has 30 days to complete the grant application. It will be due on May 15th, 2015. As part of the grant application, public meetings are tentatively scheduled for May 12th from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. at Mahomet Administrative Services and 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. at the Multi-Cultural Community Center in Rantoul.

H. Employee Benefits – Mr. Bargmann highlighted some of the employee benefits for C-CARTS under CUMTD.

- Employees have the benefit of using an on-site gym that is employee funded at a minimal cost per paycheck.
- Employees are eligible for the Urbana Municipal Credit Union.
- A uniform allowance is provided.

I. Pay Structure for Drivers – The hourly rate for operators is \$11.00. In most years, a 3% increase has been received. As CUMTD employees, C-CARTS drivers are part of a three year pay schedule where they receive 2% a year and a cost of living adjustment.

For the time that a driver does not have a client on board, the driver is clocked out for that time. CUMTD is looking to change the option to: 1. Give half pay during the down time. 2. Pay for the entire time the employee is working.

However, by changing the system, the Affordable Care Act would have an impact. Anyone that works an average of 30 hours a week over the course of the year would have to be offered health benefits. This is a very large budget item. Mr. Bargmann noted that there was not an employee eligible under the Affordable Care Act for the health benefit in the next fiscal year.

The question arose as to whether CUMTD drivers would be able to help with the routes. Mr. Bargmann indicated that the CUMTD drivers are not allowed to cross over to C-CARTS. The two are separate. The reimbursement rates/compensation rates at CUMTD are quite different than C-CARTS.

Mr. Bargmann commented that the demographic of the majority of the C-CARTS employees are retirees that don't necessarily need the job. On an average, the drivers work between 25 and 29 hours a week. Currently, there are 13 drivers. Next year's budget plan is to add four more drivers for the new vehicles coming in and pursue new service contracts. The additional drivers will also allow flexibility as the current drivers are working five days a week, and this would allow for back-up.

Summary:

It was agreed that a fixed route system is necessary. Ms. Black indicated that there are three concerns:

- When will the new vehicles be delivered?
- Will we have the same funding?

- Are we going to have the local match that is needed to use the state funding to run the vehicles?

Ms. Black commented that she wouldn't want to start the new system, and then find out that there isn't enough funding to operate the vehicles.

Mr. Reilly asked if a fixed route system could be implemented in some areas, and not the entire Champaign County area. Ms. Black indicated that permission is required from IDOT to change the system. IDOT will ask for evidence showing that the system will work before the grant would be approved. It was decided that Ms. Black would follow up with IDOT on the implementation of the fixed route system.

On a final note, the hourly rate was discussed. Mr. Reilly suggested \$12.50 an hour and commented that an increase should be included in the grant application.

Announcements –

Ms. Ansong will be leaving CCRPC and Ms. Keller will be taking over her duties.

Mr. Reilly recommended changing the time of the meeting to 3:00 p.m. Mr. Montgomery made a motion to move the meeting time to 3:00 p.m. Mr. Reilly seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Audience Participation – None.

IX. Adjournment – The meeting adjourn at 5:45 p.m.