



Greater MN Transit Provider Advisory Committee (GMTPAC)

Mn/DOT Conference Center, St. Cloud

Monday, March 28, 2011

Mn/DOT Staff: *Mike Schadauer, Tom Gottfried, Sarah Lenz, Bev Herfindahl*

Advisory Committee: *Cathleen Amick Community Transit, Mark Anderson Mankato Transit, Chad Gessel RiverRider Public Transit, Tony Kellen St. Cloud Metro Bus, Greg Negard Paul Bunyan Transit, Repinski Three Rivers Hiawathaland Transit, Daryn Toso Transit Alternatives. Absent: Jack Larson, Arrowhead Transit.*

Call to Order:

Tom Gottfried called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

GMTPAC Administration

Each meeting a volunteer will be chosen to take notes and draft minutes. Tony K. volunteered again to take notes and provide minutes. It was noted that the minutes were not completed from the last meeting. Those will be completed as well. Tom G. stated that Mn/DOT will provide space on the state website to post the minutes. It was agreed that a copy be provided to Tom G. and Sarah L. within a week. After staff review minutes will be distributed to members. Once approved by consensus minutes will be posted on the web.

Legislative Funding Update

Mike S. gave an update on recent House and Senate Legislation. The House cuts general fund \$3.7 million per year and the Senate version \$4.0 million per year. Combined with projected Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) revenues for fiscal years 2012 and 2013 actual revenue is expected to increase by \$1 million. However, inflation and rising fuel costs are projected to increase the cost of providing current levels of transit by 2.5% or more per year. This alone would mean that the increased cost of providing current levels of transit service will consume the \$1 million increase for the next biennium. MVST forecasts are not consistent with results and 9 of the last 10 years have been lower. Mike S. also explained concerns with possible impacts on Legislative Authority to obligate and spend potential excess MVST funds now that the legislature is appropriating MVST in legislation.

Volunteer Driver Programs: Scope and Impact

There was considerable discussion with regard to Public and Non-Public Volunteer Driver programs. Issues discussed included proper reporting, no load mileage issues, scope and usage of programs. Tom G. noted the need for accepted and understood definitions for volunteer driver programs. It was highlighted that a Grant Recipients "Service Design" and "Administration and Operations Designs" are exclusive. Service Design Plans lay out when and where service is operated and does not prescribe the method of service delivery. Likewise in Operations Design, Volunteer Driver programs can only be used to deliver services covered within the scope of the recipients approved Service Design. Any use of Volunteer Driver programs to provide transportation at times and/or to areas not included in the Service Design is considered Non-Public transportation and grant funds should not be utilized. Tracking costs and statistics properly is a key to evaluating performance measures.

Charter and School Transportation



Though not on the agenda, some time was taken to discuss recent concerns with school transportation and possible conflicts with charter regulations. Mn/DOT is working with the State Patrol to clarify vehicle issues. There are current guidelines in place that provide the means to potentially provide school transportation services. It was also discussed that the manner in which trips are arranged and paid for are a consideration when reviewing operations. Mn/DOT staff are working on clarifying a number of concerns and is looking to possibly do session in October in St. Paul at the upcoming Annual Public Transit Conference.

Public Transit System Operating Revenue

There was discussion with regard to working with systems to share ways in which additional operating revenues can be captured by systems. It was noted that there is a variety of ways systems are raising local revenues and some systems do better than others. An initiative is being considered to look at ways to help systems identify ways to enhance revenue streams. As funding becomes more challenging systems will need to find new and better ways to increase local operating sources. There was additional discussion of communication barriers and lack of understanding of how rates are set for differing types of transportation among a variety of governmental entities.

Transit System Fiscal Accounting

Tom G. reviewed recent initiatives undertaken to more quickly close out past year operating grants. Highlighting was the recent State Management Review (SMR) finding that there were too large a number of outstanding grants not closed out. In discussions with auditors it was suggested that if general ledger (GL) information were included with the final closeout, and final requests for funds (RFF) in were in by the end of March, the closeout process could be completed within 90 days of final RFF. It was noted in a few cases state auditors are finding discrepancies in PTA submittals and GL numbers. Other issues discussed included systems with non calendar fiscal years, the use of potentially unaudited information and propriety of using that data. In addition to a GL submittal a well laid out cost allocation plan would also be required of many systems where transit programs are part of an overall broader agency service menu or where grant recipients operate multiple programs. Tom G. also mentioned the need for a future technical brief that prescribes a properly documented cost allocation plan. The general consensus is that in some cases GL's could be provided. The information shared will be discussed with state auditors.

Annual Spring Workshops: Agenda Review

Sarah L. distributed the tentative Spring Transit Workshop Agenda. Topics and updates will include: 1.) FTA state review areas, deficiencies, corrective actions, lessons learned, 2.) Local Coordination Plans, 3.) Performance Measures, 4.) Expansion Criteria, 5.) Contract Revenues, 6.) Financial Considerations and Preparing for Annual Audits, 7.) Safety, Security, 8.) PTA System, 9.) Motor Carrier and CDL Testing, 10.) Pros and Cons of STS Certification, 11.) Independent Cost Estimates, 12.) ADA, 13.) RTAP, 14.) Language Assistance Plans, 15.) Transit Project Manager Listening Sessions.

2012 and Beyond: Brief Overview

Bev H. gave an update on continued work on defining performance measures. The internal working group continues to develop operational measurements to review service. It was noted that systems will be compared based on peer groups. Initially comparisons will be based on system level data. Some areas of consideration could include cost per mile, cost per hour, cost per passenger, revenue per hour, revenue per passenger, operating deficit per passenger, maintenance cost per mile, etc. There will



need to be an emphasis on creating measures that allow comparing systems equitably. More information will be presented at the spring workshops.

Future Topics and Advisory Committee Schedule

The next meeting date was set for July 13, 2011 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. A location for the meeting will be chosen as we get closer to that date.