

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

10:15 a.m.

Quincy Street Station

Committee Members present: Nancy Johnson, Libby Adams, Mary Thomas, Mike Nolting, Dennis Tenpenny, Shelby Fry and Brian Snodderly.

Committee Members absent: Linda Kehres.

TMTA Staff present: Denise Ensley, Al Bradley, Kris Luber, and Elizabeth Manson.

The meeting was called to order by Nancy Johnson at 10:20 a.m. There were no other guests present or public comment offered. Denise Ensley suggested options of utilizing “Go To Meetings” or conference calling as another means of attending the meetings. It could also be a resource as we reach out to other potential members as a way for them to attend meetings rather than traveling to Quincy Street Station. Dennis Tenpenny commented that those options could be very helpful to himself and to others.

Ms. Ensley asked Ms. Johnson if she was able to reach out to any potential agencies and what their responses have been. Ms. Johnson stated she had forgotten, however, she is going to contact Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging (JAAA) to obtain a copy of the booklet they put together of local social agencies. Ms. Ensley suggested contacting the agencies that purchase bulk reduce fare media from Topeka Metro. For example, Sheltered Living. Ms. Ensley stated a representative from Sheltered Living used to attend the meetings and give good input, however, when that representative stopped coming Sheltered Living decided they no longer wanted a representative on the committee. Ms. Ensley stated it was a loss, considering how many Sheltered Living clients Topeka Metro serves. Shelby Fry agreed and offered to reach out to the appropriate staff at Sheltered Living to see if they would be interested in attending again. Ms. Fry suggested Breakthrough House and Sunshine Connection as well. Ms. Ensley stated we need passenger members as well. Mr. Tenpenny asked if there was a flier he could post at his agency. Ms. Ensley said she would send him one.

Ms. Ensley asked for any corrections or additions to the minutes. Those present voiced no changes.

Ms. Ensley stated Topeka Metro has seen an increase in service animal issues. Many times, passengers are trying to take a pet or emotional support animal as a service animal. Ms. Fry asked for clarification as what defines a difference between an emotional support animal versus a service animal. Ms. Ensley stated a service or guide animal is to be allowed in all facilities, grounds and vehicles, the animal must be accompanied by a disabled person, and the animal must be trained to perform a specific task related to that individual’s disability. Animals other than service animals must be transported in a latched pet carrier. When a passenger boards the bus, the operator is permitted to inquire what type of animal it is. If the passenger states it is a service animal, the operator may then ask what task it has been trained to perform. Ms. Ensley stated she would e-mail Metro’s service animal policy to Mr. Tenpenny.

Ms. Johnson asked if there were any public education outlets we could utilize to educate the public on service animals. Ms. Ensley stated we are producing educational videos for our website and service animals is on the list. Ms. Fry suggested adding links to websites that describe the characteristics of a well-trained service animal.

Ms. Ensley updated the committee on the SOTO pilot project. The soft launch was December 15th and the hard launch was January 2nd. Metro is currently in the process of placing the cab stop signs. The one-year pilot project is made possible by JEDO funding. Capitol City Taxi (CCT) is providing 24-hour access to six businesses in the South Topeka Industrial area. To participate, a passenger must travel to or from one of the participating businesses. They must show their employee photo ID to the driver upon boarding and pay the

exact cash fare of \$5.00 per ride. Passengers must call twelve hours in advance to set up a ride or they may set up a standing order. Return rides from work can be requested as needed and CCT will do their best to pick the employee up within 30 minutes of the call requesting a ride. Mr. Tenpenny stated KDHE is where the Medicaid clearinghouse is. Although not work trips, this could be a potential ridership area due to individuals wanting to go to the clearinghouse to speak to a person on the status of their Medicaid application. Ms. Ensley stated Reser's has already inquired about a similar project being done for the east side of town. In the meantime, Ms. Ensley commented that the East 6th route has been adjusted to accommodate the new plant opening in February.

Ms. Ensley announced Community Action will be working with Topeka Metro to obtain a mobile ID unit to take to various agencies allowing passengers to easily obtain a reduced fare ID. Mary Thomas commented that it was the Community Resources Council (CRC) who would be facilitating the program.

Ms. Fry asked about the expiration length of educator ID's. Ms. Ensley said they are good for six months. Agencies who have representatives who do transportation training to its clients are eligible for the ID's by sending a request on company letterhead to Ms. Ensley.

Ms. Ensley announced the upcoming Spring/Summer update May 6th. One possible change is the elimination of the West 29th Special that operates only twice per day and has low ridership. By eliminating the route, those few hours can be utilized to provide increased peak service on another route that has high ridership. Several public meetings will be held in mid-February.

Ms. Ensley presented the latest ridership report as provided to the Board of Directors. Fixed route ridership was over 105,000 which is up compared to last year. Lift ridership is up a small amount compared to last year. Usage of the 24-hour pass has been very successful. Currently, each month we are promoting a different type of fare media to the public. Currently, Metro is promoting the annual bus/bike pass for \$300.

Ms. Manson discussed various upcoming Topeka Metro events:

- Martin Luther King Day – January 15th (limited holiday service)
- “Spring Fling” Families Ride Free – March 19th through March 24th - *fixed route only*
- Volunteers Ride Free Week – April 16th through April 21st
- No Pay Earth Day – April 23rd – *fixed route only*
- Seniors Ride Free – Month of May
- Public Employees Ride Free Week – May 7th through May 12th – *fixed route only*
- Kids Ride Free – May 15th through August 15th – *fixed route only*

Ms. Ensley announced we added a transmission lock-out system to the fixed route buses. When the operator leaves the bus, they remove the lock-out key thus making the bus immobile.

Ms. Fry suggested setting ACATS meeting times for the entire year thus allowing everyone ample time to get those times on their schedules. All those present agreed. The following meetings were scheduled for **10:15 a.m. at QSS**. Ms. Manson said she would e-mail calendar reminders to all members.

- **Wednesday, March 14th**
- **Wednesday, May 16th**
- **Wednesday, July 18th**
- **Wednesday, September 12th**
- **Wednesday, November 14th**

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Manson
Topeka Metro Operations Assistant