

ONEIDA-VILAS TRANSIT COMMISSION (OVTC) MINUTES

December 18, 2020,

ATTENDANCE: Steven Schreier, Marv Anderson, Chuck Hayes, Billy Fried, Milt Klingsporn and Fred Radtke. Dawn Winqvist via phone Present: Roger Youngren, Transit Manager; Joel Gottsaker, Interim Director ADRC of Oneida County; Sue Richmond, Director ADRC of Vilas County. Others present Kayla Houp of The Lakeland Times; Grant Bornbach, Advanced Medical LLC; Rich and Carrie Linzmeier, Stargazer Limousine Service/Northwoods Mobility Services.

CALL TO ORDER: Schreier called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. at The Vilas County Court House 330 Court St. Conference Room B, Eagle River, noting this meeting was properly posted in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law and meets the Americans with Disabilities Act.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Motion by Radtke to approve the agenda in any order as per the chair with a second by Anderson. All ayes. Motion Carried.

CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECEIVING COMMENT REGARDING POTENTIAL PARATRANSIT SERVICES. Schreier called public meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION: Youngren said the idea was developed during a meeting with Youngren, Newman, Richmond and Gottsaker a few months ago. The service would be implemented in 2021 serving outlying areas not currently being serviced by the ADRC and OVTC. Youngren submitted this to the WisDOT in the 2021 budget. Grant Bornbach, owner Advanced Medical LLC, has a personal residence at 128 E King St. Rhinelander and a business address of 1831 N. Stevens St. Rhinelander. He is private transportation provider and read in the newspaper about the new paratransit service. He wanted to say that private operators do exist and provide a quality service. His company Advanced Medical Transport LLC was awarded provider of the year by a MCO (Managed Care Organization). He has 11 vehicles running every day. He works in Oneida, Lincoln, Forest, and Vilas counties with trips to Madison and Green Bay. He is concerned with market support and encroachment on contracts he has with certain entities. Hayes reminded the committee that this hearing is to hear the public only dialog and to give the committee information. Schreier said the purpose of OVTC is not to impede or impair private entities. Gottsaker said that 85.21 money is a grant for elderly and disabled transportation. Most of the ADRC of Oneida County funds go to OVTC and some money is reserved for the volunteer escort program. 20% of the 85.21 money comes from tax levy and all funds given to OVTC are used as a match for a federal transportation grant. Prior to OVTC each ADRC had their own buses and a volunteer escort program. Fried made a note of comment not to have a back-and-forth dialog and that isn't the purpose of a public hearing. The sole purpose of this hearing is to hear your concerns. Bornbach has concerns on how this works. Bornbach stated the ADRC has a board that packages and ships the 85.21 money to Northwoods Transit and some people on the OVTC Board are also on ADRC boards and that raises a red flag. It's an incestuous relationship. Bornbach also said Article II, Section 5 of the charter has citizens members on OVTC Board should be users of the member municipality. Hayes asked what precisely should OVTC do or refrain from doing. Bornbach said that the commission should not budget or purchase wheelchair buses. Carrie and Rich Linzmeyer of Stargazer Limousine and Northwoods Mobility said they've been in discussion with OVTC for four to five years. Youngren reached out to invite them to this hearing. They offer limousine services, charter services and non-emergency transportation. 90% of the Northwoods Mobility fleet is wheelchair accessible. They contract for Badger Care and Medicaid passengers and also have private pay passengers. They stressed that there are options to work with private companies. In the past there have been more medical and taxi services, but they are the last one standing. They have struggled since the start of

transit and their trip volume has dropped. They are wondering how this will affect them. It's more expensive for private business that don't qualify for grant funds. They can't compete with \$1.00 and \$2.00 fares. They have started to partner with Social Services Departments as an independent contractor. The passengers are prechecked by Social Services and they bill Socials Services directly. They have purchased four new vehicles in the last two years which takes five to seven years to pay off. They explained that they have more staff, their employees are paid more, they are not in an insurance pool, they pay full gas prices and have a full-blown payroll not subsidized by grants. Hayes said that the commission is listening to their comments and asked for specific objections regarding the paratransit program. They said to refrain from purchasing the vehicles and that expansion isn't necessary. There are other options available like exploring the voucher program. Radtke said he receives many calls for transportation. He had someone request a wheelchair transport on a Tuesday when OVTC doesn't operate the route between Eagle River and Woodruff. There is misconception on what OVTC is doing. Closed Public Hearing at 9:57 a.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: Motion by Anderson to approve Minutes of November 20, 2020. Second by Fried. All ayes. Motion Carried.

BUDGET SUBMITTED TO WisDOT 12/08/20: Budget is in a different format and is included in the board packet per Fried's request. Additional money added for fare boxes. Discussed the 2020 anomaly in revenues. Not expecting a donation from Howard Young Medical Foundation. Youngren comfortable with Town of St. Germain donation, but unsure of donations from the Town of Boulder Junction and Town of Manitowish Waters. Money for the paratransit vehicle purchase is not in the budget and will be requested from each ADRC. Hayes asked when does WisDOT recognize that the 2021 expenses are legitimate. Youngren said based on previous years, WisDOT will simply approve the expenses. Repayment to the counties is a separate item not in the WisDOT budget. Wages are down significantly from 2020 due to pandemic and that routes are expected to be resumed on April 1, 2021. Fried asked if there is going to be over \$100,000 profit. Gottsaker said that this is how WisDOT wants their budget format to look like. A separate budget should be made to include the county repayment. Radtke said to purchase the new vehicles with grant money. Gottsaker said that this was a timing issue, and the 85.21 money is to serve senior and disabled populations. This was part of the 5-year transportation plan.

FARE BOXES: OVTC is looking to a local company to build fare boxes. The local company does a good job repairing the battery boxes. Approximate cost is \$500 per fare box.

2021 CASH FLOW: Youngren is confident the OVTC can repay the counties and the ADRCs. OVTC's contact at WisDOT left and Youngren isn't confident that the third quarter expense will be approved before the end of the year. Fried made a motion should the third quarter WisDOT be receive prior to the end of the year Youngren should make a \$5,000 payment to each county. Second by Hayes. All approved. Motion carried.

REPAYMENT TO EACH COUNTY IN FIRST QUARTER 2021: motion made in Cash Flow 2021 agenda item. Moved on to next agenda item.

ACTUAL VS. BUDGET THROUGH NOVEMBER 20, 2020: Both expenses and revenues are under budget. Fares will be reinstated January 1, 2021.

POILCY CONCERNING USE OF COMPANY EQUIPMENT: Hayes drafted a use of company equipment policy. General discussion regarding history of equipment use and there weren't any issues. Anderson wanted a

simplistic approach with no exceptions for personal use because this is taxpayer money. Radtke doesn't want to micro-manage process. Schreier said there was an expectation for the transit manager to take lap top home for business use. Anderson made a motion for all equipment purchased by OVTC are for the exclusive use of the program. No exceptions. Second by Winquist. More discussion regarding personal use as a liability to OVTC. 5 aye, 1 nay. Motion carried.

VEHICLE USE POLICY: POLICY CONCERNING COMPANY VEHICLE USE: Hayes drafted a possible vehicle use policy. General discussion regarding insurance coverage and when to bring bus back to terminal. Motion by Anderson that Oneida Vilas Transit Commission has two vehicles required for employees use when needed for appointments, meetings, or other official business. Wisconsin s.s. 345.05 requires these vehicles to be insured with a liability limit not to exceed \$250,000. This insurance does not cover employees use of personal transportation, regardless of purpose. Employees wishing to use and OVTC vehicle for any of the aforementioned purposes must obtain the Manager's prior approval. In turn, the Manager's use of these vehicles must be regularly communicated to the Commission chairperson. Second by Winquist. All ayes. Motion carried.

RIDERSHIP REPORT: 1700 rides the previous month. Discouraging people to ride everyday just to ride. Reinstating fares January 1, 2021.

COVID-19 UPDATE; One driver was exposed to two COVID-19 positive passengers and then he self-quarantined for 14 days. The mechanic was exposed to a COVID-19 positive family member and then he self-quarantined for 10 days. Both employees were tested for COVID-19, and both tests were negative.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Anderson suggested having public comments as one agenda item in order to save time. Schreier said the public can express their opinions both prior to hearing the agenda item discussed and then after hearing agenda item discussion.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday, January 28, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. at the Vilas County Courthouse.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Minutes reflect the recorder's notations and are subject to approval by the appropriate committee.

Respectfully submitted by:

Barbara Newman
Office Manager