

St. Lawrence County Public Transit Task Force

Minutes for Thursday November 20, 2020

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 1:02 PM by Frank Doldo with phone attendees because of Covid 19. Attendees included: Howie Gantner, Tim Welppe, Michele Catlin, Samantha Stone, Pat Hand, Ray Babowicz, Priscilla Leggette, Matilda Larson, Christine Richardson, Karen Bage, Klaus Proemmn, Brandi Smith, Jerome James, Alexa Goolden, Andrea Montgomery, Ronald McDougal, Diana Dancause, Sharon Brandt-Ruzza, Rena Ryan and Sue Rose.

Previous Month Minutes

October's minutes were reviewed. Motion made by Ray Babowicz and seconded by Matilda Larson. All in favor, motion carried.

Old Business:

Frank announced that he met with the Village of Gouverneur and they passed a motion to make changes at the bus stops. In the spring they will be putting up some bus stop signs and paint some blue stripes for the section at the bus stop locations.

Frank and Matilda spoke about the COVID 19 transportation updates. Changes had to be made to some transit routes. Routes 12 and 66 were temporarily suspended for 2 weeks. They will be restarting on Monday, November 23rd. Route 22 has been suspended until January 4, 2021. For the people who are in the Star Lake area they are to use First Mile Last Mile to get to medical services or food shopping if needed. The Clarkson bus has been reduced to one shift for now. The Massena Transit had to suspend services on the afternoon of November 12th because of a shortage in staff.

New Business:

Matilda spoke about 2021 - 2022 contract renewals with The ARC Jefferson-St. Lawrence and Volunteer Transportation Center to provide services. Transit Route 18 and Route 33 are going to be absorbed by other new routes that will be starting on January 4, 2021.

STOA is State Transportation Operating Assistance this is based on miles driven and trips provided. Because of COVID the STOA re-imburements have not been at 100 %, they have been reduced to 87.2 % and the county has been able to make up the difference with

the awards of Cares Act monies. If this continues into 2021 it will have a detrimental effect on the operating budget. The secondary STOA income is called the allocation of spillover monies and the county is requesting from NYSDOT that they award the monies to be released in the first quarter. If the county does not receive 100 % re-imbusement or any other State or Federal monies because of COVID then transportation will have to adjust hours of services provided to close that deficit.

There are new transportation routes to start on January 4, 2021. The first one is in Massena that will have a second bus added to close the loops to one hour instead of a two hour loop. They will be 70A and 70B. PALS in Massena has requested a stop at their location on Bayley Road. PALS is Police Activities League of Massena formerly known as the Boys and Girls Club. The county legislators just approved an Opioid Treatment center in the St. Lawrence Centre Mall. Transportation is waiting to see what can be done to help get the people there for treatments. The second new route will help get people from Akwesasne and Massena into Potsdam and Canton for employment and education. The third new route will traveling the Canton, Potsdam and Parishville areas. The fourth new route will go through Canton, Madrid, Waddington and Ogdensburg areas. The fifth new route will replace Route 33 and it will travel through the Massena, Brasher Falls and Potsdam areas. The new routes are waiting to be finalized and they will be announced when they will be launched.

Frank announced that a new advertiser is coming on board. Public Health through the Community Services committee and Seaway Prevention Council will be doing one side of the Massena Intra-city bus and one side of the Ogdensburg Intra-city bus. One side of advertising will be promoting Narcan training and the other will be to reduce the stigma of substance abuse disorder. Frank is awaiting approval from another sponsor to commit for advertising. There about four more buses that have space for more advertisers.

Matilda is waiting to hear from the NYSDOT capital contract about being awarded more buses to add to the fleet. She is also awaiting to hear if will be awarded (4) 28 passenger buses from Lot K in another contract.

Frank opened the floor for attendees to address any thoughts and concerns that COVID 19 had affecting their businesses.

Frank will send out an email at the end of January to possibly start back up in February or March 2021.

Meeting Adjourned – A motion was made by Ron McDougal and seconded by Matilda Larson and Ray Babowicz at 1:52 PM.