

St. Lawrence County Public Hearing/Task Force Meeting

Minutes for Thursday March 21, 2019

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 1:00 PM by Frank Doldo with 26 attendees present. All were welcomed and introductions were made by all.

Members Present

Ray Babowicz, Rick Pirie, Lori Elliott, Sue Mende, Priscilla Leggette, Andrea Montgomery, Patty Seelig, Leigh Ward-Charette, Sam Purington, Christine Richardson, Judy Aldrich, Michele Catlin, Ron McDougall, Rachel LaPoint, Rev. Mike Catanzaro, Casandra Dodd, Heather Wenzel, Pat Hand, Jerome James, Karen Bage, Klaus Proemm, Rebecca Allen, Ruth Doyle, Jeremiah Papineau, Matilda Larson, Sue Rose, and Frank Doldo.

Matilda Larson started with the proposed St. Lawrence County Coordinated Transportation Plan for Mobility Services introduction. She highlighted the need for the services in the county. Recommendations are to: enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and more cost-effective services.

Frank talked about the needs of the community for public transit. He wants to put bus shelters and benches up for the public but needs to overcome some challenges. Route mapping needs to be easier to read and access. Weekend services have been mentioned to possibly start in the future depending on funding. Trying to make possible connections between St. Lawrence, Jefferson and Franklin Counties. Ridership surveys will possibly be done to see where the public needs more services. Massena inter-city bus service is getting close to starting and next will be in Gouverneur. SUNY Canton will start our services soon.

Rev. Mike Catanzaro asked what has been the role of input in assessing the bus stops. Frank responded that the public will always have input and he gives out his business cards to those who have comments or concerns. He wants any feedback from them and social media sites. He went on to say that some of the positive feedback concerning the stop at Presbyterian Church in Canton was: people were thrilled that they could get to the Farmer's Market in the park beside the church, getting people to work and to job interviews that are close by. The negative feedback was that people need to travel great distances for example from Piercefield to Canton, Russell to Potsdam or Massena and be back within a short time span. Frank said he is trying to get the word out about First Mile Last Mile to help out with this problem.

Rev. Mike Catanzaro said he was asking if organizations or businesses have a say about putting a bus stop out in front of their location. Frank said that he hadn't really done that. Reverend Mike said "I know". Frank said that he was waiting for that question. Someone tried to interject but Frank said that this statement was directed at him. Frank said that the Reverend was saying that he was not asked if it was ok for the buses to stop in front of the church. Frank said that it was his mistake and he takes full responsibility for that which was a lesson learned. The Reverend said he wasn't looking for an apology. He went on to say that if you want public transit to work out then getting permission should be considered. The Reverend said I guess we will be talking. Frank said they will be talking and be talking a lot because people want to get to the downtown location. Frank told the Reverend that he would be in touch within the next two weeks.

Sam Purington gave a presentation about First Mile Last Mile. How they trying to get the public to their appointments, jobs, schools, shopping and etc. in St. Lawrence County. Using a combination of public transit buses and a volunteer driver(s).

Cassie Dodd, Christine Richardson and Rachel LaPoint gave a presentation about the Adirondack Health Institute Grant to help all of St. Lawrence County Medicaid precipitant's through Canton-Potsdam Hospital. This will benefit all of the health care locations in the county. They received a \$100,000 grant to bring transportation needs to our county residents for Medicaid services that are not billable or covered through Medicaid. Examples are: Farmer's Markets, Doctor appointments, Pharmacy locations, Medical procedures, etc. or anything to help them to stay healthy.

Jerome James from The Health Initiative gave a quick over-view of the Unite Us program through the Adirondack Wellness Connections. It connects people to the referrals and care management for their needs. This also have a tracking form that shows when the referral has left the system and it has gone to the provider.

Frank introduced Jeremiah Papineau as the new Fountain Director of the Volunteer Transportation Center located in Watertown.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made to adjourn by Judy Aldrich and seconded by Pat Hand at 2:11 PM.