

CITY OF PORTAGE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

Minutes of Meeting, February 11, 2010

CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Diane Durian, Angela Manahan Ilori, Bill Lenehan, Elma (Pat) Maye, Sandra Sheppard, Mike Thompson, Amy Tuley, and Logan Wessendorf (Youth Advisory Committee Liaison)

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Marc Meulman, Joanne Willson

STAFF PRESENT: Vicki Georgeau, Deputy Director of Neighborhood Services

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Metro Transit Comprehensive Operations Analysis Draft Recommendations – Bill Schomisch, Director, Transportation Department, City of Kalamazoo: Mr. Schomisch discussed the history of the millages that support the Kalamazoo County and City of Kalamazoo bus systems, which expanded services in Portage and replaced City of Portage funding of bus services. Schomisch then provided a review of the Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA), which includes short-term and long-term recommendations for fixed-route and demand-response bus services. The short-term recommendations have a 1-3 year implementation time-frame and were developed based on a review of route ridership. Implementation of the long-term recommendations requires additional revenue. The COA proposes to modify Portage bus routes with two routes that go in two directions, have a shorter time period to complete one loop, and will have a transfer station located at Crossroads Mall. Schomisch indicated that several Portage bus riders have reviewed the COA and indicated support of the modifications. One potential negative impact is the reduction of Metro Van demand-response services that extend $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the end of a fixed bus route. However, Schomisch indicated there was a likelihood that existing Metro Van services can likely be “grandfathered” and continued. Before implementation, which could occur as soon as fall 2010, or as late as January 2011, a public notice and public hearing process will be held. Tuley asked if the short-term recommendations will save the system money. Schomisch indicated no, resources are instead being reallocated. In response to Lenehan and Tuley, Schomisch explained there is no limit on the number of transfers per paid fare, and that if there were no transfers required within the Portage route system, the route loops would be considerably longer and time consuming for riders. Maye, Ilori and Lenehan asked why ridership is so low on the Shaver Road route and if eliminating the service on Shaver Road would adversely impact riders or businesses. Schomisch indicated no surveys had been conducted, but the route is recommended to extend to Wal-Mart and Meijer at this time. Thompson and Tuley noted that to get to KVCC from Portage, riders need to go downtown first, which takes about an hour. Schomisch noted that a long-term goal is to have lateral routes that could go directly to KVCC and other locations, but no revenue is available at this time. In response to Maye and Ilori, Schomisch clarified that passes can be purchased for multiple fares, and that services are provided Monday-Saturday, 6 a.m.-10:15 p.m. Thompson noted a high number of riders in the Lexington Green neighborhood, and a need for improved bus shelter and bus safety. Schomisch indicated federal stimulus funds will result in 70 new shelters at stops where there are more than 25 riders per day. With regard to safety concerns, bus shelter lighting will be added where readily available, cameras are available on all buses, and incidents of violence or other improper use leads to eviction of riders. Schomisch also noted a new adopt-a-shelter program to improve bus shelter locations. Tuley suggested a public education campaign regarding safety. In response to Durian, Schomisch encouraged people not familiar with bus services to take a short trip or two starting at Crossroads and throughout Portage. Schomisch also indicated that 0.4 mills generates \$844,300 in revenue from Portage property owners, and the cost of the three routes in Portage is \$1.1 million. After federal and state revenues are excluded, the local share for the Portage fixed-route buses is \$732,000. In addition, the demand-response bus services costs \$1.1 million for Care-A-Van and \$380,000 for Metro Van, and a notable percent of such services are provided in Portage. After further discussion, Schomisch explained the next steps in the process are for staff, the Transit Authority Board and the Kalamazoo County Transit Authority Board to finalize the COA, and subsequently begin the process needed to implement short-term recommendations. As there were no additional comments or action of the Board, Tuley thanked Mr. Schomisch for his presentation.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS: None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.