Public Transit Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Regional Committee Meeting Virtual Meeting

Friday, October 16th, 2020 10:00am – 12:00pm

Meeting Notes:

Attending: Christine Howe (SeVT), Randy Schoonmaker (SeVT), Timothy Bradshaw (VTrans), Chris Campany (WRC), Colin Bratton (WRC), Otis Munroe (SWCRPC), Wendy Germain (Senior Solutions)

9/18/20 Notes Approval: Notes from previous meeting approved with no changes

Business:

- Mobility & Transportation Innovations Grant (MTI)
 - The MTI grant program is a recently announced initiative from the Vermont Agency of Transportation that will provide funding for a variety of projects that improve mobility and transportation access for transit dependent Vermonters as well as projects that reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicles and lower greenhouse gas emissions.
 - The focus of the grant is on the creation or expansion of Transit Demand Management projects, such as micro transit initiatives, as well as the creation or expansion of First Mile/Last Mile programs.
 - Funding is available at three different levels; A: \$10,000, B: \$50,000, C: \$100,000
 - The discussion was led by Randy Schoonmaker from SeVT and Tim Bradshaw of Vtrans. The potential of a Micro Transit program in Southeastern Vermont was discussed, using the pilot program in the Capital Region as a basis. However Vtrans intends Microtransit as a replacement for rather than a supplement to traditional fixed route service, and currently the fixed route service in the region is operating at near capacity levels. There is little reason to make significant changes to the service that is already operating very successfully.
 - A First Mile/Last Mile program operated together with the ADA service could be a good option to explore to improve access for transit dependent populations in our region using funding from Category A or Category B MTI grant. A Vtrans cost estimate study would be the starting point for such a proposal.
 - Randy Schoonmaker motions for SeVT to approach Vtrans with a proposal for First Mile/ Last Mile ADA program cost estimate study. 2nd from Chris Campany.
 - Motion approved Unanimously.
- Fiscal Year 2021 Budget
 - SeVT as well as Senior Solutions approve of FY '21 Budget proposal from 9/18 meeting.
 - Other Budget issues:
 - Bellows Falls Senior Center reopened last week for the first time since the beginning of Covid crisis.
 - SeVT has provided 1 trip thus far for the BF senior center and anticipates a significant uptick in trips in the coming weeks.
 - Budget must be updated to include adequate funding for Bellows Falls Senior Center
 - Rockingham Meals program has also reopened and has used 17% of its allocated funding in the first month, however it is anticipated this number will fall in the coming months.
 - Wilmington Meals program is yet to reopen and is unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future.
 - Social Trips have been included in FY '21 budget, however since the program started last month we are yet to make any social rides.

- Motion by Randy Schoonmaker to move \$5,000 from the FY '21 Social trip budget to the Bellows Falls Senior Center. 2nd by Otis Monroe.
 - Approved Unanimously by Committee
- Open Meeting Law Compliance:
 - Starting in January 2021 the Elderly & Persons with Disabilities Transportation Program Meetings will be subject to Vermont Open Meeting Law Requirements.
 - To be compliant with this change the E&D committee must:
 - Must provide public advance notice of E&D meetings including posting full meeting agendas in advance
 - This must be done atleast 48 hours in advance of each meeting.
 - Meetings must be open and accessible to public and allow time for public comment during the course of the meeting
 - During the Covid crisis this will be done electronically through openly available Zoom meetings.
 - The minutes from each meeting must be taken and posted publicly within 5 days, extended temporarily to 10 during the Covid crisis.
 - Operating procedures for public participation as well as potential conflict of interest issues must be established by Committee.
 - The committee decided that the Meeting Agendas and Minutes will be hosted on the websites of the Two Regional Commissions, as well as accessible through a link on the SeVT website.
 - The Windham Regional Commission will take responsibility for creating a draft of the operating procedures for the committee.
- Ridership Update:
 - Generally Ridership has remained steady since the beginning of Covid crisis in March.
 - There was a significant jump in ridership in the two days prior to the meeting 10/14 and 10/15
 - However it is likely this is a temporary blip rather than a sustained shift
 - Adult Day centers are starting to reopen across the State
 - Rockingham and Springfield Adult Days served by our regional have not yet reopened. We do not know as of this meeting whether they will reopen soon or not, however once they do we will anticipate an increase in ridership associated with Adult Day Center patrons.
- Vtrans Updates:
 - Vtrans is very happy with the recent progress of the E&D Committee. Meetings have been engaged and organized and talking about innovative ways to improve service. The expansion of our service to include Social Trips is also a very positive development, expanding the scope of the committee beyond medical trips.
 - Vtrans continues to explore tools to improve Covid safety during the winter months, when the temperature will require vehicles and buildings to be more fully enclosed, and limit air flow enjoyed during the warmer months.
 - Currently exploring the possibility of installing air filtering systems in buses to improve air quality and limit spread of virus. Also looking into use of UV sanitizing wands on vehicles.
 - Currently nothing definitive has been implemented by Vtrans for virus safety in winter months. They will provide an update to Regional Committees as soon as a decision has been made.
 - Volunteer Driver Safety & Training protocols have been updated for increased safety during winter months.
- Workplan Template Review and Draft:
 - The committee reviewed the requirements of the upcoming work plan update and assigned tasks to committee members for the update.
 - A draft of the update will be provided by the next meeting.
- Next Meeting:
 - The next meeting of the E&D Committee will be Friday, January 15th at 10am.