

## East Central Regional Transportation Coordinating Council

March 9th, 2023

### **ECRTCC Advisory Board Meeting 9:am – 11am**

9:00 **Call to order:**

9:05 **Introductions:**

Natalie Matthewson- Central MN Council on Aging

Beth Sumner, Mille Lacs County Community & Veteran Services

Tim Schmutzer with PHASE-Industries.

Mike Moilanen, Planning and Project Management Mille Lacs Band

Joe Carvalho - MTM

Rebecca Perrotti, Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services

Helen Pieper, Kanabec County - Timber Trails

Brandon Nurmi – Arrowhead Transit

Monique Mendyke - RSVP

Tom Gottfried - MnDOT

Michelle Thomas – ECRTCC Coordinator

Karen Onan – ECRTCC Coordinator

Penny Messer – Isanti County Human Services

9:15 **Announcements:**

2024 Grant Application and 2025 Grant Application – Due on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

- Fiscal Years: July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 and July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.
- In-depth and projectory work on Work Plan which details the structure of the Logic Model.
- Continuing current work with focus on LCP priorities.

Mobility Management training – 2 year training through EasterSeals. Certification.

Last Volunteer Driver Forum Series completed in February, now moving into Lunch and Learns – one hour sessions from noon to 1pm.

- Topics:
    - March 21<sup>st</sup> – Sharing and coordination capabilities – for volunteer driver scheduling – Presentation by Kevin Chambers, Oregon – RIDESHEET which he developed.
    - May 25<sup>th</sup> – Panel discussions on scheduling software – what works and what doesn't.
    - July 27<sup>th</sup> – Transit focused MaaS – Elliot McFadden
- All hosted by MCOTA.

9:25 **MnDOT – RTCCs and MCOTA updates:**

*Tom Gottfried*

Discussion on MCOTA Barriers Work Team. Invitation to next MCOTA meeting:  
<https://coordinatemntransit.org/events/meetings> You are all invited to participate.  
 Volunteer Driver Brochure is completed.

- Continued Tim’s conversation from below - \*\*\*.
- State issues are important, keeping in mind that the regional level is where the state issues are formed.  
 Can RTCCs and this Barriers group work more closely together? Yes, MCOTA is meant to be fed information/needs from the RTCCs.

What id a TMCC? Carver/Scott covers these 2 counties as a TMCC.

TMCCs should be easily accessible.

RTCC build partnerships together – Networking. Getting all the entities together. Not to run or fund these sources.

TMCC takes what the RTCC has built and utilize the byproduct of what the RTCC has built and put it into action.

Penny Messer – utilizing MTM in Isanti County. NEMT and oversight – a component of a TMCC.

Penny is on the MCOTA Accessibility Work Team – Service needs to be promoted. This group has been studying HHS plans – Housing, etc. – is transportation being truly addressed throughout plans? These topics are on the forefront.

- Non-profit and counties work together in order to make vehicle sharing possible? Insurance? Joint Powers or MOI?
- Volunteer Driver Brochure is ready to be distributed. Okayed by MCOTA. Website and/or hard copy.
- Gray line between being an employee and a volunteer – A volunteer driving a county owned vehicle.  
*Helen to send email to Tom explaining this situation.* Counties can’t afford to pay all the employee compensation.  
 There is a need for a statewide self-insured program for volunteer drivers. Take out of hands of private insurance - for the counties. MCIT needs to deal with this issue. *Emails from MCIT to Helen.*  
*Helen will send to Tom.*

9:45 **Service Provider Updates:**

*(please include information about current volunteer driver program services)*

Helen Pieper – Timber Trails

Website to be updated.

Retirement of Operations Supervisor.

Possible Restructuring.

Tim suggested Orange Ball to help determine purpose, strengths, brand.

Lack of volunteer drivers – 1099 at the forefront of the problem. Statewide insurance for volunteer drivers encouraged.

Waiting for buses to be delivered. These delays are unprecedented.

Brandon Nurmi – Arrowhead Transit

Organizational restructuring occurring currently.

Comprehensive review with MnDOT in April.

Need for more drivers.

Electric bus contract signed which will run in Virginia. 1 bus, one charging station.  
 Volunteer driver program – 2 advocates going out to recruit face to face. 10 new drivers  
 throughout the entire Arrowhead region.  
 Waiting for buses to be delivered.

Rhonda Torgerson – Tri-CAP Public Transit (see page 4 of this document)

Updates from other Advisory Board Members – concerns, comments.

10:05 **ECRTCC Updates:**

*LCP Connection leading into 2024/2025 grant years*

1. **Transfer Station Updates**  
 Compiling survey information (completed surveys done recently CHNA, and others).  
 Discussion with Tina Neary and Torey Hunkus – led to consulting services to assist transit agencies develop their transit service plans. Could RTCCs be involved?
2. **Destination or Transfer Station Updates**  
 New contact for Mille Lacs Band – Matti Gurney from MnDOT (Project Manager).  
 NLX update – would Mille Lacs Band be interested in participating in aesthetic design of Hinckley hub? Mike has agreed that moving forward he would put us in touch with whomever would be the person – there is opportunity there!
3. **Shared Vehicles Updates**  
 Inventory list – churches and senior organizations, being updated with help from others.  
 Letter to be emailed – in editing process.  
 Enterprise concept presented at ECSN meeting – Ecumen interested, upcoming meeting with larger group from Ecumen. *Send out flyer that Michelle put together - attached.*
4. **Emergency Preparedness**  
 Radio broadcast – upcoming. Interview moved to March 31<sup>st</sup>. Will air in early April.

ECRTCC Logic Model will be relayed to the Advisory Board once they are revised for 2024/2025.

10:40 **Group Discussion \*\*\***

Tim gave update on the MCOTA Barriers Work Team.

Group has been meeting for about a year. Environmental scan/assessment of accessible transportation and prioritizing. Reporting to MnDOT and implementation. Data gathered.

1. Vehicle sharing and reducing those barriers.
2. Demystifying Waiver Services Transportation – communication gaps between DHS and providers.
3. Identifying and improving the rural transportation system - what is available, what is effective, what is the reach of rural transportation. Researching models for improving the delivery of rural transportation.
4. NEMT education.
5. Setting accurate market rates for reimbursement.

First 2 are top priority right now.

MCOTA and RTCCs are all rowing in the same direction.

MetCouncil – making massive systematic shift for those who really need assistance – they are pulling resources so there will be no assistance available. To be continued...

11:00 **Adjourn:**

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**2022 – 2023 Upcoming ECRTCC Advisory Board Meeting:**

9am to 11am on May 11<sup>th</sup>

*Virtual via Zoom.*

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**Tri-CAP Update:*****New Service***

1. *Creation of 3 new Service Segments including:*
  - a. *New Melrose/Sauk Centre Fluid Route Monday – Friday 8 am – 5 pm*
  - b. *New Sherburne Route (Elk River, Big Lake, Monticello Fluid Route) Monday – Friday 6 am – 6 pm and Saturday 8 am – 5 pm*
  - c. *New Mille Lacs Route (Milaca, Princeton, Zimmerman, Elk River Fluid Route) Monday – Friday 6 am – 6 pm and Saturday 8 am – 5 pm*
2. *Buses on order:*
  - a. *2020-3 buses*
  - b. *2021-4 buses*

*Rising costs of buses. Prices were not secured. All Class 400 buses rose from \$98,506 to \$163,794. Increases are due to rising cost of all materials put into making the buses.*

*Local share is increasing from \$54,796.00 to \$129,000.00.*

3. *Ridership has continued to increase-see attached graph.*
4. *We are in a trial phase with MNDOT to explore a transit app that will tell you what transit company can provide rides for you depending on where you need transportation and you can also purchase tokens on the app. Whoo hoo!! This has started March 1<sup>st</sup>.*