

The St. Cloud Metro Bus Rider Advisory Committee (RAC) held a meeting on Tuesday, January 17, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the Mobility Training Center, 700 W. St. Germain St, St. Cloud, MN

The following individuals were in attendance: Kim Hoff, Steve Williams, Suzanne Driessen, Karen Maruska, Jenny Svihel, David Williamsen, Bruce Benner (came at 9:10 am).

Welcome. Kim welcomed everyone and explained that Debbie was out of town and would not be at the meeting. She asked everyone to introduce themselves and state how long they have been on the committee and which bus service they use.

#### New Business.

- 1) Metro Bus Safety and Technology. Kim introduced Steve Williams, IT/Data Manager. Steve explained there are two staff in the IT department at Metro Bus. Ken Sparks is part-time, working 28 hours a week along with Steve. He explained they take care of everything from computers, servers, radios, electronic signs on the buses, fare boxes, and phones (both employer paid cell phones and regular land lines).

Overview of what the IT department supports:  
59 computer workstations, 8 physical servers and 8 virtual servers, 75 vehicles with DVR's (digital video recorders), 3 buildings with a total of 4 DVR's in all of the buildings, phone system, all 3 buildings are connected by fiber optics, email server, door access, vehicle communication equipment which include two-way radios (2 channels - one for fixed route and one for Dial-a-Ride), in a total of 73 vehicles along with 5 base stations and 10 hand held radios, data radio/MDC's, 100 foot tower at the Operations Center. He mentioned that some of the fixed route buses are on cellular communication and the goal is to transition all of the fixed route to cellular so that eventually they can turn up the reporting rate (how often the information is sent on GPS) and when the rate is high enough, then people will be able to see where their bus is and when it will be coming to a stop. The infrastructure is expensive as well as the software but it is on the long range plan list.

Steve explained they do a lot of reporting in the IT department such as monthly ridership, and for the NTD (National Transit Database) which is a federal government program. The fixed route ridership comes from the farebox

and hours the buses are on the street, are also tracked. Dial-a-Ride ridership comes from the dispatching software. Karen asked if different fare types are kept track of such as how many SCSU students ride, how many reduced fares, etc. Steve responded that the fixed route is tracked by route. Specific information can be pulled but some assumptions need to be made, such as assuming a SCSU student is using their ID to ride, which is a fair assumption but not 100% accurate. He said they typically don't break down how a person pays but it can be tracked.

He mentioned he has to generate similar monthly reports for MnDOT, which is the State government. He also does safety and security, so for example, if someone falls and gets hurt, he has to file a report and let the NTD as well.

He mentioned there are a couple of big projects coming up soon. Request for proposals (RFP) have gone out for in-house software replacement (finance, Human Resource, asset management, etc.) The RFP is due February 1, 2017. It is also planned to replace one of the big computer servers and a smaller server this year.

Steve mentioned that Debbie wanted him to specifically talk about security which includes the door access and security cameras in the buildings as well as on the buses. He stated the Mobility Center has six cameras: one on the front door, back door, three in the alley and one on the top of the building (because there had been some issues with graffiti on the second floor). There is also door access to get in the doors. The front door is on a timer that automatically closes at 3pm. The same systems are in the other two buildings. The Transit Center has quite a few more cameras because of all the activity. There a total of 15 cameras, a few in the lobby and dispatch area but majority are outside around the building. There are numerous cameras at the Operations Center due to the size of the building.

Kim asked how many cameras are on a bus. Steve said it depends on which bus it is but generally there are 5 to 8 cameras. Kim also asked Steve to describe what the cameras are generally used for and what the protocol is for pulling video. He explained we need to have just cause to pull a video, such as an incident or accident that generates a reason. Some reasons can be because the bus was involved in an accident or there was a complaint called against the

driver or the bus. Karen asked if anyone monitors the cameras at the Transit Center or they only used for “after the fact”. Steve explained that dispatch can bring up the exterior cameras and monitor activity that is going on outside. Karen stated she has some clients that are blind or have low vision and have a fear of the Transit Center. She stated it’s not just St. Cloud but transit centers all over the U.S. have more of a “reputation” of people that can be scary to vision impaired individuals. She said it will help for them to know that there are cameras. Jenny asked if there had been any discussion about putting cameras in the bus shelters. Steve explained that the shelters belong to Metro Bus but not the property.

2) RAC Terms. Kim stated that she spoke with Brenda but had not heard from Janice or Luke. There are a total of 8 people on the committee and it would be the preference to have four one-year terms and four two-year terms. The following people stated they would do a one-year term: Suzanne and Karen. Bruce, Jenny and David stated they would do a two-year term. Brenda had indicated she was open to either one.

3) Human Service Transit Coordination Survey. Kim explained that Debbie is involved in a 7W Regional Transportation group as well as several human service agency committees. She wanted the RAC to know that there will be a transportation survey conducted in the near future, and that she would like the members to participate in it. Kim wasn’t sure how the survey would be implemented, whether through the mail, email or by phone but would have more information at the next meeting.

Old Business. There was none. Kim stated there were no emails that came in for the RAC.

Open Discussion. Jenny stated the past couple of weeks on the 6/7 and 21/22 bus routes, she has noticed that when the driver opens the back door to let people off, other people have been coming in the back door and not paying for their rides. Kim asked if the driver is aware of this happening and Jenny stated that she mentioned it to a couple of drivers. One said that they would write it up for a supervisor. Kim mentioned that it is good that the driver is told but it can also be reported by calling Customer Service. She mentioned it’s important to let them know the exact time it happened, the route, the location on the route and the date. This may be a reason to pull video to

see who the person was and a supervisor could talk with them at the Transit Center or go out and observe this location to see if it happens again.

Kim asked if the meeting was informative and everyone said it was. She mentioned if there are topics they would like discussed in the future, to send Debbie an email and let her know. She also mentioned some of the topics that were originally presented will be revisited because of new members and the fact that there are always new things happening within the organization. Kim also mentioned there is still a need for drivers on the fixed route.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 9:36 a.m.