

The St. Cloud Metro Bus Rider Advisory Committee (RAC) held a meeting on Tuesday, February 20, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the Mobility Training Center, 700 W. St. Germain St, St. Cloud, MN

The following individuals were in attendance: Debbie Anderson, Kim Hoff, Ryan Daniel, Jim Perez, Dave Green, Bruce Benner, Jenny Svihel, Brenda Severson, David Williamsen, and Suzanne Driessen. Visitor: Jerry Schmitz, fixed route operator.

Welcome. Debbie welcomed everyone. Everyone introduced themselves.

Public Open Forum. Jerry didn't have anything this month.

Old Business.

- 1) RAC email. Debbie mentioned that an email was received about Route 10, asking for better service to downtown St. Cloud. The email was brought to Jim P. attention and he mentioned that staff will be looking at a lot of different routes but Route 10 is unfortunately for the past five or six years has been very unproductive. He stated they will be looking at how they can realign the route to better serve people in the Westwood community to be able to get them downtown earlier. When he spoke to the person that had emailed and called, he reminded her that we are mass transit not personalized transit.
- 2) Overview of January meeting – Open Discussion. Dave stated there was an issue brought up about the stop announcements by Burlington Coat Factory. He looked into it and found out they have to be programmed manually. He asked staff to look at this particular location and it was set at 317 feet from Burlington, so he asked for it to be set so the announcement is made earlier. Jerry mentioned when he drove the route the previous Saturday, it was announcing at a good time.

Bruce mentioned the announcement for the shelter across from the St. Cloud Technical College doesn't announce until they are almost to Whitney Center. Jenny also mentioned Route 6 and 7 doesn't announce until after the stop by McDonald's and Route 21/22 announces late over by Caseworks.

Brenda suggested there be some type of yearly maintenance where spot checks are done for the stop announcements. Dave mentioned there are 800+ bus stops. Ryan mentioned they could possibly just look at landmarks and high transit corridors/high density bus stops. Debbie mentioned there are ADA mandated stop announcements along the routes, not at every bus stop, such as major intersections and transfer points.

Debbie stated she received an update from Berta in Marketing regarding the new No Smoking decals. Maintenance will be installing them in the bus shelters over the next few weeks. Bruce mentioned he has seen them.

Bruce mentioned that the schedule for Route 33 is still not posted in the shelter by the hospital and there is also a schedule missing in the shelter by the Al Loehr apartments.

New Business.

- 1) Ryan discussed a couple of items, the first being that Metro Bus is going through a transition. One of the things that management looked at is the Rider Advisory Committee and feels that the committee will fit better under the department of Operations versus Community Outreach/Mobility Center. The RAC members are the eyes and ears on the street and the majority of the meetings are discussing operational issues. This will be the last meeting that Debbie will be chairing and next month Dave and Jim will transition into that role. Kim will continue to take minutes at the meetings.
- 2) RAC passes. There has been discussion in the past about passes for RAC members. Ryan expressed his appreciation to the members for volunteering their time and being a part of the committee and attending the meetings as well as volunteering at extra events such as the Art Crawl or Benton County Fair. As a token of appreciation, everyone will be receiving unlimited ride passes (both fixed route and paratransit). He mentioned that he will be expecting everyone to continue coming to the meetings. He asked that everyone be discreet about the fact that they have free, unlimited passes and swipe the pass like a regular fare card but not advertise to everyone on the bus (both passengers and operators) that they can ride for free. The passes will not be valid on the Northstar Link buses. Debbie mentioned that she has the serial number from everyone's pass, so if they should get lost or damaged, please let her know and they will be reissued. When someone decides to step down from serving on the committee, their pass will be deactivated at that time.
- 3) Internal newsletter. Ryan handed out the most recent employee newsletter which began in January 2017 – it was designed to keep employees up-to-date on the different departments and events that Metro Bus is involved in. He felt that the RAC members would appreciate receiving the newsletter also, so these will be handed out each month at the meetings.

Open Discussion.

- 1) Brenda mentioned the Behind the Driver poster which she questioned the Dial-a-Ride driver about earlier in the day. It said something about "We love our passengers" and she asked the operator what the free gift was and he didn't know. He said they don't get informed a lot about things like that and he said a lot of the drivers feel there is a lack of communication between departments. Ryan explained that communications are put in the drivers mailboxes (both Fixed Route and DAR) and bulletins are posted about a week in advance. Dave explained that a memo was put out about two weeks ago regarding the free gift for people that purchased a bus pass.
- 2) Ryan stated there are two vacancies on the RAC committee and he is working with community contacts to fill the positions. He is working with SCSU students and other avid bus riders from both fixed route and paratransit. He mentioned if any committee members have suggestions for new members, to let him know.
- 3) Bruce mentioned he knows it's hard but a lot of the bus shelters and sidewalks are not being cleaned of snow. He wondered if certain areas could be prioritized such as apartment complexes and senior citizen complexes for snow removal. Ryan

- wondered how we can monitor this because when the city comes by with the snow plow, it fills in the area that we may have just cleaned. Brenda asked if there could be better communication and cooperation between the cities and Metro Bus to coordinate the snow removal. Ryan stated maybe in a perfect world we could do that. We are doing the best we can but we can't control the actions of the counties and MnDOT. Brenda asked how many staff is assigned for snow removal. She wondered if we could hire more staff for this time of year. Ryan stated there are two people in maintenance and that we also have contracts for the Transit Center, the Northstar lots in St. Cloud and Becker but we need to be mindful of tax payer dollars and the budget.
- 4) Jenny mentioned that Journey Home and other riders put their kids in the strollers before they bring it down the steps in the back of the bus. She noticed recently that the stroller kind of fell down and the kid kind of got hurt. She said the driver wrote up the incident. She is concerned for the kid's safety. Jerry mentioned that it happens a lot with Journey Home. Kim stated that she could call the staff and have them put up a posting about it, as a reminder and also because not everyone goes to the monthly orientation meetings.
 - 5) Debbie mentioned the next Art Crawl is Friday, March 23rd from 5-9pm. Kim explained what the Art Crawl is and asked if anyone is interested in helping, please let her or Debbie know.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.