

## Transit Meeting April 21, 2014

Present; Mr. Rick Blake – Chairman, Mr. Steve Willis, Mr. Gordon Geiger, Ms. Susan Kunkel, Mr. Tony Kusserow and Rich Grenfell – Transit Administrator.

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2014 meeting was made by Mr. Willis and seconded by Ms. Kunkel. C.U. (Carried Unanimously).

The Commission reviewed the 2013 Annual stats; ridership increased 5%, Revenue -2%, mileage increased 2%. Total expenditures for 2013- \$560,580; (93% of Operation Budget). A motion to place the Annual stat report on file was made by Ms. Kunkel and seconded by Mr. Willis C.U.

The Commission reviewed the 2014 First Quarter stats; New 1-hour Service levels introduced – Ridership decreased 3%; Revenue increased 3%; mileage down 18%. These are welcomed and exceptional stats given the New service level changes. The public has adapted well with minimal discontent. A motion to place the 2014 First Quarter stats on file was made by Mr. Geiger and seconded by Mr. Kusserow. C.U.

The Commission reviewed the 2013 Transit Mutual Insurance Safety Audit for the Merrill Transit System. The Safety Audit is very favorable with no findings/recommendations for the Transit System. Copies of the Safety Report are available at the Transit Office for public review. A motion to approve the 2013 TMI Safety Audit was made by Ms. Kunkel and seconded by Mr. Willis. C.U.

The Commission discussed in length, (3) options of consideration for the 2014 Capital Improvement Project for the former Eastside Fire Station /Transit Bus Storage Facility renovation/ relocation concept.

### OPTIONS DISCUSSED:

- (1) Renovation / Occupancy of the former East side Fire Station Property – **Commission Rejected – based on poor efficiencies.**
- (2) Demolition of Eastside Fire Station & 1969 addition /Utilize 1990 Storage Facility for buses. Minor renovations to include; (1)ADA Unisex Restroom , directional changes to existing radiant heat system and purchase/ installation of plumbing/ pressure washing systems for parking bays. Installation of Solar Heat was also suggested to assist in energy efficiency. Transit Office will remain at City Hall. –**Highest consideration/priority by Commission.**
- (3) Status Quo – Remain at existing properties –Renovate steel storage facility at 309 E First Street. –**Moderate to High consideration/priority by Commission.**

The Administrator will prospect options 2 & 3 and prepare preliminary plans for decision /approval at the May 19, 2014 Transit Commission meeting.

### Administrator's Report:

WisDOT 5311 Program manager, Chad Reuter visited Merrill on 4/07/14. The 2014-15 budgets were discussed. Walk-through site visits were performed at the former Eastside Fire Station Property and Bus storage Facility. Mr. Reuter also joined Administrator Grenfell on a 1-hour bus ride /tour of Merrill's transit service area. Capital Funding for Projects was discussed and Mr. Reuter spoke very favorably to Merrill's eligibility by performance, effectiveness and efficiency.

Our selected, in training, Part time Bus Operator resigned from duty for personal reasons. We are now 1-month into advertising for the available position. Current applicants have until Monday April 28, 2014 to respond.

Our 1-hour headway service has shown to be very effective for the majority of transit users. The service performance, in most cases has not changed at all. There has been a little discontent expressed regarding the duration of time it takes to travel across the City now, however, our on time performance has improved immensely. The bus operators have expressed their appreciation as to the decreased levels of stress and overall improvement in safety of operations .Assessment of the first quarter is very successful and the 18% decrease in mileage is showing great potential for an effective cost savings in fuel.

The Grand Opening of the New Walmart Super Center has mixed reviews from transit users. The Corporate policies on public transit access do not coincide with the common practice of the curb to curb Demand/Response services of the Merrill-Go-Round. By designating the Transit bus stop on the far east end of the property, transit patrons incur excessive walking distances to and from the store and pharmacy. Again, it is a major change to the customary front entrance boarding and alighting we performed for the past 22 years at the old location, and the transit population will continue to express their concerns to Walmart management as well as our bus operators. Walmart's Corporate public transit trafficking policy has also been altered for the next 6-8 months. Due to obstruction behind the store, transit will have to enter and exit the primary driveway until the alleyway clears of merchandise containers behind the store. This has been approved by the Walmart Manager (4/21/12). New trafficking instructions were reviewed by the Commission and distributed to our employees.

No Public Comment

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Kunkel and seconded by Mr. Geiger

Next Transit Commission meeting: May 19, 2014.