

Emmet County
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING
January 29, 2015

Present: Commissioner Les Atchison; Commissioner Charles MacInnis; Commissioner Bert Notestine.

Staff: County Administrator Marty Krupa; Director Transportation and Development Kelley Atkins; Chief Deputy County Clerk Amanda Arthur

Absent: None.

Others in Attendance: Linda Ward, F.E.E.T.; Rachel Smolinski, Harbor Inc.; Amanda Swiss, Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians; Maureen Hollocker, Great Start Collaboration; Jeff Doublestein, Community Action Agency; Emily Meyerson, Petoskey Planning Commission; Wid Lyman, resident; Mike Mikus, Petoskey News Review

Call to order:

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Atchison in the Board of Commissioners Room.

Public Comment:

None

Election:

Notestine nominated Atchison as Chair of the Transportation Committee.

Atchison seconded the motion.

Motion carried in a unanimous voice vote.

Notestine nominated MacInnis as Co-chair of the Transportation Committee.

Atchison seconded the motion.

Motion carried in a unanimous voice vote.

Minutes:

The proposed minutes of the February 26, 2014 meeting were presented and reviewed.

Atchison recognized Vickie Carpentier for her thorough minutes.

Motion by MacInnis to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2014 meeting.

Supported by Notestine.

Motion carried in a unanimous voice vote.

Appearance by F.E.E.T.

Co-Chair Linda Ward recapped F.E.E.T.'s goal to get the county citizens a chance to vote on public transit. She reported that at the February 2014 meeting, it was stated that the committee did not have enough information. Since that meeting, surveys were provided to the committee for review. MacInnis recommended using a third party research firm to review the surveys. Notestine shared some thoughts on wording and audience for the survey. Amanda Swiss, representing the tribe, shared that the tribe is contributing funds towards the distribution of the surveys. Swiss also clarified that the intent of the survey is to question "will you pay for public transportation" not "do you want public transportation". Rachel Smolinski of Harbor, Inc. reported that F.E.E.T. approached Harbor, Inc. to draft the survey based on their experience with surveys and the comments they have been given on public transit. Jeff Doublestein, Housing and Budget Counselor for the Community Action Agency, spoke to advocate for public transportation, citing anecdotes and real budget numbers on the cost of ownership of a vehicles.

Re-presentation of June 10, 2009 letter to HSBC's Transportation Committee by Les

Atchison shared a letter to Tom Shire at the HSBC's Transportation Committee, recognizing that there was a great need in the community and addressing specific situations. The letter asked for replies to be directed to Kelly Atkins. There were very few replies. Atchison stated that they hear anecdotal stories frequently about citizens that struggle to get around. Kelly Atkins reported that June 12, 2006 a letter was sent to all the townships regarding concerns. Atchison reported that we do have some public transportation in the area: the Friendship Center and Straits Regional Ride. He continued that the committee recognizes that there is a need and the goal of the Transportation Committee is to find a way to address the need. MacInnis went back to the question posed by F.E.E.T. - does the Transportation Committee want input into the survey? Notestine stated that he would prefer to see a third party offer input to be certain that the survey is fair and unbiased. Smolinski suggested taking the draft that is already prepared and having it validated. Discussion followed regarding different aspects of the cost and contributions for a public transit program. Atchison discussed questions he would like to see addressed by the survey.

Ward reported that there are public transportation programs in every county in the state except Emmet County, and that the programs in Benzie and Charlevoix Counties are continuing to grow. Swiss addressed that the existing programs in the area leaves significant time gaps and are not always convenient.

Public Comment

Atchison opened public comment

Emily Meyerson, Petoskey Planning Commission and citizen of Petoskey, reported that the City of Petoskey recognizes a need to public transportation. It is in their master plan. Meyerson

reported that it is an important feature of the future economy of our area, as well as a need that needs to be addressed today.

Wid Lyman, citizen, addressed the survey and who is the target audience, votes vs. users.

MacInnis suggested that the voters are the important target audience.

Maureen Hollocker, Petoskey resident and Director of the Great Start Collaborative, reported that lack of public transportation is one of the top three barriers for families in regards to getting their young children to preschool.

Smolinski, as a citizen and a member of the Kiwanis Club of Harbor Springs, shared anecdotal story involving a 17 year old disabled child and the struggles the family has getting her to her classes, both in regards to scheduling and cost.

Ward, as an employee of McLaren Northern Michigan, shared a story about hiring a young man from downstate who declined a few days later due to the fact that there was no public transportation in our area.

Doublestein asked when the discussion will take place regarding what form public transportation will take in Emmet County.

MacInnis went back to the original question of does the Transportation Committee want input into the survey. He again stated that he feels that a third party should be used in the process.

Atchison inquired with Swiss regarding what the tribe has to contribute. Swiss reported that they have \$10,000.00 to contribute to the distribution through the RFP process.

MacInnis motioned that the committee recommend to the full Emmet County Board that up to \$2,000.00 be appropriated to secure a third party to validate the language and deployment method for the survey. Notestine seconded the motion. Motion carried in a unanimous voice vote.

Adjournment:

Motion by MacInnis to adjourn the meeting.

Supported by Notesine.

Motion carried in a unanimous voice vote.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.