

Emmet County
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING
January 6, 2016

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

Staff: Director of Transportation and Development Kelley Atkins; Chief Deputy County Clerk Amanda Arthur

Absent: None.

Call to order:

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Atchison in the Emmet County Board of Commissioners Room.

Approval of Agenda:

MacInnis motioned to accept the January 6, 2106 agenda as presented. Notestine seconded the motion. Motion carried in a unanimous vote.

Public Comment:

Sue Engel commended everyone. She has been hearing positive comments about the articles in the news paper and all of the support.

Minutes:

The draft minutes of the November 23, 2015 were presented. Notestine motioned to approve the minutes of the November 23, 2015 meeting. MacInnis seconded the motion. Atchison questioned Engel's statement suggesting that the committee "find strong programs that operate in the black to emulate." Engel clarified that substantially subsidized systems can operate in black. Those are the programs to focus on. Motion carried in a unanimous vote.

Survey Results:

Survey results were presented by Rachel Smolinski of Harbor, Inc. and Cathlyn Sommerfield of C.S. Research Consultants.

Smolinski indicated that the objective of the survey was to determine if the community was willing to pay for public transportation and if they wanted the opportunity to vote for it. Smolinski also reviewed the five wave design for the distribution of the survey. Surveys were distributed to 1,100 randomly selected individuals pulled from the August 2014 registered voter list of 6,332. 780 completed responses were received - a 71 percent response rate.

Sommerfield explained the random sample process and presented the survey results highlighting the following:

- Demographics – 93% of respondents were year-round residents
- Age – 78% of respondents were age 55+
- Zip Codes – 81% of respondents were from the 49770 and 49740 zip codes
- Current/Predicted Usage of current transportation options
- Interest in a more comprehensive program – 28% of respondents would definitely or probably use a more comprehensive system
- Public Transportation as a community priority – 58% of respondents ranked it as a medium to high priority
- Public Transportation as a vote of the public – 78% of respondents answered Definitely Yes or Probably Yes
- Willingness to pay through property tax increase – 66% were willing to pay from less than \$1.00 to more than \$5.00 a month

Notestine complimented Smolinski and Sommerfield on their efforts.

MacInnis suggested that a short version of the presentation be given to the full Emmet County Board of Commissioners. Atchison stated he felt it was premature at this point but perhaps at a later date.

Review Goals of the Committee:

Atchison expressed his main concern of helping the “working poor” as well as individuals successfully participating in mental health programs and transitioning into employment. He suggested that a coupon program could be implemented before a millage. He also suggested that the board should talk to the Community Action Agency. Atchison also addressed the issue of the current bus garage at the Friendship Center and the likelihood of the Friendship Center keeping it for other uses. He also discussed the need to put out requests for proposals for all aspects of transportation services for the county, as well as other possible partnerships. He noted some concerns with the increased pressure on existing programs and partnerships, such as Community Mental Health and Straights Regional Ride, to provide more services with less funding.

MacInnis added that the deadline for applying with the State of Michigan for a placeholder for 2017 funds is coming up in February. Amanda Swiss clarified that 2017 funds are on a fiscal year that begins in October of 2016. MacInnis suggested that staff create a draft proposal, including structure and millage rate. Atchison added that staff should contact Charlevoix as well.

Notestine added that the most likely way to be successful is to be a regional program, so any possible partnerships should be considered. Swiss added that the tribe has consultants looking into possible funding sources to supplement a county system. Discussion followed regarding budget and structure. Martha Lancaster reminded staff that there are resources available to assist them in their proposal. The John Drury study proposes some specific services and budget and Val Schultz from MDOT also created a budget. MacInnis confirmed that the committee was in agreement that staff should work on a draft proposal for the next committee meeting.

Atchison suggested that due to the aggressive timeline, the committee should consider meeting every couple of weeks.

Consider Expanding Committee Membership:

Tabled

Recommendation to County Board

Tabled

Committee Member Comments:

No further comments

Public Comments:

Mark Rondel, Harbor Springs resident: Rondel shared with the committee that there is a small, informal group in Harbor Springs trying to implement a local, in town shuttle. If successful, it could potentially interface with a county program in the future.

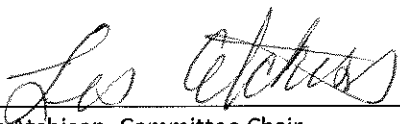
Sue Engel, Friendship Center: Engel addressed the concern for a bus garage. She noted that the Friendship Center operated for quite some time without a garage for their busses. While it is certainly desirable, it is not a necessity for start up.

Martha Lancaster, F.E.E.T.: Lancaster shared the F.E.E.T. is ready to "roll up their sleeves" to get a ballot proposal passed in August. Education efforts are currently in progress.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Transportation Committee will be January 19, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. in the Board of Commissioners Room.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Atchison thanked everyone and the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 a.m.



Les Atchison, Committee Chair



Amanda Arthur, Chief Deputy County Clerk

January 19, 2016

Date