

Johnson County Paratransit Advisory Committee

Minutes

February 25, 2025

Present:

Members: Marc Rahe, Josh Moe, Vicky Robrock, Lisa Stone

Ex-Officio:

Others: Dawn Alam, Angie Conard, Brock Grenis, Kelly Schneider, Madelyn Soen, Staci Humiston

Absent:

Members: Susan Behel, Doug Thompson, Jerri MacConnell

Ex-Officio:

Others: Darian Nagle-Gamm, Hannah Neal, Emma Simmons

1. Call to order: 1:02
2. Open Discussion: None
3. Approval of last meeting's minutes: Moved by Marc 2nd by Josh
4. Chairperson's Report:
 - a. Introductions:
5. Director's Report
 - a. Ridership update: Holding steady, 550 per weekday and 80-90 on Saturdays.
 - b. Vehicle update: Fleet vehicles are getting older so it's taking longer for repairs. Coralville purchased a new bus and SEATS will be keeping #225 for another year. At this time, SEATS does not have any spare buses. The electric bus is helping a little, the battery only last 1.5 – 2 hours in the winter and it takes 4 hours to charge so it can only be used for one or two rides. In the warmer weather it will be used for short routes. SEATS has found that if the bus is left on the charger after it's fully charged, the charge starts to go down. The early morning driver unplugs the bus then plugs it in again to give it a full charge. The electric bus was purchased with ARPA funds so Dawn will need to look into when SEATS can do something else with the bus. Riders have not made many comments about the electric vehicle, but the drivers don't care for it. The bus is smaller than the normal buses and the lift is more narrow, making it unusable for riders with larger wheelchairs. It was asked if a hybrid would be a better option and the response was that SEATS has two hybrids and are not happy with them.
 - c. Staffing update: SEATS have been chronically short staffed since COVID but it's starting to balance out now. SEATS is doing more with moral to increase retention rates. There is currently a limit on how many full-time drivers can be off on the same day and they are trying to increase this number. Management has updated training for current drivers and have brought back doing ride alongs as part of the hiring process.
 - d. Novus Update: Passenger portal is live – can book trips, cancel trips and modify online. Delegates portal is now ready. This will allow agencies to control multiple rider trips. They are able to do everything except pay for the trip.
 - e. Any questions for SEATS?: It was asked if the software will ever allow riders to make payments on line. The county is implementing a new software system in July so the hope is that the new software will have the capability to offer this. If not, SEATS will look into Novus setting it up. It was asked how much federal funding SEATS receives. SEATS doesn't have the answer to this because they receive funding from Iowa City and Coralville, this money is considered "contract money." Cities provide fixed routes

and SEATS is obligated to provide service because of ADA. Iowa City and Coralville do not pay a fixed amount, it's based on ridership.

6. Update from those in attendance at this Advisory Committee meeting: Trip Connect was launched. This is a pilot funded program that is "curb to curb" and runs Sunday – Friday from 5:00 p.m. – Midnight. Contact Kelly Schneider with any questions. Bus #331 is up for replacement next year, can't request a new bus until then.
7. Next meeting: May 20 at 1:00 p.m. Johnson County Admin. Bldg.
8. Motion to adjourn: Moved by Marc – 2nd by Josh 1:55p.m.