

Minutes

The Dubuque Transit Advisory Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 20th, 2024

4:30 pm-5:30 pm

Intermodal Conference Room

950 Elm Street, Dubuque, IA 52001

Transit Advisory Board Members:

Greg Orwoll, Chair

Matt Esser

Dora Serna, Vice Chair

Others Present

Ryan Knuckey

Director of Transportation Services

Jodi Johnson

Transit Operations Supervisor

Russell Stecklein

Parking Operations Supervisor

Joseph Lueck

Transportation Services Analyst

1. Call to Order

The Dubuque Transit Advisory Board (TAB) meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm.

2. Review/approve the agenda for the Wednesday, March 20, 2023, Dubuque Transit Advisory Board meeting

An agenda item to discuss the Orange weekday and Blue Saturday Routes by Lueck was added. Motion by Esser, seconded by Serna to approve agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Review/approve the minutes from the Thursday, September 14, 2023, Dubuque Transit Advisory Board meeting

Motion by Esser, seconded by Orwoll to approve the minutes from the September Dubuque TAB meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Vote for Transit Advisory Board Officers

Esser made a motion for Orwoll to serve as Chair and Serna to serve as Vice Chair on the TAB, seconded by Serna. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Director to update on the status of electric buses for the Jule fleet and FY25 Budget

Knuckey informed the board of the recently purchased electric fixed-route bus. The bus is expected to be delivered by December 2025. The bus's heating and cooling systems will be handled by a diesel auxiliary power unit (APU). Knuckey commented that the Dubuque hills may help to improve battery life from regen braking. Currently a spot is picked for the charging station. Waiting for the first bus allowed the battery technology to advance to where it is now and have an option that is able to travel an entire route and not be hindered by hills.

Knuckey briefed the board of plans on replacing four of their MiniBuses with a low-no or low floor option. The new MiniBuses could be powered by diesel or electric systems. The Jule is waiting for more options to be tested at the Altoona Bus Testing Center in Pennsylvania. The need for replacements is real as three MiniBuses have recently had their lifts replaced.

Lastly, Knuckey summarized the recently awarded Area of Persistent Poverty Grant from the FTA of \$200,000 with a match from the City of \$25,000. The Jule is looking to accomplish the following goals with the grant: being more equitable with service options and hoping to reduce fixed-route times. The request for proposal (RFP) should be posted after the start of fiscal year 2025 (FY25)

Orwoll is interested to hear the consultant's findings.

6. Update on City of Dubuque's new Time and Attendance System

Knuckey reported the City's new Time and Attendance system successfully launched on-time and thanks to the training sessions and two-week test phase everyone adjusted well.

7. Update on Parking and Mobility Study

Stecklein updated the TAB on the Smart Parking and Mobility Study. The mobility portion and safe routes to school is being handled by Engineering also to review with Area of Persistent Poverty Grant.

8. Discuss Student Rider Issues/Solutions

The Jule is looking at getting card readers so students would use their school IDs to get on the bus. Any issues between students would be easier to identify thanks to names and schools available to staff.

Knuckey commented that the schools have been very helpful in identifying students causing issues.

9. Review Public Transportation Agency Safety (PTAS) Plan for Bus Transit

Johnson reviewed and explained the importance of PTAS Plan with the TAB. Johnson also offered to send a copy of the PTAS Plan to the TAB after the meeting.

10. General Public Comments & Service Requests

Lueck reported there have been no new bus stop requests since the last TAB Meeting. However, The Jule has received two complaints about Bus Driver speeds, which have already been addressed by Johnson.

Lueck also reported there have been four complaints from riders about student behavior while riding the bus.

11. Review Public Comments & Service Requests

Johnson commented that Bus Driver speed complaints were a small part of the reason Hobby Lobby was officially added to the Purple Line. Having Hobby Lobby as a dedicated bus stop will prevent the Bus Drivers from feeling rushed to fit in an additional stop.

Knuckey added bus driver input was used to add Hobby Lobby as a dedicated bus stop.

Johnson reported due to the Iowa Department of Transportation's (DOT's) reconstruction of the South Grandview Bridge, the Orange weekday and Blue Saturday routes will be detoured up Southern Avenue. The residents at Mount Carmel have been notified of the detour and the DOT expects reconstruction of the bridge to be completed by November 1, 2024.

12. Ridership Report

Lueck reported ridership for the fixed-route is up at the start of FY24. Despite paratransit ridership being lower than previous FYs, there has been a surge in overall ridership.

Orwoll inquired if there was anything The Jule could do to increase ridership on the paratransit.

Johnson replied riders could be choosing to ride fixed-route over paratransit.

13. Board Comments

Esser inquired about the priority placed on ticketing those who park in bus stops.

Stecklein explained the competing priorities Parking Enforcement Officers (PEOs) and Police face during the day and assured Esser the issue is addressed as soon as possible.

Serna brought to the attention of the TAB that immigrant families have inquired about purchasing bus passes.

Knuckey explained bus passes can be purchased once they arrive at the Intermodal.

Johnson reminded there are local area organizations that offer free rides to those in need.

Knuckey asked if adding Wednesdays as a meeting option would work with the TAB and all agreed Wednesdays could be added as an option. Future meetings may meet on a Wednesday or a Thursday.

14. Adjournment

Motion by Orwoll to adjourn, seconded by Esser. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

These minutes passed, approved, and adopted on this 20th day of March 2024.

Greg Orwoll, Chair
Dubuque Transit Advisory Board