

Minutes of August 10 2012 meeting of Transit Council members with Ralph Power

Participants

John Egan, Archuleta County
John Ehmann, SWCCOG
Ralph Power, TransitPlus
Laura Lewis Marchino, Region 9 EDD
Krystian Boreyko (by phone), Easter Seals ATCI
Peter Tregillus, Road Runner
Gregg Dubit, 4Core
Martha Mason, SW Center for Independence

John Egan called the meeting to order.

(There were issues with the teleconference service.)

Ralph Power introduced himself as the consultant to transit coordinating councils thru CDOT.

John Ehmann recapped a few of the issues that had been mentioned as possible topics for this discussion: use of compressed natural gas in fleets, transit voucher programs, ADA transition plans, medical transportation and inter-city commuter service.

Peter Tregillus also raised general questions about Council direction and focus. There are many things we could do, but what will the Council do right now? Vanpools is an area he has recently initiated some work on and will discuss further at some point.

Ralph asked about Council leadership. John Ehmann noted his part-time role as staff support to the Council and the near-term end of his current position funding. John Egan explained the Council's past preference for a loose, informal structure. John Ehmann indicated that he has been in regular contact with various state government transit officials and consultants about one-call centers, veteran's service and other issues.

Ralph recommended the Council adopt formal bylaws. He asked about documentation of Council discussions and it was clarified that the Council has been a regular forum for information exchange and that minutes of meetings are regularly transcribed and posted to the COG website and shared with the COG and the TPR. Peter noted the difficulty of active coordination in a 5 county area that is so large and spread out but indicated interest in ideas to facilitate more coordination. Ralph indicated that an inventory of services and a gap analysis is standard practice. It was noted that a comprehensive transit study was prepared in 2009 and is still reasonably accurate and deemed as generally sufficient as background data and analysis. A Regional Transit Guide for potential transit users is now online at the

COG website. John Ehmann explained that John Egan has volunteered and been accepted as the informal Council facilitator but that the idea has been raised to have perhaps two more Council members volunteer to form a Steering Committee. In the meantime, a recent planning meeting was held between John Egan, John Ehmann, Laura Lewis Marchino and Susan Hakanson.

Funding and possible joint grant proposals will be a topic of the next regular Transit Council meeting in September. Whether to apply for a regional Mobility Manager in the new grant cycle is one topic to be considered.

The Council's Action Plan has been updated for recent activity and progress and is available for review on the COG website. A written brochure version that be distributed by hand may follow later.

Laura Lewis Marchino noted that there had been a lull in Council activity after the initial period of formation and strategic planning and that is was a good time to re-assess and re-energize. Peter mentioned the strong growth in dial a ride service volume in Ignacio. Other positives include reorganization of Mountain Express into a call and ride operation. Durango Transit has seen major increases in bus volume (in part due to the expansion of free trolley service) One significant cutback is in the funding for the Opportunity Bus para-transit service. Peter has submitted a grant proposal to restore inter-city bus service between Durango and Grand Junction. The decision is expected in September. The Council has discussed medical transportation coordination and Medicaid funding several times and may do so again at a future meeting.

The Council has been encouraged to form workgroups or subcommittees to facilitate Council activity on Action Plan items and will be encourage to do so again at the next regular meeting. John Egan urged forward motion on at least some of the long list of possible projects to instill confidence of even more progress in the future.

Ralph noted that a one call- one click center is a good way to organize and work together. Laura explained initial efforts to work with SW Connect and 211 to develop a community resource database and make that information available. John Ehmann explained that Susan has made a grant inquiry with those organization to US-EDA that might if funded allow the building of a first stage one-click platform. Peter noted the previous exploration of Google transit mapping that did not result in anything operative for our region. John Ehmann restated his outreach efforts to learn from current recipients of federal money for establishing one call – one click centers. He had explored the possibility of seeking second round funding for establishing such a center in our region but was discouraged from doing so this time by the state and the already funded groups. However they indicated that if the existing groups received funding in the second round that there might be some staff time available to help assist new regions in exploring the right design for setting up centers in those regions with possible third round funding. Ralph indicated he had some hours available on the state consulting contract with Coordinating Councils to further work with the Council on this or other topics. He indicated that it is simpler to do referrals than to actually do transit trip scheduling. Peter noted his past exploration of coordinated dispatch with Durango Transit and indicated interest in some assistance in resolving the specific mechanics of such

coordination. Ralph noted that his firm's owner is a leader in explaining the development of one call centers. Ralph recently worked with Colorado Springs on this topic and will provide a copy of that study to the Council. John Ehmann suggested that visiting the Denver's one call center would probably be helpful at some point.

Martha Mason mentioned some recent efforts to further address mobility issues for d persons with disabilities. She explained that a Disability Awareness WorkGroup (DAWG) is meeting to work on issues, recently attend a City Council meeting and had a work session with several Durango city government leaders and staff on parking concerns and other issues. They have invited John Ehmann to meet with them next week and expect to attend a Transit Council meeting in the future.

Ralph asked about the participation of Durango staff in the Transit Council. John Ehmann noted that they have participated in past meetings more often than not but their representative declined this meeting invitation. Their participation is of course welcome and vital.

Gregg Dubit gave a brief description of 4CORE's programs and their interest in greater energy efficiency in transit as well. They want to encourage more options and more local government support for those options. Peter noted the challenges RoadRunner has faced with maintaining service in the face of funding limitations and some recent funding cutbacks. Greg returned to the issue of CNG as a fuel alternative. A CNG refueling station is a must but Ralph further noted that if all costs of CNG provision are properly recognized (including extra miles to the station and time waiting for refueling) that it is not as promising an alternative financially as it might first appear based on just on fuel costs. Gregg would like more information from Ralph and others. Ralph noted some recent testing of CNG in Summit County. CNG was also a major topic at the Spring CASTA conference.

The topic of vouchers was briefly raised. John Ehmann distributed some information about recent communications on the topic with Council members. Gregg noted that 4CORE has some vouchers to distribute.

John Egan noted that One Call – One Click Centers is a topic that has sufficient support for further conversation. He indicated a desire to have Ralph join us for further conversation on that and / or other topics.

John Ehmann distributed some further information including a copy of an article he wrote for the 4CORE newsletter.

Peter asked Ralph about his experience working on vanpools. Ralph has some. Peter explained that there have been some recent employer contacts on this topic and he is coordinating some research on that topic and thinking about what we can do in this area.

Minutes submitted by John Ehmann