

PPT members present: Ericson & Enz (Community Reps), Andrews (School District), Searl (UWP-SUFAC), Geyer (UWP), Schnurer (UWP) – arrived at approximately 2:15PM and quorum was achieved.
PPT members absent: Vacant (UWP-Student Senate), Elskamp (UWP), Hilfer (Hospital Rep), Parrot (Council Rep)
PPT ex-officio members present: Crofoot (City), Seeboth-Wilson (UWP),
PPT Staff Liaisons: Beau (Stratton Buses), Hellwig & Woodward & Pluemer (Running Inc)
Commission on Aging members present: Banfi, Kischer, Browning
City Staff present: Meidinger (City liaison to COA) Sigwarth, and Peters (from 2:30pm to 3:00pm)

Crofoot welcomed the Commission on Aging to the meeting and started off introductions, asking those present to state their names and affiliations. Banfi took the opportunity to make a public announcement about PEAK's Ladies Night Out Fundraiser and invited anyone interested to attend on Wed, Oct 6 at the BARn.

Crofoot distributed copies of the Platteville Municipal Code Chapter 3.48 which provides the charter of the Committee, its intended function, and required delegates from specific organizations. An overview of the formation of the shared-ride taxi from the 1980s through to the current state of services provided by Running Inc., was then made. Seeboth-Wilson and Crofoot collectively presented details regarding the formation of the bus service in 2012, which started as a University shuttle service and was then, after submitting for a Federal 5311 grant, combined with the City shared ride taxi service effectively tripling the service and expanding the bus service to City Residents.

- Schumer arrived

Seeboth-Wilson presented that due to lower enrollment numbers at the University, the funds that the University had been putting towards the bus service must be lowered. Potential avenues for dealing with the budget issue would be to raise the Taxi fare, which has not seen an increase since about 2013. Of the bus, before COVID, there were around 50,000 rides a year. 90% of those riders are students who ride for free because they pay through enrollment fees. Ridership was down on the bus in 2020 due to the University closing the campus in March 2020, which remained closed throughout the remainder of the academic year. Through the CARES act, free fares were offered on the both the bus and shared-ride taxi starting in April of 2020.

Hellwig noted that taxi ridership increased when the free fares were offered.

Crofoot finished with the update that both Running Inc and Stratton Buses have exercised the Federal Option to extend their contracts for one year through 2022. This committee will need to review current routes, fares, budgets, and any other potential changes to the routes over the next few months. Proposed timeline is to have a Request for Proposal drafted by May. City Staff will accept proposals over the summer and process the federal paperwork to have a contract awarded in October of 2022 for 2023 and beyond.

Meidinger presented three issues that the Commission on Aging would like to discuss with the Committee:

- (1) Residents with mobility issues have been stranded at the hospital after being taken there by ambulance. COA would like to see an option offered to arrange for transportation back home after 8:00 p.m. on weekdays when the standard city transit services have ceased operating for the day. Also needed is some way to transport resident's motorized wheelchairs to the hospital as the resident would need access to that to return home.
- (2) Bus drivers have declined to pick up riders with mobility issues and were told to call a taxi, but that they understood this to have been recently resolved.
Mr. Crofoot noted that there had been a misunderstanding of the law on the City's part. It had been thought that because the Taxi was ADA/Paratransit, that the Taxi was supposed to cover any of those needs. The new clarification of the law, which has been communicated to Stratton Buses, is that if the person can get to the bus stop, then that person can use the lift to get on the bus.
- (3) Bus is not stopping on time
The bus system is allowed to stop at the scheduled point up to three minutes before and three minutes after the scheduled time. All buses have GPS to allow staff to track time of stops. If there is

a concern, at the time of the issue, resident should call City and staff will communicate with Stratton to confirm with GPS what the issue is. Should the bus be running late due to utilizing lifts for ADA/Paratransit rider, bus dispatch will notify city that the bus is running late.

Browning inquired if it would be possible to submit requests for different or additional stops on the Black Route that would be of use to Seniors in the community and was assured that the Public Transportation Committee will review any submissions. The Committee does review data of stops and rider demographics. Current data reflects that Seniors appear to use the taxi service, but a fare increase could affect that. Data will continue to influence committee decisions. When shifting resources due to budget restrictions, lower usage stops and routes will be where the edits start.

Kischer mentioned concerns with the hospital stop. Riders are unable to be by the sign due to various issues and the bus doesn't stop for them. At one time, a hospital representative at the front desk called Stratton to let the drivers know there was a rider inside. Committee will see if this connection can be set back up. Additional ideas to present to the hospital for approval would be to place a sign or flag at the door or bus stop sign to indicate there is a rider waiting.

City Staff will be reaching out to Transportation Committee members to establish availability for bi-weekly meetings over the next few months.

Peters requested that the Committee look into adding a COA liaison or COA member as a member to the Transportation Committee to continually address the Commission on Aging's concerns.

Enz had been approached by a resident as to whether Uber or Lyft would be servicing the area soon. There is Lyft driver that will occasionally be in the area, but as it is not a subsidized service, there is not currently enough demand for the companies to expand here.

Seeboth-Wilson announced that they are accepting a new position and this will be their last meeting.

Browning thanked the Committee for arranging for the joint meeting and for listening to the concerns of their community members.

Meeting was adjourned by Crofoot at 3:10 p.m.