



## BATA - Local Advisory Council Minutes

Tuesday, January 10, 2023

12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Hall Street Transfer Station

In Person: 115 Hall Street, Traverse City, MI 49684

Virtual: Via Zoom

Eric Lingaur began the meeting at 12:03pm

### Council Members in Attendance:

Mandy Joppich: Community Representative  
Lana Payne: Commission on Aging  
Linda Joppich: Community Representative  
Susan Odgers: Community Representative  
Michelle Krumm: Senior Center Network  
April Missias: Leelanau County Senior Services  
Demarie Jones: Disability Network No. Michigan  
Matt Morritz: Community Representative  
Mitch Treadwill: Traverse City Commissioner

### BATA Staff in Attendance:

Kurt Braun / BATA  
Bill Clark / BATA  
Eric Lingaur / BATA  
Britny Schwartz / BATA

#### **1. Eric Lingaur: LAC Annual VAP Review:**

Eric welcomed the council to the 2023 year and had the council introduce themselves.

#### **2. Kurt Braun: 2023 Vehicle Accessibility Plan**

Eric reviewed the attached PowerPoint of our current fleet and described the vehicles' sources of energy and their seating capacity. Sixty percent of the fleet is currently cutways (23' – 24'). We continue to transfer the fleet to propane fuel due to its functionality, currently 50% of the fleet is fueled with propane. We are still dealing with delays in the supply chain, but have nine vehicles in the queue, these orders were placed in 2020 & 2021, Kurt is also waiting to order three new electric vans through the state. The current rollover plan for the fleet is to replace on average 10% of the fleet with new vehicles. Eric also discussed the Five Year Plan in detail.

Mitch Treadwell asked if we are currently seeing many maintenance issues in the fleet, Eric stated that we are not currently having any major maintenance issues,

but it certainly is a concern. Kurt reports that all vehicles are serviced regularly (approx. every 2 ½ weeks) to ensure they are running smoothly, they also complete safety inspections every quarter.

Mitch Treadwell asked why we chose to have a propane fueling station instead of a gasoline. Eric reports that we researched all options, but ultimately, we did not have the need or infrastructure to support having a dedicated gasoline fueling station.

Susan Odgers asked if there has been conversation about BATA partnering in the City Mobility Plan. Mitch reports that BATA is currently involved at a member organization capacity and the city will likely add additional partnership abilities once more plans have been finalized at the city level. Susan also questioned the steps that BATA is taking on attracting new employees using the Diversity, Inclusion and Equity methods. Eric states that staff is still our biggest hurdle at the moment and the required response has been continued reduced services to match staffing (This plan originally took effect in November, 2021). It is the plan to bring services back as soon as there is staffing to support all services, he also states that we would need to hire 10-15 additional drivers to support service increases. The \$10,000, three-year sign on bonus incentive was extended for an additional six months by the Board of Directors, application numbers have increased recently, however we continue to be mindful of the quality of candidates and continue to hold the requirement standards very high for our staff.

Linda Joppich asked about what information the millage provided to BATA and how does it influence purchasing additional fleet vehicles moving forward. Eric reported that the largest piece of feedback was that it was discouraging to see empty buses on the road. The plan is to now match the vehicle to the utilization rate, using smaller vehicles when able while continuing to utilize the current assets.

### **3. Bill Clark and Eric Lingaur: BATA Roles from 2023**

Bill and Eric report that City & Village Loop routes have continued to run essentially on similar schedules as they have throughout the year, Bayline is running every 20 minutes for each stop. City Routes 1 and 2 are mostly back to every half hour throughout the day. The Village Loop 11 is still paused, Loops 12, 13 and 14 are still delayed due to running them every 2 hours but Routes 16 and 31 are running smoothly and see high utilization rates. Ridership numbers are good, riders per hour is up to 7ish per fixed-route bus in 2022. There has been an increase in demand without an increase in service, student numbers have also increased. The Link On Demand ridership more than doubled in the last year. There is current work being done to work on releasing a new app for ride requests, this app with service both fixed routes and LOD as well as Traverse City and Leelanau Counties. The hope is it will help customers book easily, increase reliability and help customers receive better realtime updates on

when their bus will arrive. The challenge will be to keep up with demand and maintain a balance between transit and Link on Demand. The goal with the system is to provide a vast variety of options for riders to utilize services in the way they prefer. The rollout is expected in May/June 2023. Eric also asked the team if they have any recommendations or requests for senior ridership. Lana Payne said they have a constant need for bus passes and there is new concerns now that Munson is no longer providing out of hospital transportation for medical appointments. April Missias states they have not seen an increase in ridership, but they do provide passes as requested. The biggest struggle they are facing is that our senior population does not know how to request rides, Eric and Bill both state that our dispatchers are happy to assist, or they may provide any customers with their direct lines and they can help them. Eric also states that in the Five Year Plan, there will be no fare increase.

Matt Morritz states that he likes the voicemail option for requesting rides. Eric said there are updates coming to provide customers the option to reach a live operator as well as leave a message.

Mitch Treadwell recommends figuring out a way for customers to reach a live dispatcher after hours in the event of an emergency or items that may have been left on the bus.

#### **4. Eric Lingaur: New Technology**

Planning on transitioning to a new app (VIA) from Transloc late Spring. This new app will help customers request rides in Traverse City and Leelanau County as well as provide live updates to customers. Will continue to provide non-technology options for customers who do not utilize technology.

Looking into providing openhouses to assist customers in downloading and using the app – Where would the best locations be? The committee recommends the Hall Street transfer station, library, senior center, etc. Communication methods recommended include: flyers, open house, radio, in person presentations, etc. Senior Services would include any written information in their monthly newsletter, Commission on Aging would encourage staff to present to employees at a staff meeting so they are able to assist customers with the app.

Mitch Treadwell recommends providing paper information at bus shelters with maps and times of pick up as well better lighting at outlying stops.

#### **5. Eric Lingaur: Transit Plan**

Eric Lingaur states that there are no plans to change fare rates in the Five Year Plan, the Board of Directors could change this as needed. Construction at the new headquarters should be completed in Fall of 2024, bid selection took place in December. Still working on advertising for employees.

#### **6. Roundtable:**

This council will meet three times yearly: January, May/June and September.

**7. Eric Lingaur: LAC Chair Nomination**

Matt Morritz is self nominated for the LAC Chair: A rollcall was made with six Yes, 0 – No – Matt Morritz will be the LAC Chairperson for 2023.

Eric thanked everyone for their attendance today and adjourned the meeting at 1:43pm

2023 Local Advisory Council Membership

- Dan Buron: Goodwill Northern Michigan
- Lana Payne: Commission on Aging
- Mandy Joppich / Linda Joppich: Community Representative
- April Missias: Leelanau County Senior Services
- Amanda Molski / Heidi Gustine: Area Agency on Aging
- Demarie Jones: Disability Network Northern Michigan
- Susan Odgers: Community Representative
- Michelle Krumm: Senior Center Network
- Matt Morritz: Community Representative
- Mitch Treadwell: Traverse City Commissioner
- Linda Joppich: Senior Community Representative

CC: Kelly Dunham/BATA  
Eric Lingaur/BATA  
Kurt Braun/BATA  
Britny Schwartz/BATA  
Bill Clark/BATA  
Valerie Shultz/MDOT

Our thanks for your support and advocacy!