



BATA - Local Advisory Council Minutes

Monday, May 9, 2022

Via Zoom

Eric Lingaur began the meeting at 12:05pm

COUNCIL PRESENT: Mandy Joppich: Community Representative
Amanda Molski: Area Agency on Aging
Susan Odgers: Community Representative
Michelle Krumm: Senior Center Network

ABSENT: Dan Buron: Goodwill Northern Michigan
Lana Payne: Commission on Aging
Jim Moore: Disability Network Northern Michigan
April Missias: Leelanau County Senior Services

BATA STAFF PRESENT: Kelly Dunham
Eric Lingaur
Mary Meredith

1. Spring/Summer Service Changes

- Service Levels
Eric Lingaur presented his PowerPoint noting that we are still about 30% below normal levels. We do have six new drivers starting this week and recruitment measures continue, including a \$10,000 sign on bonus for those who commit to three years of service.

Route 1 and Route 2 are providing 30-minute frequencies again. This will deter riders from using Link-on-Demand for these most frequent stops. Now more efficient and less expensive for riders.
- Shopping Shuttle Pilot (Tuesdays/Thursdays)
This new route goes to WalMart and Meijer.
- Link On-Demand fare
Link-on-Demand pricing is back to pre-pandemic levels.

We have reached out to Interlochen about serving their summer concert series.

Gas prices have shown a slight uptick in public transportation. BATA has not needed to raise prices yet as a response to increasing gas costs. Kelly Dunham reiterated that this is still a difficult time to predict gas prices, ridership, etc. We have budgeted however for full service. We are still struggling with staff shortages.

We are proceeding cautiously regarding special events (Interlochen, Film Festival, Cherry Festival)

Smart Commute Week will be scheduled and announced soon. And we are looking at bringing back a limited Bike n Ride schedule.

Eric noted we are still working collaboratively with other localities and their bus systems.

2. Transit Master Plan Update

Also referred to as BATA Next Wave. We are looking at actual ridership and demand and comparing this to our staffing resources.

Public input survey: [Voting \(menti.com\)](https://www.menti.com)

Eric encourages members to take the poll and provided the link (above). This will measure community feedback regarding transit use.

Also discussed was collaborating in a group regarding input on the survey.

3. Other updates include technology update, new facility status and millage renewal on deck for November 2022

Eric updated the Council on the results of our recent RFPs and the chosen vendor. He talked about how new technology incentives will improve both operations efficiencies and riders' experience. We are waiting on final approval from the BATA Board of Directors. He also described how telephoning Customer Service will still be available.

Susan Odgers brought up the subject of whether or not we know if the average rider uses technology for public transportation. Eric reviewed some of the data he has which shows that people are becoming more and more accustomed to using apps. Demographics as far as age show that seniors are also being more comfortable using technology. Kelly reports that some of the technologies we are bringing on are to ensure that the agency has more reliable data. For example, we do not have a fixed-route software program available at this time. Having technology that tracks on-time performance will bring us to the next level.

Eric also brought the Council up-to-speed on the new headquarters. The land purchase should be finalized late in June with construction to begin shortly after.

Susan commends the work that Kelly and Eric have done to see this project to fruition, and especially the positive professional presentations in the press and social media. This will be one of the first projects like this in the State that provide a public transportation hub along with a housing component attached.

Susan Odgers suggested the Council help with the upcoming millage educational pieces for the public. Kelly said this will be very important that the Council becomes involved as BATA employees are limited in what they can do and say about the millage.

4. Roundtable

Amanda Molski reports that her clients are slowly increasing their comfort levels in getting out in the public again after the pandemic shutdowns. Her agency still has some staff openings. Care providers are in high demand and short supply.

Michelle Krumm would like to see a fixed-stop at the Senior Center, and the reintroduction of the BATA Buddy Program.

Susan noted that when she rides, and sees a senior needing more assistance, the more seasoned drivers offer help. But she thinks this needs to become more consistent with all drivers. Eric said the pilot shopping shuttle route will adjust as we see how much help shoppers need with bags and other issues.

Susan would like to see lobbying efforts from the Council and BATA to collaborate on the new Senior Center. Michelle notes they are consistently trying to join other agencies and groups on supporting the location and the building. She foresees this being more of a community center however vs a senior center. There is an ad hoc meeting next week and all are invited to attend in person or virtually.

Mandy Joppich reported she is doing well and that she would like to help with the upcoming election.

Susan is Chair of the TADL (Traverse Area District Library) Board and she wondered if BATA has witnessed an increase in disruptive issues at the library. Eric reports we are being mindful of disruptions however he has not seen a marked increase or decrease recently other than the normal seasonality changes. Kelly adds that some issues may not yet be reaching management yet. Kelly knows that some drivers nip this in the bud as they now have the ability to issue a no trespass notice which will then involve police action. She remarks that this has made a big difference. Kelly said there is a small tight group of people who are causing most of the trouble. She suggested to stay the course in a united front. The root cause of homelessness, of course, needs to be addressed by government officials. Susan would like to know about BATA Board involvement on some of these actions. Linda Joppich reports the BATA Board would be in support however the management of BATA and the frontline staff at Hall Street are doing a stellar job. We do have a Ridership Etiquette Committee and a Disorderly Conduct Committee that gives drivers and front line staff the authority to ban riders from using BATA.

Susan also noted that Addiction Treatment Services (“ATS”) is using an RV wrapped in a way that is very similar to a BATA bus. They park a few times a month at the library, and other locales, providing assistance to addicts. Feedback from the public is mixed.

Eric thanked everyone for their attendance today and adjourned the meeting at 1:19pm

2022 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
- Jim Moore / Demarie Jones: Disability Network No. Michigan
- Susan Odgers: Community Representative
- Michelle Krumm: Senior Center Network

CC: Heather Bowden/MDOT
Kelly Dunham/BATA
Eric Lingaur/BATA

Our thanks for your support and advocacy!