



BATA - Local Advisory Council Minutes

Wednesday, January 17, 2024

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Hall Street Transfer Station

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

Virtual: Via Zoom

Eric Lingaur began the meeting at 12:05pm

Council Members in Attendance:

Mandy Joppich: Community Representative
Lana Payne: Commission on Aging
Linda Joppich: Community Representative
Susan Odgers: Community Representative (virtual)
Amanda Molski: Area Agency on Aging (virtual)
Michelle Krumm: Senior Center Network
Lean Vander Meulen: Leelanau County Senior Services
Demarie Jones: Disability Network No. Michigan (virtual)
Fern Spence: Community Representative

BATA Staff in Attendance:

Kurt Braun / BATA
Bill Clark / BATA
Eric Lingaur / BATA
Keir Rasmussen / BATA

1. Eric Lingaur: LAC Annual VAP Review:

Eric welcomed the council to the 2024 year and had the council introduce themselves.

2. Kurt Braun: 2024 Vehicle Accessibility Plan

Kurt Braun walked through BATA's VAP and accompanying slides and provided an update on BATA's current vehicle make up and the agency's future vehicle purchasing plans. He shared that BATA's goal is still to focus on purchasing more propane powered vehicles, although some of the recent bus purchases had to be diesel powered versus propane powered (as originally requested) due to production issues. Kurt also shared that 6 EV vans are on order with an expected delivery around Q3 2024 and discussed the features and accessibility of these new vehicles. By 2028 BATA will potentially have no gas powered buses in its vehicle fleet with the majority being propane, electric and some clean diesel.



Future Propane Availability: Michelle Krumm questioned if propane buses will be available for purchase again soon. Kurt said yes hopefully as the manufacturers work together to produce more propane vehicles based on supply and demand.

Fuel Savings: Susan Odgers asked if BATA has seen any savings in fuel costs with the recent drop in fuel prices? Kurt didn't have the gas savings figures on hand, but he was able to share that savings came into play with propane from a maintenance perspective with lower upkeep costs.

Data Used for Bus Purchase Planning: Susan Odgers inquired what data BATA uses to determine purchases future vehicle purchases. Eric Lingaur and Kurt shared that BATA uses current and existing route and service needs, future route improvement plans and the shelf life of the vehicles currently in service.

Vehicle Funding: Fern Spence asked if federal funds are available for the vehicles to purchase and if you don't use them do you lose those funds? BATA has one more year of rural purchasing through MDOT and in the future vehicle funding will come directly from the FTA now that BATA is a small urban. Kurt believes the funds are dedicated to BATA vehicle purchases and not flexible for other capital items or to be used by other MPO organizations such as the County or Road Commission. Fern Spence wants to make sure BATA's funds are dedicated and directed toward transit and not other uses. Susan Odgers said it is important that BATA has flexibility in the fleet to meet community needs.

Longevity of Vehicles: Michelle Krumm asked about diesel longevity vs. propane? Kurt shared insights on how BATA determines the shelf life of a vehicle (cost, mileage, condition, powertrain, etc.) and reiterated that BATA uses all vehicles in the fleet to their max life capacity.

3. Bill Clark: Service Levels and Fares

Bill Clark started off by highlighting BATA's Traverse City services including the Bayline and City Loops and what is live and what updates have been running since this past Fall. Then he showcased BATA's Village Loop services and hours of operations and ridership. Bill specifically featured Village Loop Route 12 – Interlochen as a very high ridership performer. He then reviewed BATA's Link service which now offers on-demand service in BATA's entire service area. Link is performing well in terms of rides per service hour and is very popular with riders. Bill wrapped up with an overview of BATA's fare system and ridership. He shared the different fare prices per service, payment methods, mobile options, and discussed corporate or downtown partnerships, such as Destination Downtown, and that we're piloting codes for employer-paid rides using BATA's Link system. Overall ridership trends year over year are seeing gains with total ridership for 2023 around 366,00+.

Village Loop Route 12 – Interlochen: Michelle Krumm asked what stops are on Route 12 in Interlochen. We shared the Blue Vase, Interlochen Library and Interlochen Arts Academy.



Benzie Bus Connections: Linda Joppich asked if Benzie Bus still connects with BATA. Yes it does, in Interlochen and here at Hall Street as needed.

Ski-n-Ride: Does BATA still offer a full Ski-n-Ride? Bill shared how its running this winter from area middle schools to Hickory Hills.

4. Grandview Parkway Construction (March) and Spring Service Improvements (May)

Bill teed up the two biggest service impacts in 2024 include the Grandview Parkway construction starting in March and the addition of BATA's new headquarters transfer area on LaFranier which should be completed in May. During the construction, BATA will make every effort to ensure accessibility to the stops especially in the impacted areas. BATA's new transfer area will allow for increased service, make more connections in the area, and will also feature a park and ride location.

5. Eric Lingaur: LAC Chair Nomination

Fern Spence was nominated for the LAC Chair with everyone present in agreement. Fern Spence will be the LAC Chairperson for 2024.

6. Other: - Roundtable

BATA Board Status: Provided an update on the BATA Board and Grand Traverse County Commissioner dispute. Fern Spence, Linda Jopich and Susan Odgers stressed being involved and connected with BATA's moving forward and the need to be alert and protect public transit.

BATA Buddies / COA: Shared information on the status of the BATA Buddy program and enhancing it. The COA is sending out a transportation survey asking what type of support their members need and how they use transportation. Results from the survey should be back by end of February – should be able to move forward with BATA Buddies support by mid-March.

Senior Center: Michelle are encouraging riders to use BATA more now that they have seven locations now. The main Senior Center facility is temporarily set up at the VFW hall on Veteran's Drive with other locations in Traverse City, Interlochen, Kingsley and Fife Lake. They are also providing daily hot lunches for the public.

Security Officer: Provided an update about why BATA added a security officer and details around the pilot. Susan Odgers applauded BATA for experimenting with a security officer after the success TADL has seen.

Leelanau County Senior Services: Partnering with share care for various support and activities. They also have a millage in August and are seeking a renewal at the



current millage rate for two years.

Funding/Weather: Susan Odgers questioned how funding is provided for supporting the BATA Buddy program and keeping it going. And how the storm is impacting people being able to access services. COA uses millage money to support any senior need and the Senior Center is also looking at using their volunteer base and volunteer coordinators. Susan reinforced that people don't always know what services are available for transportation, seniors or the disabled and we need to continue to promote the positive things they do for the community.

Area Agency on Aging: Updated the group on their Medicaid programs and trying to connect seniors to resources.

New LAC Members: Fern Spence suggested reaching out to Bruce Moore to join the LAC.

Next meeting will take place in April, date TBD.

Eric thanked everyone for their attendance today and adjourned the meeting at 1:20pm

2024 Local Advisory Council Membership

- Fern Spence: Chair / Community Representative
- Matt Morritz: Community Representative
- Dan Buron: Goodwill Northern Michigan
- Lana Payne: Commission on Aging
- Mandy Joppich: Community Representative
- Linda Joppich: Community Representative
- Lena Vander Meulen: Leelanau County Senior Services
- Amanda Molski / Heidi Gustine: Area Agency on Aging
- Demarie Jones: Disability Network No. Michigan
- Susan Odgers: Community Representative
- Michelle Krumm: Senior Center Network
- Mitch Treadwell: Traverse City Commissioner

CC: Alex Simonetti/MDOT, Kelly Dunham/BATA, Eric Lingaur/BATA, Kurt Braun/BATA, Bill Clark/BATA