



**THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.  
Board of Director Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, March 15, 2017  
Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.  
1414 North Star Drive, Zumbrota Minnesota**

**Members Attending:** Heather Robins, Julie Steberg, Brian Goihl, Mark Thein, Dave Windhorst, Jody Schwarzhoff, Ruth Boudet

**Staff Attending:**

Jennifer Larson, Executive Director  
Kindra Papenfus, Chief Financial Officer  
Amy Repinski, Transportation Director  
Colleen Hansen, Family Advocacy Services Director  
Kim Scanlan, Human Resources Director  
Leah Hall, Community Development Director  
Alexandra O'Donnell, Transportation Operations Support Manager  
LaKeisha Arndt, Marketing Coordinator  
Donna Stamschror, Support Staff Coordinator

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**Members Excused:** Ekta Prakash, Eileen Wallace, Jo Anne Krier, Stephanie Stumpf, Galen Malecha, Abdullah Hared, Barney Nesseth, Alicia Norton

**Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order by Chair Heather Robins

**Determination of a Quorum:** Quorum was not met, those present met as Committee of the Whole. Actions taken by the Committee of the Whole will be presented to the Board of Directors for action at the April 19, 2017 meeting.

**\*Approval of the February 15, 2017 (enclosed in agenda packet) Meeting Minutes**

Brian Goihl made a motion to approve the February 15, 2017 meeting minutes with the addition the Board watched a video called "Roles and Responsibilities of a Nonprofit Board" and line one of the last paragraph under consent agenda should be credit cards, not credit card statements, Dave Windhorst seconded, motion unanimously approved.

**\*Approval of the March 15, 2017 agenda (enclosed in agenda packet)**

Brian Gohl made a motion to approve the March 15, 2017 agenda seconded, Ruth Boudet motion unanimously approved.

**Case of the Month** – Alexandra O'Donnell, Transportation Operations Support Manager, presented her story on the HART program (handout at meeting). The HART (Hiawathaland Auxiliary Regional Transit), is our volunteer driver program that began in 1976. She told the board about one of the volunteers named Marvel, a rider named Nancy, and shared interesting facts about the program. She was asked if the drivers were paid. She said they are reimbursed at the current IRS mileage rate. Volunteers are offered defensive driving classes, but not required. They are welcome to attend all transit driver training. Volunteers must have insurance and a background check is done. Marvel is well known to our regular HART riders. She will take early and late appointments, and will often call into dispatch to see what they have for her.

**Director's Report**

Jenny had two handouts for the board. Minnesota Asset Building Coalition, 2017 Legislative Policy Agenda and Homes for All, 2017 Legislative Request. These are two of the coalitions that Three Rivers has participated in for the last several years.

Jenny said this is a busy time at the legislature where there is activity around many of the programs and issues that affect our clients and communities. She testified twice in the last week on housing bills in the Senate as part of the Homes for All Coalition. We are working on maintaining core funding for housing across the continuum and supporting increases in Family Homeless Prevention Assistance, and for the Challenge Fund for development of units and homeownership counseling and down payment assistance programs. We also had several staff attend Homeless Day on the Hill yesterday.

Minnesota Community Action Partnership is working with a bi-partisan group of legislators to restore cuts that were made to the Minnesota Community Action Grant during the Pawlenty administration. The bills are moving through the house and senate this week.

We are working with the Minnesota Head Start Association to protect resources for Head Start in Minnesota.

We had staff testify on a bill supported by the Minnesota Asset Building Coalition, who seeks reforms that curtail the escalation of consequences for people without liquid assets and make it easier for people to maintain or reinstate their driver's license so they can get to work, pay their fines, and avoid a criminal record.

Jenny will be heading to Washington DC this afternoon for the National Community Action Foundation conference, and have meetings scheduled with Congressmen Jason Lewis and Tim Walz and Senator Klobuchar.

Yesterday the MN Head Start Association presented four Head Start Hero awards. One of our staff, Jamie Gonzalez-Diaz, was one of the winners. We will bring Jamie in to a future meeting to tell her story.

The Head Start Federal review will be the week of April 17<sup>th</sup>. Heather asked if they will want to meet with the board. Jenny said no, this is specifically a classroom review where they will be evaluating all of the teachers.

**\*Policy Action Items**  
**Consent Agenda**

- A) February 2017 Financial Reports – (enclosed in agenda packet)
- B) Mutual of America February Monthly Reports – (enclosed in agenda packet)
- C) Credit Card Expenses Summary (share at meeting)
- D) Contracts, Awards & Contributions  
Received
  - MN Department of Commerce – A16 Proactive - \$46,257. Energy Assistance funds that allow Family Advocates to provide case management to energy assistance clients for energy efficient practices, budgeting for savings and to prevent crisis, and referrals to necessary agency and community resources.
  - Minnesota Housing Finance Agency – \$200,000 – Renewal application for Impact Fund. Funds will be used to provide 20 down payment assistance loans (0% deferred loans) to income-qualified households purchasing a home in southeastern Minnesota.
  - MN Department of Education – Pathways II scholarships - \$456,795 (2 years). Grant request to fund transportation of children to Head Start for 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years.
  - Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency - \$3600 – CIP funds to implement energy efficiency measures for clients in Lake City.
  - Steele – Waseca Cooperative Electric - \$9000 – CIP funds to implement energy efficiency measures for clients in the SWCE service area (about 75 Rice County residents).

Not Received

- None

- E) Grants & Requests Submitted or to be Submitted:
- Minnesota Homeownership Center - \$22,500 – Project Reinvest – funding for our emerging markets program, to help move clients toward financial capability.
- F) Monitoring Reports Received:
- Department of Commerce – Weatherization program (monitoring letter and Three Rivers response enclosed in agenda packet)

Ruth Boudet made a motion to approve the consent agenda, Mark Thein seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Julie Steberg said Mike Thorsteinson's name is still on the Mutual of America statement. Kindra said they are in the process of changing it, Mutual of America required one more piece of paperwork that will be sent back to them this week.

### **\*Individual Action Items**

- A) Presentation from Jeff Schuur, Three Rivers employee retirement account Investment Advisor from Gardner Financial Services, Inc. Schedule of fees on retirement account – request for the board to deem reasonable. (Recordkeeping Services Agreement enclosed in agenda packet)

Jeff thanked the board for letting him come to the meeting. He also thanked us for giving him the chance to work with the employees. He can come back anytime for the board or for employees. Jeff provided a packet for everyone with his contact information, Fund Prices and Returns, Recordkeeping Services Agreement, and a Plan Review.

He can use any type of funds but he has always really liked the American Funds. Their management style keeps risk as low as they can and in the best interests of clients. They use a team approach instead of one portfolio manager. They have 10 to 12 managers that each specialize in a sector. Such as one manufacturing, one international investing, one in bonds, and so forth. American Funds does a good job even when times are volatile. The performance is good and they manage funds well.

Jeff reviewed the fund prices and returns. The annual expense ratio is on the right side of the document. Jeff also went over the plan review. He said the assets in the plan went up 12% in 2016. The board approved a 6% match again for employees.

Jeff said if anyone has questions on the information he provided today to

please call him.

Mark Thein made a motion to deem the fees on the retirement account reasonable, Julie Steberg seconded, motion unanimously approved.

B) Continue discussion on Bylaws (enclosed in agenda packet)

Last month we talked about section XI, in particular the order of business list. No one is requiring us to list the specific order of business in the bylaws. Jenny said the board can make changes to this section.

Mark Thein made a motion to remove from section XI "The following order of business shall be observed as far as is practical: 1) Call to order, 2) Determination of a quorum, 3) Approval of the minutes of last meeting, 4) Director's Report, 5) Board Committee Reports, 6) Advisory Committee/Council Reports, 7) Unfinished Business, 8) New Business, 9) Comments from/for the group to be served, 10) Adjournment"; In section XII change the word babysitting to childcare; In section IV change the annual meeting month to January instead of October, Jody Schwarzhoff seconded, 6 voted for the motion, 1 opposed.

C) Resolution #2017-2 Public Transit (memo, project ranking, and resolution enclosed in agenda packet)

At the last board meeting, an update was given in regard to transit, transit funding opportunities, and service gaps. MnDOT has released funding for transit systems to apply for operational and capital funds to extend their current services, expand into new service areas, and to create efficiencies within their system. This funding opportunity comes to us at 100% of the service cost with no local match for at least two years. After two years, we may apply for these additional services at funding levels consistent with our current annual operating grant at 85% with a 15% local match.

Based on the service gaps identified by MnDOT, denied ride logs, input from public forums and special interest groups, and survey results from current and potential riders, the attached table identifies the extension, expansion, and service efficiency projects with our Hiawathaland Transit service area. While several of these are not large projects, we do believe that extending these services will dramatically benefit the communities in which we operate and improve the lives of the residents.

From a capital (vehicle) view point, we are requesting capital funds for vehicles to operate some of these new extension hours so not to age our current fleet. In addition, we are also asking for vehicles to replace older

ones that are currently being used in newer service areas. For example, Lonsdale service area started in January of 2017. We are using an older backup vehicle to operate this service. In this grant, we are asking for a new vehicle to operate in the Lonsdale area so we can remove the older backup vehicle from everyday use.

We have also ranked the projects based on need, ease of our current staffing to levels to implement, and ranking criteria of MnDOT (extension projects rank higher than efficiency projects).

Amy reviewed the project ranking spreadsheet with the board. Amy explained we have to meet performance standards and if we do not meet them they will decrease funds. The expansion will result in fare revenues that will go into the reserve account.

Dave Windhorst made a motion to approve Public Transit Resolution #2017-2, Julie Steberg seconded, motion unanimously approved.

### **Policy Discussion Items**

A) Amy Repinski, Transportation Director - Hiawathaland Public Transit Annual Report

Jenny said this is a continuation of the annual department presentations, where each department is providing a detailed program update for the board.

Transportation Director, Amy Repinski, provided the board with an update. Amy indicated it was always nice to keep everyone informed on what's new in the transit department as changes and growth happen so rapidly. Staff members Alexandra O'Donnell, the Operators Support Manager, and LaKeisha Arndt, the Marketing and Recruitment Coordinator were introduced to the board.

Hiawathaland Transit provides a variety of transportation throughout the 3-county service area including: Dial-a-Ride, Deviated Routes, Route Guarantee Services, and Head Start Transportation. In addition to public transportation, Hiawathaland Transit also operates the HART program (volunteer transportation), which was discussed earlier.

The Dial-a-Ride service that is provided to over 20 cities is a service that offers curb-to-curb, on-demand transportation by request. Hiawathaland Transit's curb-to-curb service means drivers are required to stay with their

vehicles at all times when providing passenger assistance and are unable to, for any reason, leave the bus and cross the threshold of someone's home or a business to complete a trip.

Our deviated route services operate in Faribault, Northfield, and Red Wing from 6:00am-6:00pm, Monday – Friday. Routes have scheduled stops at scheduled stop times, but are also able to deviate off of their route line to make pickups and drop-offs at the request of a passenger within a 4-block range.

We also have a specific route that was requested by and paid for by Carlton and St. Olaf Colleges in Northfield. This route is called the Express route and is a full-cost recovery route (full cost covered by the contract with the colleges) that is also open to the public. Because the colleges fund the Express Route, it is free to all St. Olaf and Carlton students with a valid student ID as well as staff with an ID. It was designed to provide transportation to college students after classes have concluded for the day.

All services can be scheduled in advance, same day, or as an ongoing trip, which is called a subscription ride. Subscription rides are for individuals needing the same pickup and drop off location and times for either a set period of time, like 1 month, or for the foreseeable future. This ensures their time-slot is reserved for their regular trip.

Fares range from \$1.25 to \$1.75 per ride. Some counties will purchase tokens to give their clients. We are also able to bill the insurance plans directly which helps out riders needing transportation for medical purposes.

Amy was asked about transit in Olmsted County. She said we do not serve Olmsted County. They have the Rochester Public Transit and the ZIPS Paratransit Service which is similar to Dial-A-Ride except they have to meet ADA standards to use the program. Semcac operates transit in some of the smaller towns in Olmsted County. Our volunteers often take riders to Rochester through the HART program.

We have added on multiple communities, routes, and service hours over the years based on rider request and demand within the rural communities in which we serve.

For all of the communities that have a single bus, most of the storage space for those buses is rented out by month versus building a facility for that bus – it is often difficult to find storage in such small communities. However, in areas where we have multiple buses, routes, and Dial-a-Ride services we

have our own transit facilities.

One of the great things about our system is that we are always consistent from community to community. The signage, hours of operation, and even the training of our drivers, is synonymous from area to area which makes it easier on our passengers when they are traveling between communities or if they move from one of our service areas to another. For example, all of our route stops along the route lines in Faribault, Northfield, and Red Wing are identified by a color-coded "T" to indicate which route line that stop falls on. We do our routes by color because it's much easier for individuals to identify with, especially if they don't speak English as their first language. It is our goal to be universally friendly to all of our passengers. Even with our graphics and logos, we demonstrate that transit is not just for the very young or elderly.

Amy shared information about the driver tablets that are now in all buses. The tablets list the order of pickup for each driver, as well as the drop-offs. The tablets have a great safety feature that makes them inoperable while the bus is in motion. Other safety features we've implemented are reflective safety vests for all of our drivers. This helps them because we start when it's dark out and continue to run after the sun goes down. Not only is it a safety feature, but it's also a good identifier for our passengers to know just who their driver is. All drivers also wear name badges so passengers can identify them that way as well.

Amy then mentioned how helping driver applicants get their CDL had always been a challenge when having to test through the state as they sometimes had a wait-list of 4 weeks or more. However, we are now have a certified Third Party Testing program through the State of Minnesota that enables us to test our new drivers in-house. This has cut down on the turn-around time from when an applicant is offered a position to when we can get them their CDL and officially start training them in to drive for us.

Looking ahead, we will be working on bridging the language barrier with the Somali population, especially in Faribault, by implementing a Travel Trainer/Cultural Liaison. We also look forward to having an app that will track our buses and let passengers know where the buses are and when they can expect them at their stop. This will be a great addition especially for the college kids who would prefer to schedule their ride on their device versus a phone call. Amy said the Red Wing Hub is also a park and ride and used by other buses. It took about four years to get the Red Wing Hub completed but it is finally done and up and running, being used by the Red Wing Route buses every day.



Amy shared information on the Plainview facility with the board members. Our bid for the Plainview facility came in at a range that exceeds our grant max. We need to save some of the grant money for furniture and fixtures. We tried to get them to change the bid, but they feel in order to comply with all the MnDOT requirements they could not lower the bid. We will reissue the RFP for Architectural and Engineer with Construction Management and do an RFP for construction separately. We hope to have better results this way. Our grant has been extended to accommodate the extra time this will take.

A hand-out was passed around to attendees. In the hand out today, are the ridership statistics for the entire transit system and each system separately. The Transit Advisory Committee meets quarterly and reviews this data each time. There is representation from each county and system, which could be city council members, county commissioners, and from organizations we work with such as Workforce Development.

Heather thanked David and Julie for being on the Transit Advisory Committee.

### **Advisory Committees**

- A) Head Start Policy Council (did not meet in February, next meeting is on March 21, 2017)

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Comments:** None

**Other:** None

**Date, Time and Location of Next Meeting:** 9:00 a.m., April 19, 2017 in the Zumbrota office conference room.

### **Adjournment**

Mark Thein made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ruth Boudet seconded, motion unanimously approved.

  
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Chair

April 19, 2017  
Date