



1. Call to Order  
Ms. Sicks called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.
  
2. Attendance  
Committee Members and Others In Attendance:  
Sheila Greuel (East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging) *Virtual*  
Darla Heath (Faith in Action) *Virtual*  
Betsy Kurtenbach (Homes of Hope) *Virtual*  
Laura Dick (SHOW BUS) *Virtual*  
K. Larson (Good Shepherd Manor) *Virtual*  
Erin Richey (Good Shepherd Manor) *Virtual*  
Luke Hohulin (McLean County Highway) *in person*  
Ray Lai (MCRPC) *in person*  
Jennifer Sicks (MCRPC) *in person*  
Mark Adams (MCRPC) *in person*  
Nancy Hirsch (MCRPC) *in person*  
Francesca Lewis (MCRPC) *in person*
  
3. Public Comment  
Ms. Sicks advised that there have been no requests to provide public comment.
  
4. Minutes  
The Committee approved the minutes of the April 12, 2023 meeting,

#### Items for Discussion

5. IDOT Program Status  
Consolidated Vehicle Procurement  
Ms. Sicks advised that there has been no significant change with respect to the CVP process.

6. Urban Area Provider Program Status

Connect Transit (CT)  
Connect Transit did not have a representative present.

Marcfirst (Mf)  
Mr. Zdansky was unable to attend.

Faith in Action (FiA)

Ms. Heath noted that Faith in Action (FiA) continues the search for more volunteers to work with people turning 60 and becoming eligible for services. Transportation is needed for various needs, including medical and other appointments. It takes 2 to 3 weeks to facilitate requests. There are many requests from care receivers for Chenoa, and Towanda volunteers have taken those rides. There are also many requests from Meadows, and volunteers are taking rides for 2



people in Meadows and 3 in Chenoa. Requests include transportation to grocery stores or food pantries. In addition, residents in Chenoa and Lexington need to reach medical services; there are 2 volunteers in Lexington.

Ms. Dick noted two points, the first being that SHOW BUS (SB) cannot compete with private cars to provide trips, but used to take Meadows residents to Dave's grocery in Fairbury. SB can work with FiA to restart that link from Meadows and Chenoa, a trip that will require about 2 to 3 hours and include time for lunch at the store.

Ms. Heath noted that volunteers can help with shopping, but can have issues with medical trips along I-55. There are volunteers in Heyworth and Hudson who can assist, but demand is high.

Ms. Dick noted that SB is happy to help. Ms. Heath mentioned a care receiver in Chenoa who is currently getting treatment 5 days per week in Normal.

#### Homes of Hope (HOH)

Ms. Kurtenbach advised that Homes of Hope (HoH) continues to check in regarding two potential residents for the remaining places available. She described the current program, consisting of six supervised residential houses in Normal. She is the program development coordinator. Ms. Heath asked if the program is available to all ages; Ms. Kurtenbach noted that adults of any age are eligible. Current residents represent an age range of 33 to 80.

#### 7. Disability/Aging/Rural Transportation Issues

##### LIFE-CIL (LC)

LIFE-CIL did not have a representative participating.

##### East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging (ECIAAA)

Ms. Greuel advised that ECIAAA recently conducted a public hearing, which included considerable discussion of transportation needs and issues. Among the concerns raised were the difficulties in securing reliable transportation to medical appointments and the lack of accountability from the managed care organizations (MCOs). She encouraged all interested parties and agencies to reach out to their state legislative representatives to advocate for solutions, especially with respect to the state-controlled MCOs. She noted that in Region 8, trips assigned by MCOs are not being accepted, due to non-payment. As has been discussed in both Region 6 and the MCRPC Transportation Advisory Committee over several years, the MCOs are large organizations not well versed in the challenges and constraints faced by the service providers.

The public hearing also included discussion about the impact of transportation uncertainties on social isolation, noting that limited transportation options do not allow for ongoing social interactions such as visits to family or friends, activities such as community involvement, religious services and fellowship, and the ability to participate in social exchanges without advance planning. These limits are intensified by interruptions in scheduled trips, such as cancellations and missed trips due to MCO errors.

Interest in the potential of microtransit programs is emerging. Ms. Greuel noted that its usefulness will depend on the circumstances in which service will be available, including limits



on time of day or trip purpose. Ms. Dick noted that it is difficult to predict how microtransit would manage these issues, although such services could provide the flexibility to reduce barriers to use. There are also barriers to understanding the needs of existing and potential riders. She noted that data collection and analysis with respect to the extent and circumstances of unmet needs could be a barrier in their own right. These efforts can include surveys, both of current and possible riders, but these can produce ambiguous responses about why people use transit services and related programs.

Ms. Greuel agreed that the impulse to protect privacy is a factor in determining rider motivations. She also noted that even medical appointments can reduce social isolation, as they can be opportunities to interact with a larger social cohort, as well as to understand social needs. Ms. Greuel noted that survey language and question choice can help, and avoid confronting respondents with their social challenges. Ms. Dick noted that there may be grants available to support ongoing surveys. Ms. Sicks advised that MCRPC's previous work in this area can be adapted and refined to work with specific audiences, and noted that she will look for examples and best practices to develop directed survey content for this specific purpose.

Ms. Heath noted that what could be called "quality of life" trips, such as those to social interactions and personal services or interests support the reduction of isolation, and that interaction with volunteers providing the transportation are also a form of social interaction.

Ms. Greuel noted the importance of access to adult day care services, and Ms. Dick discussed the loss of such programs during an following the pandemic. Ms. Dick and Ms. Sicks noted the loss of the BroMenn Adult Day Services program after the transition from Advocate to Carle, despite the service agreement between Advocate and SHOW BUS that expanded the scope of the service area. Ms. Greuel advised that Susan Real of ECIAAAA is seeking out new opportunities for adult day programs in McLean and Macon counties.

#### SHOW BUS (SB)

Ms. Dick advised that the PACE suburban transit system in the Chicago area is moving to consolidate its operations within each of its counties to create greater operator oversight and improve accountability. This is also intended to better control the actions of the MCOs, particularly in failure to pay for transportation services. The Committee discussed the interpretations of mandates to ensure that MCO service recipients are integrated into their communities, and approaches to assisted living operations not providing or arranging transportation for residents responsive to their needs and the organization's requirements. These issues also arise in other types of senior care, including those that provide multiple levels of care within a facility or a common campus.

Ms. Dick noted ongoing concerns regarding the delayed process of the consolidated vehicle procurement program. She further noted that it is not clear if IDOT has fully evaluated the relationship between the CVP and Rebuild Illinois grants in calculating vehicle needs.

Ms. Sicks thanked the social service and rural transportation agencies for the information provided in the meeting.



8. Next Meeting - June 14, 2023
9. Adjourn  
The meeting adjourned at 2: 55 p.m.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer A. Sicks".

Jennifer Sicks  
Senior Transportation Planner  
McLean County Regional Planning Commission