

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

10:15 a.m.

Quincy Street Station via Zoom

Committee Members present: Nancy Johnson, Deborah Dawkins, and Libby Adams.

Committee Members absent: Dennis Tenpenny, Shelby Fry, Maria Ruiz, Mark Webb, Brian Snodderly, Anthony Fadale, Mary Thomas, Mike Nolting and Linda Kehres.

TMTA Staff present: Al Bradley, Elizabeth Manson, Denise Ensley, and Mike Spadafore.

The meeting was called to order by Al Bradley at 10:20 a.m. There were no guests present or public comment offered.

There were no corrections to the prior minutes.

Denise Ensley announced Topeka Metro has been approved to receive CARES Act funding to help with ridership expenses, purchase personal protection equipment (PPE), doing anything in the buses that are needed to provide safety and sanitization, and to help cover the expenses for employees COVID-19 related time off that is not covered by the Federal Act.

Ms. Ensley stated the Union has been very active during the pandemic. A lot of their recommendations came from their international unit. Many of their recommendations were already in place or being put in place by management prior to being requested. Topeka Metro is evaluating the situation daily by looking at ridership trends and vehicle loads and reviewing mandates and recommendations made by the Governor and CDC. As the situation changes, Topeka Metro will update safety practices accordingly.

Ms. Ensley announced our fixed route buses now have operator safety barriers installed at the front of the bus between the operator and the farebox. The barriers, along with safety chains across the front seating area directly behind the operator, assist with maintaining a 6-foot social distance between the passengers and the operator. To avoid contact at the farebox, fares are free on both the fixed route and Lift through May 31st. Fixed route passengers are boarding and exiting through the rear door. The only time a passenger will be permitted to board through the front entrance is when they have a mobility issue and need to use the ramp or kneeler. Otherwise all passengers are to board and exit through the rear door. The Board voted to extend free fares and rear boarding through the end of May and will re-evaluate monthly at their Board meeting. Topeka Metro has placed 6-foot indicator dots on the ground in Quincy Street Station (QSS) and in the administration building. And, cloth face masks, disposable gloves, hand sanitizer, and sanitizing wipes have been provided for employees. Sanitizing wipes have been provided on the buses for passengers and we request that passengers wear face masks when riding. The number of passengers on the paratransit buses have been limited to assist with social distancing and wait trips are temporarily being provided when the passenger is going to a facility that is only offering curbside or drive-thru services. COVID-19 screening questions have been implemented for Lift passengers booking trips and employees calling in absent to work. We are utilizing some of our Lift operators as public "Ambassadors" at QSS to speak with passengers and remind them of social distancing, hand washing, face masks, no idle riding and essential trips. Most agency meetings have been by phone or computer when possible.

Deborah Dawkins inquired about getting a list of the changes Topeka Metro has made as a result of the pandemic for her facility to implement as they move forward. Ms. Ensley stated a list of all changes can be found on our website under the March and April Operations Board report and the paratransit information can be found by selecting “About Metro” and then “Paratransit/Lift”.

Ms. Ensley stated fixed route ridership was down over 50% from last year, however, since the Governor did not extend the stay-at-home order, ridership has come up approximately 20%. To help maintain social distancing on the #2 North Kansas route, Topeka Metro is temporarily providing a “Mission Shuttle”. The shuttle leaves QSS, goes to the Topeka Rescue Mission and back to QSS, stopping at Let’s Help if needed. Lift ridership has decreased by 85% as of April 2020.

Mr. Bradley discussed various upcoming events at Topeka Metro:

- Seniors Ride Free Month – 5/1 thru 5/31– **Cancelled due to free fares**
- Kids Ride Free – 5/15 thru 8/15 – **Cancelled for May due to free fares**
- Memorial Day – 5/25 – All Topeka Metro facilities closed
- Dump the Pump – 6/18 – *fixed route only* – **Cancelled**
- Independence Day observed – 7/3 – Saturday routes & hours on Friday
- Independence Day – 7/4 – All Topeka Metro facilities closed

Upcoming meetings for 2020 are scheduled as follows at **10:15 a.m. at QSS or via zoom:**

- **Wednesday, July 8th**
- **Wednesday, September 9th**
- **Wednesday, November 11th**

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Manson
Topeka Metro Operations Assistant