

Utilities Committee

Wednesday, January 8, 2020

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1 The Meeting of the Utilities Committee was called to order at 7:03 p.m. on Wednesday, January
2 8, 2020. It was noted that the meeting had been announced and a notice posted at City Hall.

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4 Roll call was taken, with the following members present: Ald. Dan Stevens, Ald. Jim Olson,
5 Ald. Diane Wulf, Village of Holmen Trustee Micah Wyss, Village of West Salem Trustee Leroy
6 Brown

7
8 Also Present: City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch, Mayor Kim Smith, Financial Services
9 Director/Treasurer Fred Buehler, Human Resource Director Hope Burchell, Fire Chief Billy
10 Hayes, Ald. Tom Smith

11 12 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

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14 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Micah, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as
15 printed and on file in the City Clerk's Office.

16
17 On voice vote, motion carried.

18 19 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes/individual)**

20
21 Ald. Stevens called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that
22 portion of the meeting.

23 24 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

25 26 **Item 4 – MASS TRANSIT**

27 28 A. Shared Ride Transit:

29 30 1. Financials (Justin Running or Jeff Burckhardt/Fred Buehler)

31
32 Justin Running reported the November 2019 statistics:

- 33
- 34 • **West Salem Trips:** 628 (an increase of 59 from November 2018)
- 35 • **Holmen Trips:** 1,130 (an increase of 89 from November 2018)
- 36 • **Onalaska Trips:** 2,732 (a decrease of 189 from November 2018)
- 37 • **Total Trips:** 4,490 (a decrease of 41, or 0.90 percent, from November 2018)
- 38 • **MTU Passes:** 586 (a decrease of 61 from November 2018)
- 39 • **Agency Trips:** 1,119 (an increase of 122 from November 2018)
- 40 • **Year-to-Date Trips:** 49,477 (a decrease of 2,530 from November 2018)
- 41 • **Revenue:** \$200,551 (an increase of \$6,146, or 3.16 percent, from November 2018)

Reviewed 1/10/20 by Fred Buehler

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43 Fred noted the City of Onalaska had received six Shared Ride vehicles, three of which arrived in
44 December and are not yet in service. Fred said Justin will tell him which vehicles he wishes to
45 sell once the three new vehicles have been put into service. Fred noted the price of the vehicles
46 had increased approximately \$3,000 per vehicle and said funding from the Federal Transit
47 Administration was 80 percent of the anticipated prices compared to the actual prices. Fred
48 expressed his hope that the funds collected from the sale of the Shared Ride vehicles that are
49 taken out of service will cover the shortfall for the sixth vehicle.

50
51 Ald. Stevens asked Fred if the city will be able to retain 100 percent of the sale of the proceeds if
52 it pays for 20 percent of the vehicle on the sale after depreciation.

53
54 Fred said FTA rules stipulate a vehicle must have more than 100,000 miles, and the sale price
55 must not exceed \$5,000.

56
57 Justin said the city may keep the money if the sale price exceeds \$5,000. However, all of the
58 funds must remain in the Shared Ride program.

59
60 Ald. Stevens asked Justin why he believes ridership has increased in the Village of Holmen and
61 the Village of West Salem, but has decreased in the City of Onalaska.

62
63 Justin told Ald. Stevens the trend has been increased ridership in the outlying municipalities and
64 decreased ridership in the City of Onalaska. Justin said Shared Ride had attributed a decrease in
65 ridership in 2019 to frequent passengers who had passed away. Justin pointed out the City of
66 Onalaska had enjoyed steady growth for several years and said he believes 2018 was the first
67 year there was a decrease in ridership. Justin said, "At some point you get to [the point where]
68 that's all the market will bear and then you start having these issues where if you lose a rider, and
69 then with the agency fares, maybe they're getting fewer rides given to them. ... There are a lot of
70 contributing factors. Weather is another one. It hasn't been a horrible winter yet."

71
72 Fred asked Justin if Shared Ride has the ability to track if an agency is from Onalaska, Holmen,
73 or West Salem.

74
75 Justin said he believes Shared Ride can sort the riders and determine which rides were paid for
76 by agency trips, then sort them by address. Justin noted more individuals are receiving agency
77 trips and said the agencies used to be "very segregated." Justin said the agencies have merged in
78 recent years, and thus there is more collaboration.

79
80 Fred asked Justin if he believes Uber and Lyft are impacting Onalaska, Holmen, and/or West
81 Salem.

82
83 Justin said he does not know how available Uber and Lyft are in the aforementioned

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84 communities, noting they are not available on a regular basis in many areas to make a significant
85 impact. Justin said he believes college-aged individuals are the ones who utilize Uber and Lyft,
86 noting that segment of the population does not comprise a significant percentage of Shared
87 Ride's clientele. Justin added he does not believe Shared Ride users are as likely to switch to
88 Uber as college-aged individuals are.

89

90 Fred asked Justin to share with the committee information regarding Jeff Burckhardt.

91

92 Justin said Jeff, who has served as Shared Ride's General Manager, will be leaving Shared Ride
93 on Friday for another position.

94

95 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Micah, to place on file the Shared Ride Transit Financials.

96

97 On voice vote, motion carried.

98

99 2. Discussion and possible action relating to transfers occurring at the Center 90
100 location in the City of Onalaska

101

102 Fred noted the committee had discussed this topic at its December 4 meeting and said this item
103 was placed on this evening's meeting agenda for further discussion.

104

105 Mayor K. Smith told committee members a citizen informed the city that the individuals who
106 had waited inside Center 90 for Shared Ride to pick them up had lost that area due to the
107 remodeling of Center 90. Mayor K. Smith said, "We were trying to evaluate how many people
108 this was affecting, and if there was something different that could be done for these people while
109 they're waiting for their ride at Center 90."

110

111 Ald. Stevens told committee members he has been made aware since the December 4 meeting
112 there are private sector entities that will both place and maintain a sheltered bus stop if they are
113 granted permission to place it on either public or private property. Ald. Stevens noted the
114 entities wish to place advertisements on the bus stop and said he believes the City of La Crosse
115 declined the offer to place such a bus stop in the city. Ald. Stevens asked, "If we can find a way
116 that we can shelter people for free, is that something that we would want to approach? We don't
117 need an answer now. It's just a discussion item."

118

119 Justin said approximately 30 transfers occurred in December around Center 90 and noted the
120 transfers occur daily.

121

122 Ald. Stevens asked Justin if he is saying that perhaps it is not necessary to install a sheltered bus
123 stop at Center 90.

124

125 Justin told Ald. Stevens he just wanted to make him aware of the number of people utilizing

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126 Center 90 as a transfer location. Justin said he believes a shelter would be easier to justify if 300
127 people per month were utilizing Center 90 as a transfer location.

128

129 Fred referred to Ald. Olson's observation at the December 4 meeting that there is a section inside
130 Center 90 that is available for riders to wait.

131

132 Ald. Olson noted there is a heated hallway between Redemption Bookstore and Salon 151
133 leading to the restroom. Ald. Olson said he does not believe anyone would object to someone
134 waiting inside for a few minutes.

135

136 Justin said he does not believe individuals typically have to wait long for a Shared Ride vehicle
137 to arrive. Justin also said outside shelters are uncomfortable, noting they will keep individuals
138 dry, but not warm. Justin addressed the S.M.R.T. buses and told committee members Shared
139 Ride does not have any shelters with them, but rather a cooperation with businesses along the
140 route for them to utilize their spaces. Justin noted the Kwik Trip located in Coon Valley is a
141 pickup point.

142

143 Fred asked Justin if he tracks S.M.R.T. bus ridership statistics.

144

145 Justin said yes.

146

147 Fred noted La Crosse County Planner Charlie Handy had promised to provide him with S.M.R.T.
148 bus ridership statistics, and he said he would like to know about the ridership within the City of
149 Onalaska since the city will be making a financial contribution to the program.

150

151 Justin said he can bring the statistics with him to the February 5 Utilities Committee meeting and
152 told Fred perhaps Charlie was referring to the new tracking software.

153

154 Micah said perhaps one of the businesses located in Center 90 would be willing to allow riders to
155 stand inside, and he asked if the city had considered doing this now that the public area of Center
156 90 is no longer available.

157

158 Fred told Micah there is a public area located in Center 90.

159

160 Ald. Stevens referred to the hallway area Ald. Olson had mentioned and said he does not know if
161 individuals need to be in one of the Center 90 businesses if the facility's owners do not object to
162 individuals utilizing that hallway.

163

164 Micah asked if the concern that the individual who raised a concern about this situation does not
165 know this hallway exists.

166

167 Fred said he believes the owner of the facility had written a letter to the city.

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Mayor K. Smith told committee members a concerned citizen had contacted her on behalf of individuals who utilize Shared Ride at Center 90. Ald. K. Smith said the citizen who contacted her became aware of an individual who needed a place to stand, and she wants to ensure that the individuals who utilize Shared Ride are being taken care of.

B. MTU:

1. Transit Financials 3rd Quarter information (Adam Lorentz)

Fred noted Adam had provided him with the third-quarter MTU statistics, which have been included in committee members' packets. Fred noted the transfers from OHWSPT had been decreasing (238 in the first quarter, 182 in the second quarter, 130 in the third quarter).

Justin shared the following month-by-month transfer statistics (MTU to Shared Ride) from 2018:

2018

- **January:** 706
- **February:** 578
- **March:** 735
- **April:** 661
- **May:** 723
- **June:** 658
- **July:** 556
- **August:** 638
- **September:** 590
- **October:** 718
- **November:** 647
- **December:** 561

Justin said he will see if Shared Ride is able to track the transfers from Shared Ride to MTU.

C. Holmen Transit Input (Holmen Rep.)

Micah told committee members he has utilized Lyft's services a few times and noted the bulk of the vehicles are in the City of La Crosse. Micah added he doubts Lyft would have much of an impact in Onalaska, Holmen, or West Salem.

D. West Salem Transit Input (West Salem Rep.)

No report.

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209 E. Onalaska Transit Input (Onalaska Rep.)

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211 No report.

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213 **Item 5 – UTILITIES**

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215 No Report

216

217 **Adjournment**

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219 Motion by Micah, second by Leroy, to adjourn at 7:30 p.m.

220

221 On voice vote, motion carried.

222

223

224 Recorded by:

225

226 Kirk Bey