

Utilities Committee

Wednesday, May 2, 2018

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1 The Meeting of the Utilities Committee was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 2,
2 2018. 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. Jerry Every, Ald. Jim Olson, Ald.
5 Kim Smith, Village of Holmen Trustee Brandon Cain, Village of West Salem Trustee Leroy
6 Brown

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8 Also Present: Financial Services Director/Treasurer Fred Buehler, Mayor Joe Chilsen
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10 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

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12 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Ald. Smith, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting
13 as printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

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15 On voice vote, motion carried.
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17 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes/individual)**

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19 Ald. Every called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that portion
20 of the meeting.
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22 **Item 4 – Review and consideration of changing the date of July 4th Utilities Committee**
23 **meeting to Thursday, July 5th due to the holiday**

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25 Fred told committee members the Board of Public Works had changed its meeting date from
26 Tuesday, July 3 to Monday, July 2.
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28 Motion by Ald. Smith, second by Leroy, to approve changing the date of the July 4th Utilities
29 Committee meeting to Thursday, July 5th due to the holiday.
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31 On voice vote, motion carried.
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33 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

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35 **Item 5 – MASS TRANSIT**

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37 a. MTU Transit financials (Jim Krueger)

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39 No report.
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41 b. Shared Ride Transit:

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

Reviewed 5/7/18 by Fred Buehler

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44 The March 2018 statistics are as follows:

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- 46 • **West Salem Trips:** 599 (an increase of 114 from March 2017)
- 47 • **Holmen Trips:** 1,298 (an increase of 176 from March 2017)
- 48 • **Onalaska Trips:** 3,355 (a decrease of 260 from March 2017)
- 49 • **Total Trips:** 5,252 (an increase of 30, or 0.57 percent, from March 2017)
- 50 • **MTU Passes:** 735 (an increase of 12 from March 2017)
- 51 • **Agency Trips:** 967 (an increase of 206 from March 2017)
- 52 • **Year-to-Date Trips:** 14,567 (a decrease of 499 from March 2017)
- 53 • **Revenue:** \$49,392 (a decrease of \$2,514, or 4.84 percent, from March 2017)

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55 Fred referred to a bar graph included in committee members' packets showing
56 Onalaska/Holmen/West Salem public transit trip totals. Fred noted that the Shared Ride Program
57 began in Onalaska in 1994, began in Holmen in 2001, and began in West Salem in 2006. Fred
58 said, "Even though sometimes the statistics show that the trips are down, if you look at the past
59 history and you look at the longer picture of it, it's not been too far out of context from what it
60 has been in the past years."

61

62 Ald. Every noted there was a decrease of 260 trips in the City of Onalaska in March 2018
63 compared to March 2017, and also that there had been a .57 percent increase in the number of
64 total trips in the City of Onalaska, the Village of Holmen, and the Village of West Salem. Ald.
65 Every said, "If you took Onalaska's, Onalaska is going to be a lot higher." Ald. Every also told
66 Fred he has several other questions regarding how the city budgets, how it receives
67 reimbursement, and where it stands to date, and he also told Fred he plans to meet with him prior
68 to the Utility Committee's next meeting June 6.

69

70 Ald. Smith asked if perhaps Fred would be willing to do an overview of the Shared Ride
71 Program at the June 6 Utilities Committee meeting.

72

73 Fred noted he had distributed to committee members a draft copy of the 2018 Wisconsin Small
74 Urban Transit Systems (Tier 8) Funding Distribution. Fred noted the process to determine the
75 cost of running the Shared Ride Transit program for 2018 began with the Utilities Committee
76 last August. Fred said that in 2016 the City of Onalaska had bid out the program and referred
77 committee members to Appendix "A" of the 2018 Wisconsin Small Urban Transit Systems (Tier
78 8) Funding Distribution, which shows Shared Ride's hourly service rate for both 2017 and 2018
79 was \$26.34, and also that the number of hours between Onalaska, Holmen, and West Salem
80 totals 31,604. Fred referred to the upcoming hourly rates for 2019 (\$26.79), 2020 (\$27.25), and
81 2021 (\$27.71), and he said the hourly rate is subject to the Consumer Price Index. Fred also said
82 he does not see the total number of hours changing from 31,604 and told committee members,
83 "This figure is not going to deviate a whole lot for the years to come."

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85 Fred noted that with this information in hand, the City of Onalaska filed a grant with the State of
86 Wisconsin, and the state's figures are as follows:

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88 • **Operating expenditures:** \$834,950

89 • **Farebox revenues:** \$207,000

90 • **Net operating loss:** \$627,950

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92 Fred referred to the second page of the 2018 Wisconsin Small Urban Transit Systems (Tier 8)
93 Funding Distribution handout and noted that for 2018 he had anticipated 31 percent federal
94 revenue, and 22 percent state revenue. Fred told committee members 31 percent had turned into
95 30.6 percent, or \$255,591, compared to the anticipated amount of \$258,834. Fred said the
96 anticipated 22 percent from the state turned out to be 23.7 percent. This means the city received
97 \$10,819 more than anticipated. Fred said this means there would be a net gain of \$7,576. Fred
98 said that if these are the final figures, the City of Onalaska would receive \$255,591 from the
99 federal government. Fred said funding from the State of Wisconsin will be based on the number
100 of hours, noting that 31,604 hours had been budgeted. Fred said if Shared Ride logs 31,500
101 hours, or 104 hours less, Shared Ride will receive \$2,739.36 less (104 hours multiplied by the
102 hourly rate of \$26.34). In contrast, if Shared Ride logs 31,904 hours, or 300 hours more than
103 budgeted, Shared Ride will not be paid for those additional hours. Fred said that once the 2018
104 Wisconsin Small Urban Transit Systems (Tier 8) Funding Distribution has been finalized, a
105 contract between the City of Onalaska and the State of Wisconsin is signed both by Mayor Joe
106 Chilsen and City Clerk Cari Burmaster. The contract binds the city through December 31, 2018
107 because it has filled out the grant for 2018. Fred said the city will begin the process again this
108 autumn, noting the grant must be submitted to the state either on or before a certain date in
109 October. The state then finds out what its federal allocation will be and how much it will
110 participate.

111

112 Motion by Ald. Smith, second by Ald. Olson, to accept the Shared Ride Transit financials and
113 place them on file.

114

115 Ald. Every said he would like to find out from Fred "the cost benefit of what we're actually
116 doing here compared to what it's costing us and see how we come out."

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118 On voice vote, motion carried.

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120 2. Update regarding any issues with the Shared Ride program

121 a. Shared Ride vehicle purchasing

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123 Fred said that in the past it was reasonably easy for the City of Onalaska to purchase vehicles
124 through the State of Wisconsin. However, the state changed the rules regarding the purchase of
125 vehicles. In the City of Onalaska's case, this means Shared Ride vehicles, meaning seven-

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126 passenger minivans. Fred said it became more difficult for the city to purchase vehicles. Fred
127 said that about 4½ years ago he had met with a representative from the La Crosse Area Planning
128 Committee, and he told committee members the MPO must prepare a budget for the State of
129 Wisconsin. The State of Wisconsin calls this a “state tip.” Fred said he realized 4½ years ago
130 that the majority of the STP Urban Funding was designated for road construction, and he had
131 asked if he could submit for vehicles. Fred said he was encouraged to try, which he did, and the
132 City of Onalaska received nine Shared Ride vehicles. Fred said the city was a direct recipient
133 from Region 5, which is based in Chicago, from the federal government to receive the nine
134 vehicles over three years. Eighty percent of the cost was paid. Fred said that he had
135 approximately \$14,000 of the grant remaining as of 2017. Fred said he asked Region 5
136 representatives if the city could purchase a 10th Shared Ride vehicle at a cost of \$30,000 by
137 utilizing \$16,000 of the city’s money along with the remaining \$14,000 from the grant. The city
138 purchased the vehicle after Region 5 gave its approval.

139

140 Fred told committee members the state once again had changed the rules regarding STP Urban
141 Funding and put the city on a temporary hold regarding the purchase of vehicles. Fred said the
142 temporary hold has been in place since October 2017 and told committee members the city had
143 requested the vehicles through LAPC Executive Director Tom Faella, but he is unsure if the city
144 will be able to obtain them. Fred said a meeting to discuss this issue is scheduled for later in
145 May and told committee members he hopes to provide more information at the June 6 Utilities
146 Committee meeting. Fred said, “If we have no funds, then this committee is going to have to
147 decide how we’re going to purchase vehicles in the future.”

148

149 Fred noted he and City Engineer Jarrod Holter had spoken with Region 5 representative Evan
150 Gross and was informed that federal legislative laws regarding Shared Ride-type transportation
151 programs had been changed. These programs must have a Transit Asset Management Plan.
152 Fred said the city’s plan is simple, meaning vehicles, but he also said, “You have to remember
153 when it comes to receiving money from the federal government, the federal government does not
154 care if we’re Chicago, Minneapolis, or Onalaska. We have to follow the same rules as these
155 monorails and everybody else does. I have to follow the same rules as they do.” Fred said Evan
156 Gross suggested that the city work with Tom Faella, and he told committee members both the
157 City of Onalaska and the City of La Crosse would like to join in the plan for the State of
158 Wisconsin. This means the City of Onalaska would incorporate what it has for assets with the
159 state program to comply with the federal mandate. Fred said it is very possible the committee
160 likely will approve a Transit Asset Management Policy at its June 6 meeting.

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162 c. Holmen Transit Input (Holmen Rep.)

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164 No report.

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166 d. West Salem Transit Input (West Salem Rep.)

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168 No report.

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170 e. Onalaska Transit Input (Onalaska Rep.)

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172 No report.

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174 **Item 6 – UTILITIES**

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176 No report.

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178 **Adjournment**

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180 Motion by Ald. Smith, second by Ald. Olson, to adjourn at 7:22 p.m.

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182 On voice vote, motion carried.

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185 Recorded by:

186

187 Kirk Bey