

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Social and Environmental Committee
CHAIRPERSON: Don Hill, Chairman
DATE/TIME: April 21, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

☒ Don Hill	☐ Bob Heuerman	☐ Janet Checker
☐ Bill Bingham	☒ Hendrica Regez	
☒ Robert O'Connor	☒ Diane Allendorf	

A quorum was established.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Diane Gallagher

OTHERS PRESENT: Nicole Hermsen, Sandra Schleicher and Mary Althof

1. Minutes Approval:

- a) Minutes of the January 20, 2022 Social & Environmental Committee Meeting – Dianne Allendorf made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2022 Social & Environmental Committee meeting. Seconded by Bob O'Connor and motion passed following a voice vote resulting in all ayes.
- b) Minutes of the February 17, 2022 Social & Environmental Committee Meeting – Dianne Allendorf made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2022 Social & Environmental Committee meeting. Seconded by Bob O'Connor and motion passed following a voice vote resulting in all ayes.

2. Citizens' Comments: None.

3. Unfinished Business

- a) FY22 Strategic Goals and Plans – The FY2021/FY2022 strategic goals and plans were reviewed. Hendrica Regez asked if it was possible to have a speaker come to discuss climate change. Don Hill said he would welcome a speaker to the Social & Environmental Committee.
- b) Update on Jo Daviess County Health Department – Sandra Schleicher, JDC Public Health Administrator will update below.
- c) Passenger Rail Feasibility Study Update – Hendrica Regez reported on the Passenger Rail feasibility study. On March 18 the Passenger Rail Committee met with IDOT Secretary of Transportation for a presentation on the feasibility study. The consultants mentioned the flag stops, explained that trip length is under 4 hours, discussed capital costs, study methodology, and ridership estimates. They stressed how adding to existing service is the most cost effective and that we need the Rockford-Chicago route done before we can start plans for Rockford-Dubuque. Since the Federal Railroad Administration grant applications are not available yet (maybe in June), Quandel recommended applying for the IDOT State Planning and Research (SPR) Grant to continue with the Passenger Rail Service Plan and Return of Investment (RIO) analysis. Chandra Ravada, DBQ MPO, explained the SPR grant would be for \$600,000 and asked for the state to provide the 20% matching funds. Secretary Osman recommended applying for the SPR grant.

They asked all the stakeholders for letters of support, but the grant application was due a few days later and unfortunately the County wasn't able to send a letter in time. Grant decisions will be made in June. The 6th PRC meeting is set for Wed., April 27, in person and virtual, in

Freeport at the Freeport Council Chambers. Quandt plans to: Recap the meeting with Secretary Omar Osman, recap the second round of Focus Group Meetings, review final revisions to the Feasibility Study Report, and discuss options for next steps for the program. Regez expects the final study report will be available to the public after that. Last Tuesday, Ride the Rail hosted a presentation by Scott Speegle from IDOT about the progress on the Rockford to Chicago route. They expect to have it operational by 2025. He stressed the importance of advocacy. For that reason, Ride the Rail is building a coalition of supporters along the route. Galena and NWLED have already joined and we would like to have the county join also. The coalition statement reads: We support extending passenger rail from Rockford to Dubuque because it will benefit our organization and countless citizens along the route. **Hendrica Regez made a motion for the County to join the coalition of supporters for passenger rail with the support statement reading: “We support extending passenger rail from Rockford to Dubuque because it will benefit our organization and countless citizens along the route.” Seconded by Bob O’Connor and motion passed following a voice vote resulting in all ayes.**

- d) Review, discussion and possible action on fares/fees charged by JDC Transit – Nicole Hermesen, JDC Transit Director/PCOM stated there is nothing new to report at this time.

4. New Business

- a) Discussion and possible action on Jo Daviess County Transit creating a Community Liaison Coordinator position – Nicole Hermesen explained the duties of a Community Liaison Coordinator Position. A Community Liaison Coordinator plans, organizes, and manages the community outreach activities of the Jo Daviess County Transit System to ensure that transit service is provided to the general public. The Community Liaison Coordinator is responsible for the coordination of various special programs, which may include fund-raising, and acts as a liaison between Jo Daviess County Transit and various community/business organizations and the general public. This position would be funded by the grant program. **Bob O’Conner made a motion to create a Community Liaison Coordinator position for the Jo Daviess County Transit. Seconded by Hendrica Regez and motion passed following a voice vote resulting in all ayes.**

5. Staff Reports

- a) Jo Daviess County PCOM – Nicole Hermesen, Jo Daviess County Program Compliance Oversight Monitor (PCOM) updated the committee on the 5305 E Federal grant technical studies that was to review additional needs within the County. This study was to find out what riders and residents need from the County transit department. This was completed in March. Results are not expected until June. Hermesen will be at the Warren Senior Expo on May 14th handing out brochures and information on the Transit services. FTA has extended the mask mandate to May 3rd. Hermesen is looking to work with other local transit companies for services. In the fall when Highland Community College goes back to in person classes they are looking to work with Pretzel City Transit on splitting the rides. Jo Daviess County Transit would take the student to Freeport and drop them off at HCC. Pretzel City Transit would return the students back to Jo Daviess County. This would help with labor costs, etc. This is going to be something they are working on with multiple other agencies and locations. Hermesen advised she received a hugely discounted rate on a full page ad in the Galena Gazette that will be going out next week.
- b) Public Health – Sandra Schleicher, Jo Daviess County Public Health Administrator, reported that the Clinical Services Department will be doing COVID-19 testing at the Health Department on Tuesday and Thursday. Sandra advised that there are vaccines back on hand. The blood draw program will be back in place at the end of the May. Sandra advised that Gwen has been very busy with Animal Control.

- c) Mental Health Board – Hendrica Regez reported there was nothing new to report at this time.

6. **Citizens' Comments:** None.
7. **Board Member Concerns:** Diane Gallagher said that it was great to read a report on the immunization numbers for our County.
8. **Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn was made at 6:42 p.m. by Hendrica Regez, seconded by Bob O'Connor. Motion passed following a voice vote resulting in all ayes.

Next regular meeting will be on Thursday, May 19, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.