

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Social and Environmental Committee
CHAIRPERSON: Dianne Allendorf, Chairperson
DATE/TIME: September 19, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT:

☐ Dianne Allendorf	☐ Lynn Gallagher	☐ Bob Heuerman
☐ Vacant	☐ Joseph Heitkamp	☐ LaDon Trost
☐ Michael Dittmar		

A quorum was established.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Angela Kaiser and Nicole Hermesen.

1. Minutes Approval:

- a) Minutes of the August 15, 2024 Social & Environmental Committee Meeting – Gallagher made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2024 Social & Environmental Committee meeting. Seconded by Heitkamp and motion carried by voice vote.

2. Citizens' Comments: None.

3. Unfinished Business:

- a) FY2023/FY2024 Strategic Goals and Plans – The committee reviewed the goals and plans.

4. New Business:

- a) Discussion on the Ad-Hoc Mental Health Committee – The Ad-Hoc Mental Health Committee was established by the County Board on September 10th. There was discussion on possible members to appoint to the Committee. Gallagher thanked the board members for approving to create the Ad-Hoc Committee. Dittmar recommended that the County Board appoint Dan Pepin for his experience with grants.
- b) Discussion and possible action on a Contract with Jo Daviess County Transit and Prairie Ridge – Hermesen presented the proposed contract with Prairie Ridge of Galena. **Heitkamp made a motion to recommend to the County Board, approval of a Contract with Jo Daviess County Transit and Prairie Ridge for \$4.00 per passenger per ride outside of Jo Daviess County and \$2.00 per passenger per ride within Jo Daviess County. Seconded by Dittmar and motion carried following a voice vote resulting in 4 Ayes and 1 abstention by Allendorf.**
- c) Discussion and possible action on Jo Daviess County Transit creating a Community Liaison Coordinator position – Hermesen explained that this isn't the first time this position was recommended to the County Board. It was approved in 2022 and then Personnel Review graded the position. At that time, Hermesen wasn't able to see it all the way through, so the position was never filled. This position would potentially be busier during certain times of the year. She spoke to the State about that and they recommended that she speak with the County. She is gauging interest and looking for additional ideas. One of the biggest things this position could bring to the County, Hermesen said, is public engagement. She said there is sometimes a misconception of the County officials and employees and that we are all in this

for the same reasons. Community engagement is very important, especially for the Transit department and the amount of exposure it has to the public. Hermesen said that she spoke to her staff and asked them about the position so they would feel more included and be more welcoming to having this position created. She said that there was a lot of positive feedback. This position could also be seen as a mediator – if there is a group, for example, that would happen to have an issue, this position could potentially mitigate situations like that. She believes this would benefit other departments in the County as well, and potentially bring departments closer together. She also informed the committee of what the wages were when this came to Personnel Review in 2022. The position description was included in the meeting packet. **L. Gallagher made a motion to move the creation of a Jo Daviess County Transit Community Liaison Coordinator position forward for further discussion and potential action in the future.** Gallagher feels like it would be really great to have a person dedicated to public relations and have a singular voice out in the community. **Seconded by Dittmar and motion failed.** According to Hermesen, Transit has the funding. Pending further information, **L. Gallagher made an amended motion to direct Jo Daviess County Transit to create a Community Liaison Coordinator position for the purpose of sending the position to the Personnel Review Committee. Seconded by Heitkamp and motion carried by voice vote.**

5. Staff Reports

- a) Jo Daviess County Transit Director/PCOM – Hermesen gave her report. She brought up the idea of a Mass Transit District that was discussed last month. She provided the statute. The County wouldn't be the grantee. If Transit depleted funding, the County wouldn't be liable. This is a long process and there is a lot of legislation involved as well. Hermesen is simply gauging the interest and providing information. She went on to explain that a couple of years ago, there was discussion on this. At the time, it was well-received. There are other counties in Illinois that aren't as successful as Jo Daviess County. These counties are operated by a third party. They have also been talking about doing a Mass Transit District. The State said that if the other counties were thinking of doing that and eliminating the third parties, having that entire Northwest corridor as a Mass Transit District would be ideal. One of the bigger issues regarding transportation is coordination. The other agencies have been willing to meet Jo Daviess Transit halfway. This would allow the agencies to work in tandem with one another. There were a lot of questions and discussion. Hermesen went on to talk about the Comprehensive Analysis Ridership. That has started and the survey is being mailed out to more than 14,000 households. It will be interesting to see the responses and to give the residents what they need.
- b) Public Health – Sandra Schleicher, Public Health Administrator, was not in attendance.
- c) Mental Health Board – Colleen Farrell was not in attendance.

6. Citizens' Comments: None.

- 7. **Board Member Concerns:** There was a question some people had for Gallagher about Transit and if there would be free rides for Election Day again. Hermesen said there is an overwhelming desire to transport people to and from polling places as volunteers for no pay. The County is closed, but she wasn't sure which permissions allowed her to have Transit operate on a holiday. Kaiser said she isn't sure how it could be facilitated. There is a collective bargaining agreement and there is some verbiage on holidays.
- 8. **Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn was made at 7:37 p.m. by Heitkamp and seconded by Dittmar. Motion passed by voice vote.

Next regular meeting will be on Thursday, October 17, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.