

COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: Special Social and Environmental Committee – Public Hearing – Jo Daviess County State of Illinois Public Transportation Operating Assistance Grants for Jo Daviess County

CHAIRPERSON: Don Hill, Chairman

DATE/TIME: March 9, 2021 @ 6:34 pm

PRESENT:

☒ Don Hill

☒ Bill Bingham

☒ Bob O'Connor

☐ Vacant

☒ Bob Heuerman

☒ Hendrica Regez

☒ Scott Toot

A quorum was established.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Diane Gallagher, John Lang, John Schultz and Don Zillig

OTHERS PRESENT: Nicole Hermesen and Dan Reimer

1. **Introduction of Nicole Hermesen, Program Compliance Oversight Monitor** - Don Hill introduced Nicole Hermesen, Program Compliance Oversight Monitor. Hermesen has been doing a great job since she began in this position. She attended the last committee meeting via Zoom so we have not met her in person yet.
2. **Citizens' Comments** – None
3. **Reading of the Meeting Notice into the Minutes :**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
JO DAVIESS COUNTY
STATE OF ILLINOIS PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
OPERATING ASSISTANCE GRANTS
FOR JO DAVIESS COUNTY**

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held by the County of Jo Daviess on **Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 6:30 pm** in the County Boardroom of the Jo Daviess County Courthouse, 330 N. Bench St., Galena, IL 61036, for the purpose of considering a project for which financial assistance is being sought from the Illinois Department of Transportation/Department of Public and Intermodal Transportation for State of Illinois public transportation Operating assistance grants from the FY22 Section 5311 and Downstate Operating Assistance Programs, pursuant to the Illinois Department of Transportation's general authority to make such grants, and which is generally described as follows:

- A. Description of Project
 1. Provision of Demand Responsive public transportation in the County of Jo Daviess. The hours of operation will be 6:00am to 6:00pm Monday through Friday.
 2. Provision of Demand Responsive public transportation in the City of Galena. The hours of operation will be 9:00am to 1:00pm Monday through Friday.
 3. Ride requests for Demand Responsive Service will be made through a centralized dispatching system.
- B. Relocation: No persons will be relocated as a result of these grant applications. Relocation assistance will not be required.
- C. Environment: This proposed project will be implemented to minimize environmental impacts.
- D. Elderly and Disabled: All transportation equipment used for this proposed project will meet the ADA accessibility rules for the elderly and persons with disabilities.

At the hearing, the County of Jo Daviess will afford an opportunity for interested persons or agencies to be heard with respect to the social, economic and environmental aspects of the proposed project. Interested persons may submit orally or in writing, evidence and recommendations with respect to said project. Information concerning this project may be obtained from:

Nicole Hermsen, PCOM
Jo Daviess County
9483 U.S. 20 W., Galena, IL 61036
815-777-0263, ext. 231
nhermsen@jodaviess.org

PLEASE NOTE: To promote health and safety, we encourage the public to follow the Gubernatorial 'shelter in place' Executive Order and attend this public hearing virtually, using the information below.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91640869707?pwd=cTRCUhFLZWQvNmJyR3JqVzJnODk1UT09>

Meeting ID: 916 4086 9707

Passcode: 072873

Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Published in the Galena Gazette – February 24th, 2021

Published in the Breeze Courier- February 21st, 2021

4. **Reading of the overviews explaining the FY'22 applications to the Illinois Department of Transportation for an Economic Development Grant requesting Federal Administrative and Operating Funding Assistance through the Section 5311 Formula Funds for Rural Areas; and the Illinois Department of Transportation for an Economic Development Grant requesting State of Illinois Administrative and Operating funding assistance through the Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP) Formula Funds for Rural Areas** – Nicole Hermsen commented that for the 5311 project overview the County is requesting \$181,875 in federal assistance for FY22 to help offset direct County administrative and operating expenses and to help reimburse the Jo Daviess County's Public Transportation Program's Operator for eligible direct administrative and operating expenses approved by the County Program Compliance Oversight Monitor (PCOM). Attached are the maximum budgeted project expenses for FY22 at \$962,088. Also listed is the program fares and income of \$12,971, the Federal Section 5311 Assistance of \$181,875, the State DOAP Assistance of \$616,926.05 and the Local Match Contribution of \$42,424. The Federal Section 5311 (CARES) Assistance for this would be \$107,891.95. In FY22 the County intends to continue the contract with The Workshop at 706 S. West Street, Galena, IL to manage and operate the County Public Transportation Program commonly known as Jo Daviess County Transit and will "Pass Through" federal assistance funds to The Workshop "Operator" to reimburse the Operator for eligible Public Transportation Program expenses paid by the Operator and approved by the County PCOM. Jo Daviess County Transit operates a "Demand Responsive" Transportation Program – Reservations are required for all rides requested. A Central Dispatch Office is located in the Transit Facility located at 710 S. West Street, Galena, IL. The phone number for reservations is (815) 777-8088. The operating hours of Jo Daviess County Transit are 6:00am through 6:00pm – Mondays through Fridays. Requests for rides (reservations) will be accepted between 8:00am and 4:00 pm – Mondays through Fridays. Requests for trips for medical appointments will be considered for medical destinations in: Freeport and Rockford Illinois; Dubuque and Iowa City, Iowa; and Madison and Monroe, Wisconsin. All such trips must originate and terminate in Jo Daviess County and are subject to availability of vehicles and/or drivers. Jo Daviess County currently has an active fleet of 25 vehicles composed of seven (7) Six Passenger Min-Vans and eighteen (18) Fourteen Passenger

Medium Duty Busses. All vehicles are Handicapped Accessible and are equipped with either Ramps or Lifts. The projected total number of trips for FY'22 is 33,000. The projected total of all vehicle miles is 250,000 with 167,000 Live Miles and 83,000 Dead Head miles. Jo Daviess County Transit's direct operating staff include: Four (4) Full Time Drivers, seven (7) Part Time Drivers, three (3) Dispatchers, and two (2) Mechanics. As for the Downstate Operating Assistance Project (DOAP) we are applying for that as well. The County is requesting \$616,926.05 of assistance in FY22. The program fares and income, Federal Section 5311 Assistance, Local Match Contribution and Federal Section 5311 (CARES) Assistance all remain the same as previous. The formula for requesting Downstate Operating Assistance Program Operating Assistance is a slightly different than the other one. 65% of eligible Quarterly Administrative and Operating expenses or the total amount of the Downstate Operating Assistance Grant. Expenses not covered by one of the above will be paid with Local Contract Funds (Local Contributions) received for the year and the County's Public Transportation Account. (PTA). In FY22 the County intends to continue to contract with The Workshop, 706 S. West Street, Galena, Il. to manage and operate the County Public Transportation Program commonly known as Jo Daviess County Transit and will "Pass Through" State assistance funds to The Workshop "Operator" to reimburse the Operator for eligible Public Transportation Program expenses paid by the Operator and approved by the County PCOM. Jo Daviess County Transit operates a "Demand Responsive" Transportation Program – Reservations are required for all rides requested. A Central Dispatch Office is located in the Transit Facility located at 710 S. West Street, Galena, Illinois. The phone number for reservations is (815) 777-8088. The operating hours of Jo Daviess County Transit are 6:00 am through 6:00 pm – Mondays through Fridays. Requests for rides (reservations) will be accepted between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm – Mondays through Fridays. The proposed project will provide General Public Demand Respond Service in the core service area of Jo Daviess County and Non-emergency Demand Respond service for Medical appointments in Jo Daviess County. Requests for trips for medical appointments will be considered for medical destinations in: Freeport and Rockford, Illinois; Dubuque and Iowa City, Iowa; and Madison and Monroe, Wisconsin. All such trips must originate and terminate in Jo Daviess County and are subject to availability of vehicles and/or drivers. Jo Daviess County currently has an active fleet of 25 vehicles composed of seven (7) Six Passenger Min-Vans and eighteen (18) Fourteen Passenger Medium Duty Busses. All vehicles are Handicapped Accessible and are equipped with either Ramps or Lifts. The projected total number of trips for FY22 is 33,000. The projected total of all vehicle miles is 250,000 with 167,000 Live Miles and 83,000 Dead Head miles. Jo Daviess County Transit's direct operating staff include: Four (4) Full Time Drivers, seven (7) Part Time Drivers, three (3) Dispatchers and two (2) Mechanics.

5. **Open Public Hearing** – Don Hill opened the Public Hearing at 6:40 p.m. Robert O'Connor questioned how we are projecting \$12,971 income from program fares and other income and yet we are projecting 33,000 trips so that averages out to earning .30 to .40 for every trip that the Transit bus takes. Hermesen replied that for the budget we had taken the program fares based on what happened with COVID and rides were down. That is an estimate for the fares and income for the trips. That is a gross estimation of what it could be. It is significantly lower than what it was. Hermesen feels that 33,000 rides is on the high end. This was discussed with Rich Machala and we did decide to take an average for that because that is also what we would have to report to the state as well. The numbers are based on what we have done in the past and what we project to do this year. John Lang questioned the number of drivers and vehicles in operation. There are 11 total drivers and 25 vehicles. Seven of the vehicles in the inventory are obsolete in regards to year and mileage and the state does want us to sell and relinquish them. That number will go down but, yes, we do have a large number of vehicles. Don Hill added that one of the agenda items that will be addressed at the next Social & Environmental Committee meeting is the fares that are currently being charged. We will try to get that narrowed down. We all agree that we need to do something. The deficit that we have at this time can't continue on.

6. **Close Public Hearing** – Don Hill closed the Public Hearing at 6:51 p.m.
7. **Citizens' Comments** – None
8. **Board Member Concerns** – None.

The next Social & Environmental Committee meeting will be on Thursday, March 18, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Motion to adjourn was made at 6:52 pm by Scott Toot, seconded by Bob Heuerman. Motion passed following a roll call vote resulting in all ayes.