

**MORRIS AREA PARATRANSIT SYSTEM
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Team

MINUTES

February 4, 2021

Members Present:

Marc Molde

Matt Putts

Maria Isaza

Staff Present:

Janet Ackerson Jefferson DAR

Kasey Errico Director of Human Services

Christine Hellyer Director of Special Transportation

Marcy Merola, SR Transportation Mt. Olive

Pat Petrillo Aging

Isabel Rojas NJ Transit

Laura Sostak Tri Town 55+Coalition

Carol Stoltz Aging

Justin Winfrey NJ TIP RUTGERS

Michelle Woehle Jefferson DAR

I. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am by Christine Hellyer, and she announced the meeting is being recorded.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from November 5, 2020

Motion: M.I./M.P.

Staff Report-Christine Hellyer MAPS

The **5310 FY 2020 Application** will be submitted to *NJ Transit* today.

This application requests 2 vehicles handicap accessible and operating dollars to go toward salaries of MAPS drivers and dispatchers.

NJ Transit is current on reviewing applications.

Matt asked if the vehicles are buses?

Christine yes

Isabel added to clarify all **NJ Transit** vehicles' are handicap-accessible.

Christine offered to find the information for Matt of the options of vehicles .

MAPS was closed this past Monday and Tuesday due to snow and *Ecolane* system allowed us to view our ridership who had trips scheduled and it was seamless.

We are currently operating at 50% capacity bus/vehicle. The requests have been less, and we are making more accommodations, and we have a low denial rate.

New Jersey's COVID numbers peaked after the holidays, and now the numbers are going down, we watch in February.

We will increase to 75% capacity with COVID vaccine appointments become more available.

We are prioritizing COVID vaccine appointment, for seniors, disabled and residents of rural areas.

Additionally, I am also looking into Saturday service for COVID vaccine only. (we already accommodated one).

As of now the **MAPS** drivers do not receive paid overtime only compensation time.

I am looking into providing our employees with paid overtime for Saturday work.

And we are looking to accommodate and prioritize Saturday requests for COVID vaccines as they become available. We want to make sure we will be able provide the transportation.

Atlantic Private Care, that has a transportation contract through our Aging department, is also available to assist us with homebound clients that might need a home health aide to assist them.

Kasey Errico welcomed everyone to the meeting and added she is looking forward to getting to know the Committee members.

NJ Transit – Isabel Rojas

2021 5311 and Casino revenue and **5311 application** was received and agreement sent out to Morris County waiting on return.

2021 Casino Revenue Morris County allocated \$1,096,419 and the 2021 5311 rural general public Federal \$269,711 with NJ Transit and County matching 50%

2018 award letters went out to **Morris County, Jefferson Twp., Mt. Olive Twp.**

2019 award letters of inclusion/non-inclusion letters will be received shortly.

Morris County was awarded \$20,000 with the **County** matching \$20,000 and the **County** will match \$20,000 for a **TNC (Transportation Network Companies) pilot program**.

This program is aimed to test the viability of using ridesharing services to provide critical first mile/last mile connections in areas where conventional fixed-route **bus** service is not always available.

Christine worked really hard on this request.

2020 5310 Application was available on Dec 11th and is due February 5th at 3pm.

CDC (Center for Disease Control) federal mandate January 29, 2021 that all passengers and operators must wear masks when utilizing public transportation.

I am sure you are all following this guideline, but now it's a federal mandate.

Christine asked **Isabel** can **MAPS** (has been requiring this of their passengers), but now federally we can say you can't ride without a mask.

(**MAPS** vehicles carry a few extra masks).

Isabel yes, it is the passenger's responsibility. The County doesn't have to provide masks.

Maria asked if there are no exceptions?

Isabel no

Matt added there are **ADA (Americans with Disabilities' Act)** exceptions on the **CDC web** site;

a person with a disability that can't safely wear the mask, or create a work place safety risk, that would be an exemption is covered under ADA.

The below information was researched after the meeting:

*ADA exempts a person that because of their disability can't wear a mask: persons with trouble breathing, post-traumatic stress disorder, severe anxiety or claustrophobic fear, autistic persons, or persons with mouth control devices.
Modifications to face mask: scarf, loose face covering, or a full- face shield*

Moving forward all NJ Transit vehicles procurements are with plexiglass partitions COVID equipped for safety measures.

New Business

Christine added the **SCDRTAP TNC program** we will receive the award shortly and I will be working on how the grant was written this month. I have to work on obtaining a quote/contract (it is under the threshold for a quote) and work closely with our legal and purchasing departments.

I look forward to your comments and questions.

This transportation will be more accessible than what MAPS already provides and the scheduling not be in house, and have a third party involved, to do the calls and scheduling.

Morris County can say this person on the list and is able to ride with your service. And then that client will be able call the ride-service and request a ride on demand/or plan ahead trip.

This service will be on *demand/and plan ahead* and the client will access the service of **Uber/Lyft** or very similar.

I must also have ADA (*Americans with Disability Act*) accommodations in place, so I will pilot this program smaller to begin, so we can and will meet these requests.

Maybe we can partner with Life Ride (wheelchair and non- emergency transportation)

I would like this to be up and running by March/April.

I think this service will supplement what MAPS provides, that is a fantastic program.

MAPS have a recruitment issue, 3 driver vacancies for 2 years. A **CDL** is required and our pay rate is lower than what other companies offer.

Maria asked how interested parties can apply for the position?

Christine replied on **Morris County's website** or call **MAPS** and the will mail an application.

Old Business-Christine

In 2020 MAPS provided 20,515 rides in comparison to 45,000 rides, prior year. This was due to COVID and MAPS was closed for 8 weeks, only providing must do critical medical and employments rides. Employment Horizons one of our trip generators was also closed also. We are currently doing 75/100 trips a day and before COVID 200 trips.

And when we reopened we have been at 50% capacity.

In the past we had some difficulty reporting the 5311 rural trips. And with Ecolane allowed our reporting to improve.

MAPS provided in 2020,493 5311 trips, and in 2019 581 trips. And remember MAPS was closed and did half the trips.

In 2020 we did close to what we did in 2019.

5311 CARES funding we upgraded Ecolane system and are now able to do IVR (interactive voice response) phone calls: reminder of rides and ride window period. And those with cell phones will also receive a text when their vehicle is fifteen minutes away.

Also, we hope to have a rider portal up and running, points of interest: will allow riders to book/cancel themselves online at pre-approved points of interest.

Coordinated Human Services Transportation plan are mandated by our grants, and was supposed to be updated in 2018, and every five years, but I had just become Director, so we anticipated in 2019 and 2020 to update it, but with the COVID pandemic it wasn't possible.

So, moving forward we decided to outsourcing and receive an outside perspective might benefit us.

We want it done correctly and let us see some of our blind spots.

More on this at our next meeting.

Laura from Tri Town said she would like to participate

Isabel added she encourages all transportation service providers to participate it's a great tool. Where the needs are where the gaps are and with the Census results, it will become more refined.

Announcements

Matt added *Hanover Township* received a grant for \$100,000 for improving transportation for the disabled population and will expand their DAR (Dial A Ride) which services most group homes for the disabled, most group homes per capita in Morris County and maybe in the State.

And also looking to improve pedestrian safety especially on Ridgedale Avenue.

I am sitting on that committee and will provide this committee with any useful information. I also encouraged them to attend the MAPS CAC meeting, so that there is no duplication of services between the two.

He also thanked MAPS and NJ Transit that were very helpful providing Employment Horizons workshop the best ways to serve our clients during the COVID pandemic.

Carol Stoltz Aging, Disability Coordinator added this her first MAPS CAC meeting, and is looking forward to providing and sharing resources to the Morris County disabled population.

Adjournment:10:45am

Motion: M.I./M.P

Christine

Next meeting: April 1, 2021 at 10am.

More than likely it will be virtual at 10am. If you have any ideas for presentations please let me know.

Matt offered his *Zoom* for future meetings.

Christine added she has to add the call- in option because it's a public meeting, but *Christine* did accept *Matt's* offer for next meeting.

I will send this to my IT department