

CEDAR AREA TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 30, 2024

A regular meeting of the Cedar Area Transportation Advisory Board was held on Tuesday, January 30th at 4:00 PM in the Cedar City Conference Room located at 10 North Main, Cedar City, Utah.

PRESENT:

Carmen Alldredge, Newly Appointed Chairman
Kol Gibson, Member
James Jetton, Member
Kathy Long, Member
Ryan Marshall, Public Works Director
Jill Smuda, CATS Manager/Dispatcher
Anna Hernandez, Executive Assistant

ZOOM/TELEPHONE:

Brody Johnson, Member
Carter Wilkey, Council

Marshall Welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

1. STAFF REPORT

- a) Introduction to new Board members – There was a round table introduction of the board and new members:
 - Brody Johnson (Southwest Behavior Health Center)
 - Kol Gibson (SUU-Academic Affairs)
 - Carmen Alldredge (SUU-Student Affairs)
 - James Jetton (Executive Director at Iron County Care & Share)
 - Kathy Long (United Today Stronger Tomorrow Advocate)
 - Carter Wilkey (Council Representative)
 - Ryan Marshall (Public Works Director for Cedar City)
 - Jill Smuda (CATS Manager/Dispatcher)
- b) Vote on a new Chairperson - Marshall started the meeting with defining and electing a chairperson that will direct the meeting. They would start the meeting by going through the agenda, allow members to give their point of view on the topics discussed. Control the meeting, call for votes and represent at city council if the board wants to address the council directly.

Wilkey made the motion to nominate Alldredge as the chairperson, and all I's were in favor that C. Alldredge is now the newly appointed Chairperson for the CATS Advisory Board.

- c) Approval of meeting minutes – Gibson moved motion to approve, Jetton seconded, and all I's were in favor accepting the meeting minutes from July 18, 2023, as presented.
- d) Review of the By Laws – There is By Laws Ordinance No. 0811-21 that has been set up for this committee. The members of the board shall serve without compensation. Shall be appointed as provided as stated and shall provide advice and recommendation on matters related to public transportation.

The Mission Statement: the advisory board is responsible to advise on transportation coordination plans for the Cedar City service area.

The Goals: to reach that goal, the committee will pursue all avenues available funding in the form of grants, community, and business resources. Encourage the use of advertising and personal donations to assist the CATS system.

The organization is a seven-member board appointed by the mayor. With a council member representative which is councilman Wilkey that will be the council representative on this board. The members will serve a period of 4 years and can be invited to be re-appointed.

The Cedar City Transportation Advisory board shall organize an elected Chairperson. The Chairperson shall be a voting member of the board. Shall conduct meetings at least bi-annually or otherwise called by the Chairperson.

Cedar City shall assign such staff to the Cedar City Transportation Advisory board that is necessary and proper. The city staff shall provide training for new members upon their appointment.

The procedures: The simple majority of the voting members shall constitute quorum for conduct of business. The Roberts rules of order apply. The Chairs encourage to reject overly formal applications and adopt the application that favors the following goals:

- Allow the chairman the ability to facilitate or direct the discussion and keep order.
- Protect the ability of all board members to bring up their ideas, discuss them, receive input from the public and staff and come to their individual opinions and conclusions on each of these issues.
- Allow all members the opportunity to express their individual opinions and conclusions on each issue through their vote.

- Assure the majority vote of the board is the opinion of the board while at the same time protecting the minority of board members' ability to speak, express ideas and vote.

Basically, this committee is formed to be able to talk about some of the issues with CATS. To be able to understand how it is to be an advocate for CATS out in the community. To make suggestions to our city council, who then have the right to accept or deny those and to look at a way to budget and to fund all the operations that we have.

Wilkey questioned if he was a voting member of the board or if he is a member in a different capacity?

Marshall stated that Wilkey is considered a voting member of the board.

Action Item:

Allredge has requested a copy of the By-laws to be forwarded to her. Sent on 2/5/24.

Johnson asked if the members are required to go through any kind of training on open and public meetings as required by the state?

Marshall responded that this meeting would be considered as part of training. However, occasionally, the city attorney will want to go to all the boards to do some additional training. This year Marshall has not heard of one yet.

Action Item:

Johnson proposed to have the city attorney present at the next meeting.

- e) Study being conducted – The transit survey study was discussed at the last meeting and is still in process. We are trying to conduct a Transit survey study and have been working with the UDOT (Utah Department of Transportation) transportation team. They have provided some grant funds as well as the UDOT rural program is going to do the matching for that grant. They will be providing the funds for the study. We will be going out and doing a study to see if we can expand the city service.
There was notification from UDOT that they want to meet and discuss it a bit further prior to putting the study out there. The way it is currently structured is it would be in phases. It would go out to bid through an RFP (Request for Proposal) process where companies would bid on it. We are requesting a proposal just to expand within Cedar City limits because that is what helps fund this is our Cedar

City budget. Also look at another alternative of Cedar City and SUU, there has been some interests from SUU and maybe helping to participate financially. If they can get better service for their students around campus. That would be one aspect of the study to look at. Because the state is funding this, they want the study to look at a county wide proposal. So, the third option for the study would be if it would be expanded beyond the city limits if it went to the county or up to Brian Head. How would that look and how would those communities participate financially to help run that kind of service.

The study being conducted will look at all three different scenarios and who wants to participate. If no one else wants to participate, the Cedar City portion will be looked at and we will see how much it would cost to be able to increase our service.

The study will be going out in the next month or so. The RFP is ready and was forwarded to UDOT. They want to make some changes, so there will be a meeting about it and go over the changes.

If we were to expand to Enoch, we would have to have them participate financially. Cedar City is not going to subsidize in other cities service, they would have to pay their portion the same with SUU. If the transit is going to focus things around the campus to better service the students then there will need be some financial assistance.

The way the bus system is funded, the city operates it and is the only one that financially contributes to it. The routes are limited to within Cedar City. Now because it is a Federally subsidized program, it is subsidized 80% for FTA (Federal Transit Administration) for capital costs, it is subsidized 50% for the operational costs and Cedar City comes up with the balance of all the funds that are needed.

The city sponsors the transits portion from the General Tax funds, that is why it has stayed within the city limits because that is all that is helping support that program.

The granting process that is funded by UDOT, Public Works takes care of the Administration part of it. We apply for those grants every year under the 5311 FTA program and that is public transportation in rural areas. It gets past through the state, the state gets around 5 to 6M dollars. Any agency that provides rural transit in the state can apply for those funds. Currently it is split up within the five agencies Cedar City, Park City transit, Logan in some of their rural routes, Vernal and St. George. That 5M has to go toward both Operational and Capital costs and

it goes quickly. They try to fund the operational side of it first and then if there are any capital requests those are on a case-by-case basis or try to get additional funding for that. That is how CATS operates.

It has gone up quite a bit, since COVID hit the salaries have gone up because they are trying to be competitive in trying to get drivers that have some responsibilities, and experience.

The Operational expenses have gone up probably 30-40% in the last three years. It is taking the city some time to help subsidize our local portion of this.

The city provides a Fixed route service that has been here for a long time. There is one route that goes down Main Street and hits the main corridors.

There is also a paratransit service that is offered. That is a curb-to-curb (door-to-door) service, it is for people with disabilities and the elderly (65 and over). There is an application process that people must qualify for, it is not available for everyone. It is for those with disabilities who cannot use the fixed route service. Once they go through an application process and they are qualified, they can call and set up an appointment to be picked up and dropped off to and from their destination at the set times.

All the fixed route vehicles/buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts, so there is that accessibility. If there is some other reason their disability limits them from using the fixed route, then they can qualify for the paratransit service and get the application submitted.

- f) Ridership – A chart was presented to the board on ridership. The ridership goes back to 2006. There was a peak in 2011 and ridership was starting to build up in 2018 & 2019, then COVID hit in 2020 with a drop. Last year it started to trend again.

Action Item:

Forward a copy of the Ridership graph to Councilmen Wilkey. Sent on 01/31/24.

A copy of the CATS brochure of map and schedule was distributed amongst the members.

There were directions on where to locate the fares and their price points for Fixed and DAR (Dial-A-Ride) as well as including costs of the different pass options.

The paratransit DAR service is more expensive, that is why it is an application process.

There have been questions about, if you put in more services, you get more riders. But then the city council says, show us more riders and we will provide more funds for more services.

With the study, we are trying to provide as much information as possible.

Wilkey brought up if perhaps there can be a survey that the riders can pick up on the bus. To get an idea of where people are traveling to.

Marshall mentioned that's where the stakeholders like SUU or larger employers can come in and provide that data. They would have a better understanding of who in their organization or sphere would want to ride and to use it for.

Johnson suggested that as a group, ride the entire Fixed route together sometime. To get a feel for what the ride is like, evaluate who is getting on and off and where.

Marshall also suggested scheduling it as a board meeting, 3 months from now prior to the next board meeting.

- g) Budget – As a city the budget calendar is July through June. In July started a new budget year. Marshall has the budget tracking sheet through September (1st Quarter). He has not received the last quarter yet. Every year the budget is reviewed, starting at the end of February for 24-25 budget year. There will be a proposal, as a department go through to figure and proposal what is needed, propose it to the mayor. The mayor takes it, looks at it and says this is how much funding we have and decides what he presents to the council. Goes to council and council approves it and adds their items. By the first part of June there will be a new budget for the following year. Until then continue to work off the old budget.

The CATS budget, just the operational expenses it is at two hundred thousand right now is what the total overall operating budget is. A hundred and forty of that is salaries and benefits. The rest is for gas and oil at thirty-nine thousand which was budgeted for.

There are subsidies that cover fifty percent of that, the city has to come up with about one hundred and ten thousand that they put into out of the general fund just for operating.

Then the bus replacement runs about ninety thousand dollars, they are replaced every five years. For the larger buses they are estimated at three hundred and forty thousand dollars, that has to be replaced every twelve years.

At the end of September, it was at sixteen percent, which should be at twenty five percent of the budget. The expense has been little under, there will be couple of things coming in. There was a vehicle that was purchased and replaced.

Wilkey asked if there was any kind of sinking fund or any kind of capital replacement fund that CATS puts some into every year?

Marshall stated this is a special revenue fund, there is revenue that comes in. However, the passenger fares only bring in around thirty thousand dollars a year. It does not come anywhere near to paying for the operational costs. There are no revenue funds balances that can be put away for future expenses.

When COVID hit the FTA came out with all these grants. They were one hundred percent funded for CATS. Which has helped relieved the general fund for now.

Wilkey asked if there are any form of public transportation in cities small or large, where ride fares cover the operating costs of the programs itself?

Marshall responded that he has not, not that he's aware of. He was on a board called the National Rural Transit Board, where they looked at small cities all over the country and had not heard of one, where they are self-sustaining.

2. NEW BUSINESS

No new business to discuss.

3. OLD BUSINESS

No updates

4. NEXT MEETING DATE

Meetings are set up bi-annually for January and July. Next meeting will be scheduled for July to report on what the new budget that was approved as. Then in January give an update half-way through year as to how we are doing on it. Next meeting proposed for July 30th, 2024.

Action Item:

Allredge will set up a day to have the board meet to ride the Fixed route as a group.

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5. ADJOURNMENT

As there was nothing further, Alldredge motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:50 PM.