

Chisago-Isanti County Heartland Express

February 20, 2020

Heartland Express
39840 Grand Avenue North
North Branch, MN 55056

Present: Paul Smith – Heartland Express Transit Director, Mike Warring – Isanti County Commissioner, Dave Oslund – Isanti County Commissioner, George McMahon – Chisago County Commissioner, Mike Robinson – Chisago County Commissioner, Chase Burnham – Chisago County Administrator, Julia Lines – Isanti County Administrator, Bob Benson – Chisago County Human Services Director.

The meeting was called to order by Mike Warring at 9:30 am.

Motion by Mike Warring, seconded by Mike Robinson to approve the February 20, 2020 agenda, motion passed.

Old Business

Motioned by Mike Warring, seconded by Mike Robinson, to approve the minutes from the November, 21 2019 Joint Powers Board meeting. Motion passed.

New Business

Veterans Fares –

Paul revisited a discussion from the previous Joint Powers meeting regarding the possibility of offering free rides to Veterans. Paul advised that this was no longer being considered due to a lack reported need within the community, ability to track the rides, and potential complaints from other groups that may also request free rides.

Volunteer Driver Program –

Paul stated that Heartland Express currently has three active volunteer drivers that serve residents in both counties. Across the State, there has been a drastic decline in volunteer driver program participation mostly due to changes over the past two years in the tax law, which require drivers to report reimbursements as income. There are legislative efforts in progress to address these concerns. Heartland Express has been coordinating with other transit programs in an effort to recruit more volunteer drivers.

Staffing & Operational Updates –

Paul stated that since the last meeting, Heartland Express hired one full time and one part time dispatcher. Two new part drivers also recently started and the department is almost fully staffed. Finding qualified commercial drivers continues to be a challenge.

TAC Meetings –

Due to staffing issues in 2019 and discussions pertaining to a potential merger with Kanabec County, independent TAC Meetings have not taken place since last summer. They are scheduled to resume in April.

MnDOT Program Update –

Julia Lines recently met with personnel from MnDOT, including Transit Project Manager Tina Neary, to discuss a few concerns regarding communication and timely reporting that were experienced primarily during the transit director's absence. MnDOT requested a plan and protocol be put in place to address concerns going forward. Paul Smith has responded to those requests and no future problems with MnDOT are anticipated.

Other Business

None.

2020 Meeting Dates

May 21, 2020

August 20, 2020

November 20, 2020

Moved by Commissioner Warring to adjourn.