

BATA - Local Advisory Council Minutes

Monday, April 29, 2024

12:00 – 1:00pm

Council Members in Attendance:

- Fern Spence, Community Representative, LAC Chair
- Matt Morritz, Community Representative
- Mandy Joppich, Community Representative
- Linda Joppich, Community Representative
- Lena Vander Meulen, Leelanau County Senior Services
- Heidi Gustine, Area Agency on Aging
- Demarie Jones, Disability Network No. Michigan
- Susan Odgers, Community Representative
- Michelle Krumm, Senior Center Network
- Mitch Treadwell, Traverse City Commissioner
- Fern Spence, Community Representative

BATA Staff in Attendance:

- Kelly Dunham / BATA
- Bill Clark / BATA
- Eric Lingaur / BATA
- Tracy Melville / BATA

- 1) Welcome to the 2024 LAC spring meeting: Bill Clark called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm.
- 2) Introductions: Members introduced themselves and shared new things happening within their community.
- 3) Last quarter ridership: Bill Clark shared the Q2 2024 ridership report.
 - Fixed Routes showed a 1% increase over last year because of more services offered.
 - Link service showed a 3% decrease over last year – switch to Via Link system wide, but growing daily.
 - Total ridership across all platforms (fixed routes, Link, and Agency) showed a 1% increase.
- 4) Looking Forward: BATA summer 2024
 - Update on new facility and new transfer station. Potential move in dates for the new building (late July or early August) and possible start dates to include the transfer station (possibly June 10th).
 - We have four new 100% electric vans that seat ten people each. Two more will be delivered soon that will have mobility lifts. They are quiet and modern and will be used for City Links for quality transportation service in-town and to maximize energy and charging-time efficiency.
 - Service Improvements 2024: Spring 2024 will see many fixed route additions. Adding new stops, adding new routes, and adjusting start times for certain routes.
 - May 18th: Bike-N-Ride service with the big 11-bike bus begins service to Suttons Bay.
 - May 28th: Introducing the new year-long West Flex (similar to old Route 4), the summer seasonal Leelanau Flex (similar to old Route 11), and adding some new requested stops to other existing routes.
 - June 10, 2024, opening date for Lafranier Transfer Station to enable better frequency and earlier/later connections to Kingsley & Acme.

- Special Services: BATA will once again be teaming up with the Bayshore Marathon, Cherry Fest, Polka Fest, and more to provide transportation.
- Bus stops improvements: GT Crossings and Meadowlane both received new shelters this year, and more shelters will be coming soon to stops at Airport Access Road, the West Western, and Family Fare.
- BATA added benches to some temporary stops to help our riders, new signage that includes QR codes and maps have been put into shelters that provide information.
- Education and marketing for summer 2024: BATA is working on building BATA's community value and building our brand value. BATA will be working with Brand Tonic for a survey of the communities that BATA serves.

5) Board of Directors update: BATA accepted the recommendation from their new general counsel to enter mediation with Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners. Mediation is scheduled for July 8, 2024.

6) Open Discussion:

- Susan Odgers asked if BATA is working with Benzie County and NMC for adding service? Kelly Dunham shared that this is on the ballot. If the vote does pass, we will revisit at that time and would be able to work with Benzie County to see the level of service needed. We do have a great working relationship with Benzie.
- Susan Odgers asked if BATA has considered modeling our buses like Indian Trails where they have stops at fast food stops along its route. Kelly Dunham responded that at this time, we currently do not model our stops like the rest stops for long-distance buses but are looking into providing stops at places where people want to access.
- Fern Spence shared her concern of the visibility of the Tom's East Bay shelter. With the trees and bushes that are around the shelter, it does seem a little secluded. Bill Clark and Kelly Dunham responded that BATA could look into getting the trees/bushes trimmed back.
- Fern Spence asked if Munson or anyone offers tickets to their employees to encourage using the bus. Eric Lingaur responded the DDA does pass out "Destination Downtown" commuter passes, so people who work downtown could utilize the bus to get to and from work. At no cost to them. BATA is hoping to market this more and promote our park and rides along with the new transfer station.
- Susan Odgers asked how common it is that a business offers to pay for a shelter. Bill Clark responded that although we have some shelters that are privately owned, it's not very common. Nevertheless, we have found businesses to be supportive of shelters on or near their property because of the accessibility and convenience for their employees.
- Susan Odgers asked if any of the solar or shelter stops have an audio feature. Bill Clark responded that currently our stops do not have an audio feature, but riders can use the Transit app or Google, which has an audio feature, that will inform you when your bus will be arriving and how to get to the next stop. Eric Lingaur offered that BATA could do a BATA 101 class and educate people how BATA works, how to use the different apps, and answer questions.
- Susan Odgers asked what BATA is currently using for security on the buses. Eric Lingaur responded that our contract just ended at the end of March with STT Security. We would be looking back into bringing them back in the winter season and possibly during Cherry Fest.
- Susan Odgers asked who BATA is using as current legal counsel. Kelly Dunham responded that BATA is using Miller-Johnson, and Richard Cherry is our representative.

7) Adjournment. Eric Lingaur adjourned the meeting at 1:06pm.

2024 Local Advisory Council Membership

- Fern Spence: Chair / Community Representative
- Matt Morritz: Community Representative
- Dan Buron: Goodwill Northern Michigan
- Lana Payne: Commission on Aging
- Mandy Joppich: Community Representative
- Linda Joppich: Community Representative
- Lena Vander Meulen: Leelanau County Senior Services
- Amanda Molski / Heidi Gustine: Area Agency on Aging
- Demarie Jones: Disability Network No. Michigan
- Susan Odgers: Community Representative
- Michelle Krumm: Senior Center Network
- Mitch Treadwell: Traverse City Commissioner

CC: Alex Simonetti/MDOT, Kelly Dunham/BATA, Eric Lingaur/BATA, Bill Clark/BATA