

Berrien County Board of Commissioners
Committee of the Whole
May 16th, 2019



Comments/Questions Received by Staff

- Budget
- Operation
- Governance

Budget: Why do State and Federal dollars go up?

FY18 Revenue:

State:	\$336,293
Federal:	\$157,117
Contract Fares:	\$243,916
Public Fares:	\$45,229

Proposed FY2020 Revenue:

State:	\$411,290
Federal:	\$189,826
Contract Fares:	\$144,000
Public Fares:	\$145,080

Budget: General Fund vs. Berrien Bus Fund Balance

- Berrien Bus fund balance of roughly \$200,000 was retained using Federal/State funded transportation program and must be either spent on transportation service or returned.
- County General Fund appropriation is essentially matching the use of fund balance to provide increased public service (which requires increased local funding)

Budget: General Public Vs. Contract Service

Contract Service:

Cost:	\$60/hr
Reimbursement:	\$34/hr
Contract Fares:	\$30/hr
NET:	+\$4/hr

General Public:

Cost:	\$60/hr
Reimbursement:	\$34/hr
Public Fares:	\$5/\$2.50/hr
3 Passengers/hr:	\$15/hr
NET:	-\$11/hr

Operation: Will the Pilot Program require additional Capital investment?

- Since we will be operating “Flex Routes” and not “Fixed Routes” we are not planning any new structures like Bus Shelters.
- We would likely need to purchase signs, brochures, update our website, host public meetings, etc. This is budgeted under “Marketing”.
- We will not need to expand our fleet to operate the Pilot Program.

Operation: Fares? Frequency of Service? Scheduling?

- We are planning to stick with our existing fare structure of \$5.00/\$2.50 for demand response trips.
- Flex Route service will be \$2.50/\$1.25 and will operate four “round trips” per day from 7am – 5PM.
- Demand Response trips will be scheduled on a “priority system” with “advanced reservation” getting first priority followed by same day service.

Operation: Connection to TCATA/Niles/Buchanan

- Flex Routes into Niles and Benton Harbor will end/begin at TCATA and Niles DART “base”. Passengers can then use local service to get to their final destination.
- Buchanan DART has scheduled service between Niles and Buchanan.
- If approved, there remains work to be done with the other providers in terms of coordination of service.

Operation: How did staff arrive at ridership estimates for Pilot Program?

- We took the ridership estimates provided in the service plan and reduced them to reflect the reduction in service levels.
- Ridership is based on 3 passengers per hour, which is a baseline benchmark used for rural transit service.
- We wanted to budget “low” for ridership numbers as to not over estimate fare revenue.
- Fact is, we do not know what the level of demand will be until we provide the service.

Governance: What will be the role of the Berrien County Advisory Transportation Committee?

- Monitor the Pilot Program and make necessary adjustments.
- Commissioners on BCATC will hopefully provide status updates to BOC. County staff can assist.
- Engage in conversations aimed at setting up the “next phase” of countywide transportation.
- Invite other stakeholders (Senior Centers, SWMPC, SLC, Municipalities, Service Agencies, Non-Emergency Medical Providers, etc.) to attend meetings and/or present.

Governance: Given their level of involvement up to this point, what will be the role of SWMPC and SLC?

- County staff met with both groups this week and they are both in support of the County moving ahead.
- SWMPC will assist in providing technical planning assistance to County staff and the BCATC.
- SLC will continue to provide marketing/outreach.
- Both groups will be invited to attend BCATC meetings.

Questions?