

The Board of Huron County Commissioners met this date in Special Session. Roll being called found the following members present: Terry Boose, Harry Brady and Bruce Wilde.

The following were also in attendance: Vickie Ziemba, Administrator/Clerk

At 9:05 a.m. the board recessed to travel to Tiffin for the Seneca/Crawford Area Transit (SCAT) board meeting.

At 10:04 a.m. the board resumed special session

The SCAT board meeting was called to order and it was stated a quorum was present. Board members and guests introduced themselves: Mary Habig, SCAT Executive Director; Mary Hay, President of the Board; Harry Brady, Huron County Commissioner, Terry Boose, Huron County Commissioner; Vickie Ziemba, Huron County Administrator/Clerk; Amy Preble, Board member; Bob Boes, Board member; Sharon George, 2nd Vice President; Doug Weisenauer, Crawford County Commissioner and Board member; Jim Oliver, Mobility Management Coordinator, GLCAP; Carol Iannantuono, Board member; Bruce Wilde, Huron County Commissioner; Denise Manning, Board member; Dave Shelton, 1st Vice President; Ron Davidson, SCAT Safety Manager.

Ms. Hay noted there was no one present for public comment.

Ms. Habig explained their board has given the green light to keep investigating what they want to do with Huron County. It sounded like the Commissioners had a lot of questions and had a lot of things they wanted to do. The purpose of this meeting was to see if they would like SCAT to provide transportation services for them. Ms. Habig thought the SCAT board was comfortable with proceeding forward, but wanted to meet with Huron County to see what questions they may have. She had talked to ODOT Tuesday and they have given their blessing and encouragement to proceed. She thought ODOT would like to see public transit and Senior Services separated to make sure everyone in the general public was getting what they need.

Ms. Habig noted Huron County had their Technical Assistance Review, or TAR, in 2022 and they passed with flying colors. The only issue was vehicle maintenance. She said Mr. Davidson was an expert at that and could get them in compliance. ODOT said it was a very clean audit, nothing jumped out at them. SCAT also had theirs in 2022 so that makes things perfect for timing. She stated that for the TAR, ODOT goes into everything with a microscope, including financials, payroll, vehicle maintenance, policies, everything. She thought Huron County had done an amazing job with their TAR and she appreciated that.

Mr. Wilde asked about the state wanting to have the Seniors and the county split. Ms. Habig said there are two funding sources – 5310 and 5311. The state wants them to operate separately. Mr. Weisenauer said that was the process they had to undergo when they made the change. Their Council of Aging had both 5310 and 5311; they had to split. There were some growing pains. He said they had to re-designate SCAT as the recipient for 5311. Then 5310 was designated to Council of Aging. There were some board members of Council of Aging, and some of the public as well, that didn't understand why Council of Aging couldn't do it all. Mr. Weisenauer said it was due to the different types of transportation and Council of the Aging had too many denials. The state looked at that and they had to make the change and designate SCAT as their public transportation.

Mr. Brady asked Mr. Weisenauer about separating. He said right now Huron County Transit is operated by Services for the Aging. But they also operate Senior Express. There are some buses that are theirs that say "Senior Express". Some buses that are theirs, but ours, that say "Huron County Transit". Services for the Aging is actually operating two different types because of the revenue stream. He asked Mr. Weisenauer if Crawford was doing that, or if they were operating just as a transit without designation of buses being one or the other. Mr. Weisenauer said the buses were all identical and Council of Aging handled both grants. Mr. Wilde asked if their seniors fell under SCAT now. Mr. Weisenauer said no. Ms. Habig explained that since SCAT's main quarters are in Seneca County, that allows Crawford County to receive 5310 operating funding. You can't have both funding in the same county. But because it is a satellite, it is permitted. Seneca County's Council of Aging can never receive 5310 funding because SCAT receives 5311. Mr. Weisenauer asked how Huron was getting both 5310 and 5311. Ms. Habig did not know how that was happening and thought it would eventually throw a red flag. Mr. Oliver said the big difference is Crawford gets 5310 operational funding. Huron does not. They get the 5310 funding, but not the operational funding. Ms. Habig said now they will be able to receive the operational funding.

Mr. Boose wanted to let the SCAT board know that the reason we started looking was because, other than Mr. Vasquez, we don't have anybody specializing in transportation. We don't have anybody that knows how to get the grants. Huron County Transportation was started when he was a commissioner back in the late 1990's or early 2000's. Sometime over the years it was given to Senior Services. Senior Services does an excellent job with senior services issues, but they really don't know a lot about transportation. Mr. Boose said we are lacking what SCAT has - the knowledge of transportation. Mr. Weisenauer said when Seneca County took

over the 5311 their trip denials pretty much went away. They have had a lot of positive feedback from the community.

Mr. Brady said we have just purchased a building with two pole barns that will house vehicles. We have property and we have office space for transportation already. We have vehicles that ODOT said can be used on the Huron County Transit side. Board of DD is giving us another bus but we are waiting to take possession of it until we know how to title it. We officially started a transportation department and we have money to help do some things. We are not coming into this empty handed.

Ms. Habig asked if Huron County was looking for a short-term fix, because re-designation letters were typically for three years. She thought Huron County would see changes right away; she will be as transparent as humanly possible. She said SCAT had just received an electric vehicle grant, or EV grant. They asked for \$2M. They received \$3.5M. It is 100%, no local match required. This opens up other grants that are out there from other agencies. SCAT will be EV-capable and they are putting buses in Galion, Bucyrus, Fostoria & Tiffin. If there is enough money, and if they are allowed, she would love to put one in Willard & Norwalk. That opens up those counties and cities for more funding in the future.

Mr. Brady said Services for Aging currently has the grant, they are the designee. The commissioners have made a commitment to not take that funding from them until December 31. He was concerned about their funding and asked, if we were to go forward with this, what kind of timeframe were they looking at? Ms. Habig said she talked to ODOT, they would like for it to be the first of the year. But she would have to start to get things going now. They are in the middle of a year change. Next year there will be a six-month period where ODOT will look to see how much they spent. She asked ODOT about taking on Huron County and they said to let them know, they would make it whole. Ms. Habig said that Huron County for sure won't end in the red. She is presently working on the grant for July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. ODOT wants her to include Huron County based on the outcome from today's meeting. The grant is due September 11.

There was a question about Huron County's staffing. Mr. Brady explained we have Steve Beal, Director of Senior Services/Huron County Transit. Carlos Vasquez, Operations Manager. There is a bookkeeper who is part time. All the employees split their time between Services and Transit. He wasn't sure how many drivers we have. Mr. Vasquez has indicated he is fairly sure all of the drivers would come over if he were still the Operations Manager. Ms. Habig said the drivers for Huron County make \$10.10/hour – she already checked. SCAT starts their drivers out at \$13.75, so they will get a pay increase.

There was a question as to whether Huron County had a five-year plan for their transportation. Mr. Brady said they were looking for a long-term solution. He thought it was in the best interest of Huron County to become a part of SCAT. They want to keep some control, so he thought having a seat on their board was the best option.

Ms. Habig mentioned that Mr. Brady had said that they were leaving funding until the end of the year. She asked if that was for Services for Aging, for transportation or both? Mr. Brady said that was both. The funding was for transit, Services for Aging is operating transit, so if we pulled funding they would be in a world of hurt. Mr. Boose said Senior Services pretty much knows everything we are doing, they have been a part of it. We want to make this as smooth a transition as possible. Mr. Weisenauer said their Council of Aging was concerned when they took the 5311 away from them. But they get more funding now than they had before. It has been a world of difference. Mr. Boose asked him if their board would be willing to talk to our Senior Services board. Ms. Habig said they now have mobility managers. Mr. Oliver was the mobility manager and she thought he could piece the pieces together. Mr. Oliver said he would have a discussion with the stakeholders about 5311 funding and the different levels. Ms. Habig said he could explain to the stakeholders what to expect and what we can do. She clarified they were partnering with Huron County – they are not taking it over.

There was a question as to how big Huron County's current transportation budget was. Mr. Brady said we don't operate it. We are trying to take back the ability to be involved in it. Mr. Boose said we don't even have a separate board that he was aware of. Ms. Habig said they have a TAC/Advisory board. Mr. Brady explained the county placed \$100,000 into a transportation budget. We have been paying Transit 911 from that, but we do have some funds for transportation. Mr. Boose said we have been giving some money to transportation every year. Every now and then it will get close to the end of the year and they may need \$25,000 or so to get through the end of the year. It is never big amounts. We give it to them to keep them running. But we do also have money set aside for this transition. Ms. Habig said they have contracts that keep them going. Mr. Boose said all of our stakeholders are looking for those contracts. Ms. Habig said they all work with Mr. Oliver to find out what those are. She said Crawford County more than pays for itself with their contracts.

One of the board members asked Ms. Habig what impact adding Huron County would have on her staff's ability to provide services in Seneca or Crawford County, and what impact it would have on her resources.

Ms. Habig acknowledged it would be a lot of work, especially the first year. But she thought they had a strong enough team she was not concerned. They have drivers in Crawford County that already said they are willing to drive in Huron if we need them. We have drivers in Seneca County that go to Huron County already. Both counties have offered, if you need help let us know. The possibility of adding Huron County has been mentioned at safety meetings and they are all excited. There was never a negative comment. On the financial end there is funding available. Ms. Habig thought they might have to help us the first year, year and a half, but she thought with the grant knowledge she has the local match will come. That is always the biggest fear, your local match. She thought there were probably contracts that have not been tapped into. Ms. Habig expected to increase hours, so we don't have to have public meetings. Public meetings are only necessary when you take away hours. She thought the infrastructure was there and she would be able to make it better suited for public transit.

Mr. Brady said he went to Columbus last October and talked to ODOT. ODOT was thrilled to know we had set aside money for transit. ODOT has money available and Huron County has the necessary funds for a match. As a commissioner board they are very committed to servicing the needs of the county as far as transportation.

There was discussion regarding the name SCAT and how it could be changed if Huron County were included. Ms. Habig stated there is new grant funding coming out for rebranding. It is 100%, no local match. But she didn't know when it would be released. Currently their fixed routes are branded as Shelton Shuttles – Seneca/Crawford Shelton Shuttle.

Ms. Ziemba wanted to know if there would be a local office/local hub where they would staff administration. Ms. Habig said there would be a satellite office. Ms. Ziemba asked how the finances would be handled. Ms. Habig said all deposits could be deposited at a local bank in Huron County. All bill paying would be done through the Seneca County office. Dispatching and all that will be done in Huron County. Ms. Habig said they had a meeting in Columbus recently to discuss software. The software ODOT recommended is the one Huron County is already using. So, dispatch could be handled from Seneca County if it became necessary. SCAT will also upgrade Huron County's software to include cameras and panic buttons for the drivers.

Ms. Ziemba asked if the staff were county employees, or if are they were SCAT employees. Ms. Habig said they are nonprofit. She asked if our transit employees were county employees now. Ms. Ziemba said they were not. Ms. Habig stated they will stay nonprofit. Ms. Ziemba confirmed they would fall under SCAT for payroll. Ms. Habig said they would.

After discussion it was decided the next step would need to be the approval of the board of directors, followed by the approval of the Huron County Commissioners.

A motion and second was made by SCAT board members to expand SCAT service into Huron County. A roll call vote was conducted. The motion passed unanimously.

Bruce Wilde moved to have SCAT move into Huron County and handle public transportation. Terry Boose seconded the motion

****Discussion: Mr. Boose said we appreciate this opportunity and we don't take this lightly. The fact that they are allowing us to join them is a real privilege for us. Mr. Wilde thought everyone had been very supportive all the way around.***

The roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows.

***Aye – Terry Boose
Aye – Harry Brady
Aye – Bruce Wilde***

At 10:55 a.m. the board recessed to return to Huron County

At 12:00 p.m. the board resumed special session

At 12:00 p.m. Bruce Wilde moved to adjourn. Terry Boose seconded the motion. The meeting stood adjourned.

IN THE MATTER OF CERTIFICATION

The Clerk to the Board does hereby attest that the foregoing is a true and correct record of all actions taken by the Board of Huron County Commissioners on August 4, 2023.

IN THE MATTER OF ADJOURNING

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting

SPECIAL SESSION

FRIDAY

AUGUST 4, 2023

was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Signatures on File