

**COLUMBIA/BOONE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**January 8, 2015**

The Columbia/Boone County Board of Health met for a regularly scheduled meeting at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, January 8, 2015. The meeting was held at the Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services, 1005 W. Worley St. Public Health & Human Services Director, Stephanie Browning, and Assistant Director, Scott Clardy, represented the staff. Senior Administrative Support Assistant, Brittany Klusman, recorded the minutes of the meeting.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Dr. Michael Szewczyk  
Jean Sax  
Lynelle Phillips  
Dr. Colin Malaker  
Dr. Beth Hussey  
David Sohl  
Cynthia Boley  
Denise Stillson  
Mahree Skala  
Harry Feirman  
Dr. Sally Beth Lyon

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

**MEMBERS NOT  
EXCUSED**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Dr. Michael Szewczyk called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Dr. Szewczyk noted that he added the school lunch program presentation to the agenda. The Board initially thought they would be hearing two different presentations regarding Transit; however, there was only one speaker.

Dr. Szewczyk also mentioned the Board has a new member from the county, Ms. Janet Thompson. Ms. Thompson introduced herself as the new Northern District Boone County Commissioner. She has lived in Boone County since 1959. She explained that she is a lawyer by trade, was a public defender for twenty-five years and has been on the commission for two years. It was clarified that she has replaced Karen Miller.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Sohl made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Dr. Hussey seconded, and the motion passed.

## **GUEST SPEAKERS**

### **Drew Brooks – Update on Transit Changes**

Mr. Brooks explained that he is the Multi-Modal Manager for the City of Columbia; multi-modal meaning multiple modes of transportation. He is in charge of the Transit Department and the Columbia Airport. He went into some details of the crisis mode that Transit experienced in 2012 due to budgeting issues. The Department had to restructure during that time. They spent a couple of years redesigning the bus system, receiving a lot of public input as they did so. He explained that City Council had voted to raise fares in 2012 and since then, ridership has steadily declined. He also explained that at that time, some changes were made which affected student ridership. The Tiger Line routes are the University Shuttle system that Transit operates. They have a contract with the University who pays one hundred percent of the cost. He went over ridership data from September to November 2014 compared to 2013. A couple of things that affects this comparison are how different the 2014 routes are compared to 2013, and also their counting methods are completely different. Mr. Brooks explained they now have automatic counters on the bus doors so it helps their data be more accurate. In 2013, the bus drivers were doing head counts. He then proceeded to discuss the new routes.

Mr. Brooks explained that Transit did a customer survey from November to December 2014 and received 433 surveys. He explained 345 of those were the paper form and were completed on the busses. The other eighty-eight were completed online. He went over some of the questions and results from this survey. When asked how satisfied customers were with the system, sixty-eight percent fell into the satisfied category. He clarified that they did not do the survey on the Tiger Line routes. He explained that the vast majority of complaints have been related to the timing of the busses, mainly the Gold route. This route stops at Rollins and Hitt Street and can't stay on time when classes are in session. The pedestrian and automobile traffic in that area causes the bus to sit for too long resulting in it being behind schedule and not able to connect with any other bus. To fix this problem, the stop is being moved to University and College, which is about fifteen hundred feet away from the current stop. Mr. Brooks explained that this was approved through City Council. The change will be made sometime in February. There is already a bench at that location and a shelter will be added as well. This will help eliminate roughly seventy-five percent of the complaints about this route being late. Mr. Brooks went over the data on how many people get onto specific routes per day. He explained that this data helps them decide where to put bus shelters and benches. Additionally, this information will help them decide where to place routes if changes to a route increased or decreased ridership. Forty-seven percent of the stops have five riders or less per day, which is not a good percentage to have.

Last spring semester, Transit had a group of students help design a new shelter. They voted on the shelters and Mr. Brooks went over some details of the winning design. The total cost is roughly eleven thousand dollars per shelter, which he explained is not radically out of line with what has been spent on the older shelters. The variable for the price is the site work and concrete. Theoretically, Transit would like to get twenty to thirty shelters on the street this year, but it will be dependent upon how much the site work will cost at each location. Mr. Brooks explained the ultimate goal is to have forty shelter locations. They currently have nine shelters that need to be relocated and hope to get another thirty more on the street throughout 2015. Funding is coming from two capital grants from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), almost \$400,000 in grant money. Transit has to match that at twenty percent so the total amount is \$470,000.

Mr. Brooks explained that there are eleven locations that have an immediate need for a shelter. He went over their timeline for the new shelters to be placed through 2016. A local artist's work will be on the shelters to try to minimize vandalism. He touched on how they want to put shelters in places where there is going to be sidewalk improvements. Mr. Brooks explained that there are many places in Columbia that do not have sidewalks. Transit does not want to put shelters and benches at locations where there are no sidewalks.

Mr. Brooks went over some other programs that Transit is doing to increase ridership. Youth Ride Free program was started in September 2014 and allows any student eighteen and younger to ride for free all year round. He clarified that this is for Columbia Public School students and not college students. Park and

Ride program is for anyone who buys a parking permit to a City lot or a City garage. These individuals also receive a free transit pass. He mentioned that this program has not been as successful as they were hoping. City Council has approved Transit to hire a planning consultant to analyze their current transit system. This consultant will look at expanding services and go over their current funding. Mr. Brooks explained that currently, compared to other cities Columbia's size, Columbia is underfunded on the state level. Currently, Columbia receives \$20,000 from the State of Missouri. A city comparable to Columbia would be receiving between three to four hundred thousand dollars from the state. Transit will be having a Request for Proposal (RFP) go out within the next few months to hire the consultant. Mr. Brooks estimates this will be a twelve to eighteen month process for the consultant to build a transit master plan and develop a better funding model.

It was clarified that Transit's competition is the private shuttles that are provided by the apartment complexes. There was a discussion of how complex the new system is for the low income and low educated riders to understand as well as the lack of bus shelters at the connecting stops are a burden. Mr. Brooks said they have to be careful about where they put these shelters. Shelters do require the pouring of concrete. Since there is a possibility that the consultant may say the shelters need to be moved, Transit does not want to be pouring several pads of concrete that they may need to remove after the consultant's report. He explained that the old system was a lot simpler, but didn't allow for the buses to travel too far out because they had to all meet at the Wabash Bus Station downtown in order to transfer riders. If one bus was late arriving at the station, then they all were late leaving the station. With this new system, the outlining areas are now getting service, but not the best service. Mr. Brooks touched on some of the problems with the current system. He said their budget is a big problem and also the city being roughly sixty-six square miles but only having a population of 117,000 thousand creates a low population density. Basically, the population being spread out that much makes it hard to reach everyone that is in need with the current budget they have. This is why transit experts are being brought in to give them advice on how to fix their system or change it all together.

Mr. Brooks explained the number one complaint is the hours of service, and the second biggest complaint is no Sunday service. The only problem with the hours is not having enough money to run all the time. There was a discussion about the safety of the stop along Providence at Green Meadows and what types of solutions there could be. Mr. Brooks explained that this is a perfect example of problems caused by not having sidewalks and/or curbside. Mr. Brooks added that Providence is a State road, so the City does not maintain it, but they can look at some different options when the routes are reanalyzed.

### **Laina Fullum – Columbia Public Schools Lunch Program**

Ms. Fullum is the Director of Nutrition Services for Columbia Public Schools. The Nutrition Services' revenue is being out paced by their expenses. She explained her department is self-supporting. The general revenue of Columbia Public Schools does not contribute to their funding. Their funding comes from local and federal funding. The local funding is a child paying the full price of the meal. The federal funding pays for a free meal, part of a reduced-priced meal, and a small amount per regular meal sold. The rest of the cost is made up by what the students pay. Her biggest fear is they will eventually have to pull funding from the general revenue account, resulting in less funding going to actual education of the students.

The new federal regulations are affecting them greatly. The reality is healthier foods cost more and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) mandates have not been properly funded. The USDA gave them an additional six cents per lunch meal, which does not cover breakfast. Ms. Fullum went over some doubts about the required sodium level, which makes it harder to maintain any flavor. She explained that one of their biggest problems is trying to get the kids to eat the meal. She touched on some of the other mandates that are required. Overall, the color, texture, and flavor are all very different than what most students are getting at home. The cost of the food is outweighing their revenue. Meeting the students' preferences has been a challenge and the students are eating a lot less, and choosing to bring their own lunch. They are roughly serving a 100,000 less lunch meals. At the high school level, a lot of kids are choosing not to eat at all. She explained that raising the meal prices wouldn't keep up with the cost of the meals at this point.

Ms. Fullum explained that two years ago her department decided to deal directly with parents about unpaid balances and still allow the kids to eat while working on collecting the money. They did not want to punish the students when the parents are unable to pay the bill. Unfortunately, this causes a large deficiency in their budget since the parents are not able to pay. That unpaid balance is up to eighty thousand dollars from the last 1.5 years. Their efforts to get students signed up for the free and reduced lunches have been increased. She said the home school educators have helped out in that regard as well. Additionally, staffing cost has gone up due to the city expanding and Battle High opening. Overall, they are not producing more meals, but the labor has increased due to the staffing demands. Therefore, they have added labor but did not add any new revenue, so they are continuing to lose money. They also value their staff and tried to make their wages and benefits competitive to attract good people to be around the students. Fortunately, Ms. Fullum's department had a \$2,800,000 surplus which is helping to supplement their current deficit. She explained that the number of kids that are eating with them has had a slight increase. She went over some changes they have implemented to save money. This includes looking at food wastage by staff and other ways they are spending that can be reduced. There are three regional kitchens set up for Kindergarten through eighth grade with skilled chiefs to cook all meals. This helps to maintain the quality of the food and cuts down on the amount of food ordered and wasted. Furthermore, Ms. Fullum explained that the new regulations caused them to have to update their infrastructure and equipment in addition to the more expensive food.

Ms. Fullum said finding out where their money is going has helped their Department tremendously. She feels future federal initiatives need to be piloted, and be implemented slower. Also, the USDA has to adequately fund these mandates. The Board of Health agreed to send a letter to the USDA regarding these issues. She explained there are still some inefficiencies that her Department are working on and will continue to make changes to improve the situation.

## **REPORTS**

### Director's Report

Ms. Browning reported that the Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program was awarded the gold level award from Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services for being a "Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite".

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### Status of citizen's petition on Tobacco21 and e-cigarettes

Dr. Szewczyk noted that the petition drive did not collect enough signatures. Ms. Skala mentioned that they have given up on appealing the ordinance and now are trying to get enough people to sign a petition to get the issue on the ballot. Mr. Clardy wanted to clarify that the ordinance states you have to be twenty-one to purchase tobacco products, not to sell tobacco products.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### Elections – Chair and Vice Chair

The Board was unanimous that Dr. Szewczyk stay as the Chair and Ms. Skala stay as the Vice Chair.

## **ADJOURN**

There being no additional business, Dr. Hussey made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Stillson seconded and the motion carried.