



**Partners' and Stakeholders' Meeting
May 10, 2017 Minutes**

Stakeholders Present

Rina Bale
Willie Barber
Virginia Belew
Michael Black
Beth Carrell
Soeli Erazo
Karen Faulkner
Eric Garcia
Isaac Garnett
Alfredo Gonzales
Deanne Hamilton
Marilyn Hancock
Audriana Hartwig
Patricia Hogan
BJ Jones
Blanca Loya
Shari Rambo
Gabriela Reyes
Regina Swafford
Sunshine Thompson
LeAnne Thornton
Sohnna Williams
Blas Zenteno

Organization Representing

Permian Basin MPO
MOUTD Board Member/Citizen Advocate
Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission
Permian Basin Community Centers for MHMR
Texas Workforce Commission – Vocational Rehabilitation Services
2-1-1 Texas
West Texas Opportunities, Inc.
TxDOT – Lubbock/Odessa District
City of Midland – Community Development
TxDOT – Odessa District
TxDOT – Odessa District
ABLE Center
ABLE Center
Experience Works
Experience Works
2-1-1 Texas
West Texas VA
Midland County Sheriff's Office – Crisis Intervention Unit
Aging & Disability Resource Center
Ector County Veterans Service Office
Midland Vet Center
Aging & Disability Resource Center
First Care

AGENDA ITEM

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting of the Regionally Coordinated Transportation Planning committee was called to order at 11:35 a.m. by Rina Bale.

2. Public Comment & Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves.

Willie Barber commented publicly regarding the Midland Odessa Urban Transit District's Transit Advisory Committee (TAC). Applications were disseminated to the committee for anyone interested in applying. The TAC meeting quarterly to discuss transit projects, needs, concerns, and how to improve the system. This committee needs to be revitalized to advise the MOUTD Board of improvements needed in the current urban transit system.

3. Review/Approve April 12, 2017 Minutes

A motion was made by Karen Faulkner and seconded by Gabriela Reyes to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2017 RCTP meeting as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Presentation by Ector County Veterans' Services

Sunshine Thompson presented to the Committee the services offered by the Ector County Veterans' Services office (ECVSO). The ECVSO assists with many Veteran-related issues but largely helps Veterans apply for compensation for disabilities caused or aggravated by their military service. Sunshine explained some of the forms used as required by the Veterans' Administration. The ECVSO will also assist with healthcare forms to enroll in VA programs. Information regarding service members' family members' rights and obligations was also shared. Usually veterans inquiring about education benefits/GI Bill are referred to the local colleges/university. When veterans are applying for a VA loan, a letter of eligibility can be obtained from Sunshine. While there is no official "Veteran" card, it can be put on one's driver's license through a request from the DPS office.

Rina explained to the committee that she, Sunshine, LeAnne, and Shari are all members of the Permian Basin Military Partners' Coalition and welcomed anyone interested to join. The meetings are held in the MPO conference room the third Wednesday of each month at 9am.

5. Open Agency Discussion

2-1-1 Texas:

Soeli Erazo – 2-1-1 is an information and referral agency through the Texas Workforce Commission. 2-1-1 also advocates, follows-up with crisis calls, uses a language line with over 90 languages, transfers calls directly to the Health and Human Services Commission to those requesting services offered through them. Employees take disaster preparedness classes and complete drills for emergency scenarios. Currently there are 258 agencies within the database providing over 1,000 resources.

ABLE Center:

Audriana Hartwig – Mobility Manager who assists clients in transportation training using the EZ-Rider transit system. At least 15 individuals have applied for Paratransit service or completed training for the fixed routes. Also does ILS services for the Texas Department of Health and Human Services' Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

Marilyn Hancock – Director of ABLE Center which provides independent living services. Also provides computer classes including the use of assistive technology for individuals having disabilities that affect their ability to use standard technology equipment. Low-income clients are provided a refurbished computer to keep. Working with Advocacy Inc. to get Landmark Apts., which houses individuals with disabilities, to install wheelchair ramps.

City of Midland Community Development:

Isaac Garnett – Operates and manages all HUD Entitlement Funds, around \$700,000 per year. Provide sub-recipient grants, infrastructure projects, sidewalk/street improvements, home repairs for low/moderate income.

Experience Works:

Patricia Hogan – Assist in placing clients with host agency for elderly clients to gain skills to qualify for higher paying jobs. Always searching for participants. Will pay for training through local colleges as well.

FirstCare:

Blas Zenteno – FirstCare is a Medicaid Plan chosen by the individuals on Medicaid. Works with migrant works and kids on the Texas Health Steps program. Serves 17 counties.

Midland County Sheriff's Office Crisis Intervention Unit (CIU):

Gabriella Reyes – Currently have two vans to provide emergency transportation provided at the request of officers. Also help agencies provide transportation assistance to clients. Main responsibility is Victim Assistance which includes helping with paperwork for Victims' Compensation. Next volunteer class will be in September.

Midland Odessa Urban Transit District (MOUD)/EZ-Rider:

Willie Barber – EZ-Rider is in the process of getting approved by the Board to improve the transfer centers in both cities. This may include benches with shelters and selling bottled water. The proceeds from the water would go toward events to show appreciation to the drivers. These ideas came from the Transit Advisory Committee(TAC) described during the Public Comment Period. Willie also gave everyone in attendance a day pass to experience the EZ-Rider system. The TAC committee meets quarterly at the EZ-Rider Administration Building; EZ-Rider will provide free rides to anyone attending the meeting.

Midland Vet Center:

LeAnne Thornton – Provides Readjustment Counseling for combat Veterans and their families. Primarily involved with counseling services for PTSD, TBI, Family, Marital, and MST. LeAnne's role is Outreach to inform community about services provided.

Success stories: A veteran was put into Hospice but had no family. LeAnne gathered a group of veterans and found a funeral home who provided free services to give this deserving individual a hero's burial. Another veteran was entered into a contest for a new roof by LeAnne and won. A veteran in Hobbs who has lost his sight will have his home accommodated to meet his needs. The Mobile Vet Center travels to 28 different counties and Hobbs, NM to find veterans to inform them of services available. Also stays involved in the area Homeless Coalitions. Referred to several events on the calendar.

Permian Basin Community Centers (PBCC):

Michael Black – PBCC serves Midland, Odessa, Ft. Stockton, Alpine, Marfa, Presidio, Van Horn, Monahans, and Dell City. Provide services including ECI, substance abuse, impatient through Turning Point, mental health, IDD, veteran, Basin Assistance services for Ector County residents diagnosed with AIDS, peer support & advocacy, and Bridges Behavioral Health. Michael's expertise is within the Intellectual Development Disability (IDD) program which includes employment services, group homes, foster care programs, day programs, and post-home health care.

Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission (PBRPC):

Virginia Belew – The PBRPC offers many services including the Area Agency on Aging as well as counseling on Medicare and social security benefits. Ombudsman services for those in nursing homes to ensure requirements are being met. Provide assistance including utility bills, live alert

systems. The 9-1-1 services for area counties is also through the PBRPC. The Homeland Security department is also through the PBRPC.

Regional Services Department operates the EDA program which has been solicited to receive funds for the Comprehensive Transit Study being sought by this committee. This department could possibly be eliminated under the Trump Administration so the funding is currently on hold until these political decisions are made. The PBRPC also participates in environmental programs and has a police academy to train officers.

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Public Transportation Coordinators (PTC):

Alfredo Gonzales – PTC for the West Region. Primarily manage/oversee public transportation program grants including Section 5304, which is the one used for this Regionally Coordinated Transportation Planning (RCTP) committee. Passed in 2007, HB 3588 mandated that regions begin greater coordination efforts between federal, state, and transit entities to streamline public transportation services. Numerous projects including communications infrastructure, six major facilities infrastructure, and fleet vehicles were made possible through the coordinating efforts/partnerships of the RCTP member agencies.

Eric Garcia – TxDOT will give a presentation at the June meeting.

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Vocational Rehabilitation Services:

Beth Carrell – Formerly known as DARS working with anyone 15 years and older wanting to gain employment. This includes assistive devices like prosthetics, hearing aids, etc.

West Texas Aging and Disability Resource Center:

Sohnna Williams – Referral services to those with disabilities who call-in requesting specific services. The ADRC does not provide the actual services but refers individuals to agencies that can assist with their particular request. Serves 17 counties. Also, advocates for affordable and accessible housing in the area.

West Texas Opportunities, Inc. (WTO):

Karen Faulkner – WTO provide rural transportation services throughout 22 counties – 17 directly ran by WTO and 5 counties which Big Bend Community Action Committee (BBCAC) operates. Also provides Medicaid transportation in 15 counties and participates in the Highly Rural Veterans' Transportation Program which provides free transportation to medical appointments for Veterans' from 8 counties in the Permian Basin and the 5 counties in the Big Bend region. All transportation is door-to-door, demand-response.

West Texas VA:

Sharon Rambo – Transition and Care Management program for combat Veterans and those with complex care needs. Assists in finding appropriate department for Veterans' needs. Those whom receive case management are transitioning from military to civilian life, from military treatment facilities, relocating, etc. Also, coordinates medical services for those with TBI.

6. Future Discussions & Calendar Events

Next meeting is Wednesday, June 14, 2017 at 11:30 a.m.

7. Adjourn

A motion was made by Michael Black and seconded by Isaac Garnett to adjourn at 1:20 p.m.