



Audit and Finance Committee Minutes

September 25, 2024 3:30 PM

IUC, Room 117, 17221 E. 23rd St. S., Independence, MO 64057

CALL TO ORDER

1. Present
2. Absent
3. Additional Attendees
4. Approval of Minutes - August 7, 2024

OLD BUSINESS

1. Independence Communications Center Review

Update to preliminary discussion was presented by Andrew Frazier, a few additions were made and requested data was included. Routing, new technology, emergency/non-emergency calls and dispatching data were discussed.

2. 2023 - 2024 Year End Financial Presentation

Megan Borth reported nothing new to report, time given to ask questions/make comments. Nothing has changed from last report, looking good, gearing up for audit will get audit around December. CM Fears-thought on monthly financial reports, being given at Audit & Finance but the rest of Council does not receive. When month is closed out request that all of Council receive by email so can be reviewed in greater

detail. Megan Borth will handle.

NEW BUSINESS

1. 2025 Independence Transit Proposal

Proposal presentation overview given for transit going forward by Tom Scannell, Director of Community Development. As discussed in the budget process over the past several years, transit costs have been going up and revenues and federal funding has not kept up with the costs associated with transit. Current Independence Transit Services provided: Fixed route intra city (First Transit) meet at transit center across from City Hall; Fixed route inter city service bus that operates by KCATA and goes between Independence and downtown KC MO; we offer both inter city ADA (operates between the city limits of Independence and goes into KC MO) and intra city ADA just operates within the city limits of Independence; also have intra city Non-ADA which is the senior paratransit (qualify by age); all services are operated six days a week, Monday-Saturday; ADA and Non-ADA Paratransit is door to door service. City has provided transit service since the 1970's. When first offered, Federal Transit Funds paid a significant majority of the costs associated. Over the years, it has flipped and the City's General Fund has had to cover a significant portion of transit costs, looking for cost effective ways to provide transit to residents. Transit funding challenges, funding sources and deadlines were discussed. Transit Service Analysis was discussed, including IRIS. Orange/Yellow serves the northern third of Independence. Headway is the time it takes the bus to make one trip, currently operates on one hour. Four scenarios within our budgeted amount were considered to form an RFP which was released in May and closed in June; there was a great deal of interest in pre-bid meeting from many transit operators; however, only one response received, First Transit. The costs proposed were 2-3 times higher than KCATA estimates; all scenarios, costs were higher than the current service; significant reduction but costs going up; staff looked for ways to trim costs to get most out of budgeted funds; discussed with First Transit ways to work through costs; First Transit came back with proposal higher than having paratransit separate from fixed route; Three options presented: 1) 24 Route along with Complementary Paratransit within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile and IRIS Citywide (lowest cost option), 2) 24 Route, Citywide Paratransit and IRIS, 3) 24 Route, First Transit Fixed Route and Paratransit and IRIS Staff Recommendation is 24 Route with Citywide Paratransit and IRIS to get costs within budgeted amounts; it was noted by the City Manager that some peer cities have dropped services altogether due to price increases as compared to users that are utilizing that service, so not unique to Independence; those cities that have paratransit (i.e. OATS bus services) are still sustaining those but their version of the 24 route that would connect their community to some portion of KC MO, they have dropped that service; the City Managers of EJC meet monthly and have engaged MARC and their transportation division to really take a look region wide at where are riders trying to get to, looking to get data driven insights to pool our limited resources on how to address some of these needs; some cities that did drop service did switch to IRIS;

annual fixed route ridership varies from 218,000, 220,000 to 230,000, Pre-COVID annual ridership was 270,000-290,000 COVID significantly reduced ridership however over the last few years ridership is getting back to Pre-COVID numbers; Currently there is no fares, some funding were to do \$0 fares; fare prior to COVID was \$1.50/full fare with reduced fare was \$.75, paratransit before COVID paid \$3/trip, this scenario would reintroduce \$3/trip and \$5/trip for IRIS; on first scenario, in order for it to be a complimentary paratransit trip in the eyes of FTA, a trip must start within ¾ mile of a fixed route (24 Route) and end within ¾ mile within that route so there is that ¾ mile buffer around that route, so if you start your trip there and end your trip there, it's considered a complimentary paratransit trip which would then be a free fare trip under today's rules. Further discussion held. Discussion on presentation to Council discussed.

2. Schedule Next Meeting

- Wednesday, November 20, 2024 at 3:30 PM

3. Next projects for Management Analyst

NEXT PROJECTS FOR MANAGEMENT ANALYST

- Animal Control-second top priority
- Work Comp/Safety
- Santa Cali Gon
- Utility Billing-top priority
- Rental Ready
- Currently working on Enterprise Funds with Municipal Services

PROJECT FOR CITY MANAGER (CM PERKINS)

- Put something a little more formal on what the lobbyist work would entail from Washington and some of the costs and the benefits for that and what we would possibly be leaving on the table. City Manager can have for the November 20th meeting to share with group.

ADJOURNMENT