**BERRIEN COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

**(BERRIEN BUS)**

**LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE-MINUTES**

Wednesday, May 22, 2024

Berrien County Building 701 Main St. St. Joseph, MI

**Members Present:**

Mark Johnson, Chair

Hanna Lei-Sam, Michigan DHHS

Maureen Adams, Berrien County Veterans Services

Cindy Gray, Disability Network of SW Michigan

Amanda Drew, Region IV Area Agency on Aging

**Members Absent:**

Yvonne Olam

**Vacant:**

One Member

**Staff Present:**

Paul Gillespie, Berrien Bus Transportation Supervisor

1. **Call to Order** Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM
2. **Approval of Minutes of Meeting of January 10, 2024** Motion to approve minutes by Gray, seconded by Adams. **Motion passes with all in favor.**
3. **Introduction of New Member** Amanda Drew introduced as a new member representing the Region IV Area Agency on Aging.
4. **Six Month Review of Berrien Bus Operations** Gillespie gave an overview of the last six months of Berrien Bus operations including ridership, initiatives, and procurements.
5. **Discussion of 2020 Urbanized Area Census Map** Gillespie discussed the new census map of the three urbanized areas of Benton Harbor-St. Joseph-Lincoln, Michigan City, and South Bend-Niles. The TCATA UZA has been extended along the lakeshore both north and south. The Michigan City UZA has been extended north. The South Bend UZA no longer includes Buchanan. All of these changes affect Berrien Bus. It makes the problem of the “urbanized area without service” of TCATA even worse. If no changes are made to how public transit is structured, these changes will disenfranchise thousands more people making public transit unavailable to them. Members discussed the desirability of initiating talks to consider restructuring public transit in the County.
6. **Discussion of HIPAA and Public Transit** Gillespie discussed the issue of HIPAA and how it relates to public transit. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 is a law that protects the privacy and security of patient health information. An issue has come up between Berrien Bus and Cass County Transit and other transit agencies, and the Area Agency on Aging as to whether or not public transit agencies meet the definition of “Business Associate” under the law, which would require transit agencies to treat the names and addresses of passengers as confidential health information. Gillespie stated that discussions with AAA and Berrien and Cass County were ongoing in the hopes of resolving the issue.
7. **Public/Member Comments** No public or member comments were made.
8. **Adjournment** Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 11:05 AM.