

Item 24-0774: Approve Proposed Valley Transit Evening & Saturday Service Modifications

Fox Cities Transit Commission

Tue, Jun 11, 2024 2:50PM

George Dearborn (Chairman) 09:56

The next item is the one that's, uh, we—there's been a public hearing on. This is the approval of the proposed Valley Transit evening/Saturday service modifications. First, I need a motion to approve

Larry Wurdinger (Commission Member) 10:09

I [...] [His words were not picked up by the microphone, but per the meeting minutes: Commissioner Wurdinger made a motion to amend with a modification of the hours to 6 AM - 6PM Monday through Friday and 8 AM - 6 PM Saturday.]

George Dearborn (Chairman) 10:23

Is there a second to that? I hear no second, so I need a motion to approve the item that's on the agenda. I have a motion and a second to approve that. Ron, I know we've had a public hearing on this. We've heard some public comments. I mean, none of us are really excited about having to do this, but we don't—all of us I believe, at least—I see no other option. So, Ron, maybe you can just give some highlights again.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 10:54

Sure. Thank you, chair. I guess I just want to talk through, again, why we are here and what we're facing. So, we're proposing to transition from non-peak bus service to the VT Connector micro transit service. This proposal was precipitated by a lack of qualified drivers and anticipated forthcoming Federal Transit Administration regulation change, which limits driving hours to 10 hours per day per driver.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 11:26

Up until this time, the VT staff has been working an excessive amount of overtime hours just to keep the service on the street. As recently as yesterday, we had a supervisor out driving most of the morning to keep from canceling a route because we didn't have enough staff to do it. In the evening hours, Amy, our assistant general manager was prepared to drive all night until we found somebody who had a day off and we forced them to come and work overtime. So that's what we're running into on a daily basis right now.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 11:58

In looking at the proposal, we calculated we needed approximately 320 hours to transition from the weekly bus service to the micro transit service, and the proposal before you accomplishes that 320 hour savings. The staffing availability right now is 17 full time drivers out of the 36 in a table of organization. We anticipate, if we start this in mid-July, that we'll have about 18 full time drivers available, and to run the service as proposed, I anticipate we need 24 to 26 drivers. So as of July, middle of July, when we start this will have 18 drivers and we need about 26 full time drivers just to not be having overtime on a regular basis. So, we're already behind the eight ball with what's proposed. So, we didn't make draconian cuts. We did what was necessary to get us into a manageable situation. But that's the reality of where we're at in staffing levels.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 13:01

A public hearing was conducted on June 4. Comments were received through June 10, yesterday afternoon. There was approximately 40 non-duplicate comments between the public hearing and the written comments.

Some of those were duplicates. I didn't do an exact count, but there's about 40 probably of non-duplicate comments. A significant number of those comments were because of misunderstanding of what the hours are. Many thought that they had to be certified for the service; didn't understand that wasn't going to cost \$6, was in fact \$2 a trip. And there was a lot of discussion about "Well, do I need to get certified for the service?" And that was a matter of confusing our VT II service with the VT connector service. So, after we got through many of those conversations, several of those individuals had their concerns answered.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 13:54

I'd like to say that, you know, Valley Transit remains committed to getting people where they want to go in the Fox Cities. That's our tagline. That's what we do here. That's why we're out here. With this proposal greater than 90% of the VT passenger trips will remain on the bus service. Large buses are clearly the best mode of transportation during the daytime hours when the masses are traveling. We're mass transit; we handle the masses. Again over 90% are going to remain on the bus. The lesser traveled hours of service are reasonably served by other transit services provided by Valley Transit, like the VT Connector's micro transit service. Just as a reminder, the VT Connector micro transit service has been in operation for over 15 years. We are one of the first in the country to be providing one of those services.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 14:43

We understand that disrupting a single passengers transportation is a big concern and it is for Valley Transit as well as the Transit Commission. So, if we disrupt one life, it's a problem. If we just run more than that we it's a bigger problem. That's not what we're here to do. Unfortunately, we're faced today with having to make some tough decisions that will affect some people.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 15:08

This proposed service modification allows for an orderly transition to the VT Connector micro transit service during non-peak hours. This provide service during the core service times for the masses where greater than 90% of the bus passengers will be provided transportation, and the other remaining passengers will be provided a shared ride demand response service providing origin to destination service, which is a squa—a small number of passengers comparative to the rest of the system. I don't want to minimize that, again, there are people that are going to be disrupted. But knowing all of that, I would humbly request authorization to begin operating proposed modifications, effective July 15. And I'd be happy to answer any questions for anybody.

Larry Wurdinger (Commission Member) 16:02

Is there any [...] with the with Oktoberfest being the busiest transit day of the year. Is there some way we could at least do special events service because you're hauling a lot of people, there's a lot of people drinking, it's kind of a safety issue. We've hauled a lot of people for a quarter rides by far. Like you said, mass transit—that's a clear example of mass transit in the valley. Maybe we can't do every Saturday till 6:15. But it sure would be nice if we could still do these big events.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 16:33

I've got a couple of issues with that, Larry. I've got a philosophical problem doing something where we can't handle our core services yet, we're going to pop up and able to do something miraculously. Oktoberfest used to be the largest day of the year, by far. The last few years, it hasn't been. Ridership has been significantly down. In the morning hours, we'll still be out there till one o'clock. Quite frankly, we had more transit rides in the morning hours of people going to the to the craft part of it rather than the drinking part of it. The red solo cup group wasn't riding as much last few years. So, I think we'll still cover the vast majority of them with a service as proposed. That's a good point though, Larry. And it's certainly something we can continue to look at.

George Dearborn (Chairman) 17:23

Had some more questions about—

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 17:24

I think Diane had a question.

Diane Dexter (Commissioner) 17:27

Thank you. We've heard some issues of complaints regarding riders on the Connector service during the public hearing. With what we heard, is our contractor ready, willing, and especially able to pick up where we will be cutting if we need to cut?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 17:54

I've had a number of conversations with our contractor. They are geared up primarily for providing services during the day. The one individual who was most vocal about not being able to get trips, hasn't bothered to call and file a complaint with us, so I can't verify that.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 18:14

I will tell you in my conversations with Running Incorporated, as soon as it's approved, they're going to gear up their hiring process, and they have about a month to start getting people on board and ready to go. They've assured me that they're going to do the best job possible to be ready to go. Does that mean there won't be hiccups? I can't promise that. But they're certainly aware, and they're gearing up to take care of it. And it's—and they've already got the fleet of vehicles; they're using the same vehicles all day long for the other services.

Diane Dexter (Commissioner) 18:47

If we vote no, today, what do you see happening in the near future?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 18:52

I would see where we'll be canceling routes on a daily basis, sometimes hourly basis as people call in sick. We won't be able to operate.

Diane Dexter (Commissioner) 19:00

Similar to July 5, 6?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 19:02

Well, I what I would say was we'll provide—we'll be providing a very unreliable service because we can't continue to provide the services at the level we're doing. It's not healthy and it's—we can't continue in a safe manner this way. As of yesterday, we could have very easily have canceled three routes yesterday if we didn't have our supervisors all driving and forcing somebody on their day off to come in. We've been doing that. That's not sustainable. The workforce is tired. They've been very dedicated to keep the service on the street like it is. But it's it's—yeah, we're in a situation where we need to act on something.

Diane Dexter (Commissioner) 19:44

Is our Mobility Manager able to help those that feel that they're very disruptive or don't know how to use the connector? Do we have enough people to help? We need—there were a lot of have very courageous people that were here last Tuesday, and we need to know—we need to let them know that we do have compassion, we do hear them, we do see them. I think it was obvious with their comments, they knew that our hands are somewhat tied. With not having the number of drivers, you can't do anything with no drivers, and it's not safe when they work too many hours.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 20:26

I would say—and I can certainly let Sarah speak if you'd like, but she's already set up a tentative schedule where her and Stephanie (our travel trainer Stephanie's sitting in the back row there) they will be putting out a table top out in our transit center for several days leading up to that beginning of service and even after it starts. So, people that are riding can stop in the transit center, they can get specific information as it relates directly to them. You know, we can publish all kinds of information, but the reality of it is each individual is only concerned about how it affects them personally. And they know how they've been doing the service. So, it'll take a lot of one-on-one work to be able to explain the differences and what phone number to call, how to call, how to make the reservations. We met yesterday with the mobility management team and Stephanie and Sarah, and they talked about even possibly walking them through the first reservation with them to get them situated.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 21:30

This is going to be a complicated process. You know, one of the comments that was brought up, and we heard very clearly, was the non-English speaking individuals trying to make reservations. It's going to be an issue. However, you know, I can assure you, it's an issue every day out on the streets on the buses. They get on the bus and try and communicate with drivers, and we try and get through it the best we can. But Stephanie and Sarah are very much gearing up, and they know they're going to be extremely busy over the next time.

Diane Dexter (Commissioner) 22:03

There was also a consistency with people being affected on Saturday afternoons. But asking you to extend where you're going to cut off on Saturday, even two hours really is too much of a challenge and hardship with the number of drivers we have, correct?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 22:23

Normally, the—well, first of all, the what we've proposed is the weekday service to run basically from six o'clock till six o'clock. The Saturday service starts later about eight o'clock, and we propose that being done at one o'clock. If we expanded that to the same timeframe at six o'clock as we doing do during the week, that would take us about 40 hours each Saturday to do that. And that's not just one driver, that's about six or seven driver positions that I have to have bodies behind the wheel of the bus.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 22:59

Again, I want to go back to we have we anticipate having 18 drivers out of needing 26 the day this starts. So, I would caution about adding services on at this point. However, if the commission so desires, I think we can use that as a priority, as soon as we can get enough drivers in, to look at maybe expanding hours on Saturday service. I think is great.

Diane Dexter (Commissioner) 23:23

That was my next question. Does it have to be temporary? If we do get drivers, can we add some hours like on Saturday?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 23:34

Saturday—I'll be honest with you. All the discussions that we had, including with the drivers, is was heartburn over Saturday afternoons. Clearly—and Larry, you know, you and I've talked—it's an issue, you know. So, I think we can we can utilize that as a priority to say "Okay, as soon as we can get enough drivers and let's figure out how we can do something on Saturdays." And maybe it doesn't go to six o'clock. Maybe it goes to three o'clock or four o'clock. I don't know.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 24:06

But one of the other things I said to the public hearing folks that were here is we're going to take all of these comments and we're going to feed that to East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Missy's here. We're going to we're scheduled to do a transit development plan very early in 2025, and all of these comments will be forwarded to whoever is coordinating that effort. And as we look at the services we provide, certainly the comments that we received at this public hearing are imperative to be part of that discussion.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 24:38

So, one of—another thing is we thought that once we went to the six to six like everybody else is in our neighboring communities, that we'd probably get more job applicants. I can tell you the number of job applicants has gone way up since this was announced. Probably 10 to 1 over the last six months. I don't know how many of those are qualified, but the number of applicants has gone up. Now, again, that's because we're talking about going to 6 to 6. That was a very common theme at the employment fair that we attended. There was Amy and Sarah and a member of the human resources department went to the employment fair a couple of weeks ago, and the discussion was, "No, we don't want to talk to you. I don't want to work that late," person after person. And Amy and Sarah said, "Well, there might be some news coming up you might be interested in." So, they took cards. Well, many of them have come back and applied now that the discussion looking 6 to 6. So, there's some hope that maybe we can look at some of the things, like maybe a Saturday afternoons. I can't promise anything. But I don't have a problem with a director from the Commission saying, "Let's look at how we do something as we move forward." I think that's a reasonable effort.

Larry Wurdinger (Commission Member) 24:45

[...] about this is, historically, once you lose something, you don't bring it back. And if we can go up to six o'clock on Saturday—I get it. It's six drivers, but it's one FTE. And I do agree with you, you will get a lot more applicants because even if you have to work those six on Saturday, it's better than working till 11 and doing the turnaround. If we go to 6—if we go to 6 on Saturday, that gets us kind of similar to what we were previous to when we had night service. I understand we had peaks and all that stuff. But it gets us similar back to what we were in the 70s, 80s, and 90s.

Larry Wurdinger (Commission Member) 26:01

I know what I'm concerned about is six months from now, if you're only running to 1 on Saturday, you're going to come back and say, "Geez, our ridership has gone into S, H, I, T -hole. Let's just get rid of Saturday." So, I get it. You're driving staff would love that because they only have to work Monday through Friday. But you know. And another question too—with this \$36 reimbursement a ride, is that—with the connector—is that going to be more expensive for the communities? Is it going to wash? Or less expensive? Or what's your projection on it?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 27:13

I think worst case scenario is a wash. That's certainly our discussion that Deb and I've been having. It would take a significant increase in the number of VT connector trips to get to that point.

George Dearborn (Chairman) 27:31

Yes.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 27:37

Allo—how is the allocation of expenses for the connector? How are those allocated to the communities under this scenario?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 27:48

We would have to distribute it evenly amongst the amongst the population base or something. Because it's not miles operated, necessarily. So, I think what we've done in the past is the communities where the trip of origin or trip destination, we kind of looked at where the trips were going, and then distributed the cost based where the trip destination origins were. Is that accurate, Deb?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 28:11

Origin and destination, okay. And how will-calls be handled?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 28:24

I would highly encourage them not to do will-calls on the connector. I would—because it's going to be busy. I would schedule a trip ahead of time. If you're going grocery shopping and you know it's going to take you an hour, I would book in an hour and a half. That's just me. Because when they're busy—first of all, we'll call this something that we do as a service to the employee or to the customers. It's not a requirement as part of the ADA or anything else. Fact is the ADA tells you probably shouldn't be doing them, but they allow it. Because what happens is those tend to happen during peak busiest times and then you're trying to squeeze something in that wasn't scheduled, and we've had people wait for several hours trying to get a will-call pickup just because of volumes. So, I would highly recommend that people schedule in advance, but to allow themselves enough room, so they don't miss it—that they have to be ready for it. And to me that's not much different than what we do on a bus. You know that if the bus is coming in an hour, I either got to be ready in an hour or I gotta be ready in two hours, and there isn't a lot of leeway in there. So, I would I would recommend scheduling it ahead of time.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 29:41

A couple questions and comments. The—what—first of all, the drivers pay, what's the average salary per driver that stays a year you know?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 29:56

Probably about \$26 an hour.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 30:00

To me, that seems really low.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 30:02

It's not.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 30:02

Is it a Class A license, Class...?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 30:04

Class B license. And—

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 30:09

I know you said that it didn't matter. But if we were paying \$40 an hour, let's just say, I bet you we get a lot more applicants. And I know it's a lot of money, but we're about to spend a lot more money doing this. And it actually works, and people are using it. And—it's going to be another discussion, because we're still going to be looking for drivers to get there and whatnot. So, I'm a little concerned about that.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 30:34

The—when, when people—two questions here. If they someone got a day pass, how does that work? Can they use it at night?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 30:39

Not on the connector.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 30:39

So now it's going to be someone that might go to work, \$2 at two o'clock, will have to pay an additional \$2 plus the wait time and all that.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 30:53

Right.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 30:54

So, it is an increased for some riders for sure. 'Cause I know—

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 30:57

Potentially.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 30:57

—one of my riders comes into my place weekly and takes the bus home around eight o'clock or whatever. Right now, at work in Kaukauna coming back to Appleton, it's gonna cost her two more dollars. She ain't got no money. So, I'm concerned about that. Also same person referencing—if someone's working a regular job, and they depend on it every day, can they schedule like four days a week, right off the bat, just like, "Hey, I need this time, this time, this time, this time this week"?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 31:27

Sure. The VT connector service has been around for about 15 years and about 98 to 99% of the trips previously were all employment related transportation. So, we refer to that as subscription trips, the ones that are go day after day after day, same times a day, or whatever your work schedule is. They book those out. They want to get those on the schedule. When I say "they" I'm talking about the contractor. They want to get those on the schedule so they don't have to worry about it. They don't want a call coming in every day. So, they'll book them in advance. The problem with that is when the individual doesn't go to work, and then doesn't schedule the trip, because three misses like that, they're going to be suspended from the service.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 32:02

Right. That's what I was wondering.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 32:03

Yep. If I could just talk briefly about the rate, the hourly rate, for the drivers. And we have director Jay Ratchman with us from Human Resources. Jay has led a number of meetings with representatives from the union, and we asked them specifically, "Is it the amount of money; what is it?" And they told us point blank, "It's not the money." Absolutely not the money.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 32:36

I'm just gonna disagree there. Because every everybody's got a price tag. And that's just the reality of—

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 32:36

I'm just I'm just sharing you with what our conversations have been.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 32:38

I'm just curious, like, so let's say it blows up. Let's—I'm just curious, just thinking about it. Let's say someone's at Bachelor's bar on the south side of Kaukauna, and they want to go to Plan B, the other bar on the north side of Kaukauna, they can call and just take the van right up there, right?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 33:08

Correct. However, remember, it's going to be a shared ride service. It's not an Uber taken point A to point B. They might stop at four other places, pick somebody up, drop somebody off, en route to that. So, if that's what they want to do, they can certainly do that. But I think that's probably the thing that's going to deter most because if I'm going to a bar for a cocktail, I'm going to get to the next place, not bounce around four or five different places with somebody else. That's just me.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 33:34

Well, the reason I bring it up, it's because it's on the bus route already. So, it passes basically both places already. Let's just say someone was already using that. Could they still then use it?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 33:45

Certainly. There's no restrictions on use.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 33:52

Thank you.

George Dearborn (Chairman) 33:55

Any other questions?

Rick Detienne (Commissioner) 33:57

I have one.

George Dearborn (Chairman) 34:00

Oh, please. Yes. Go ahead.

Rick Detienne (Commissioner) 34:03

Yes. I'm concerned also about the use of Running. We heard last week or so from someone at a group home where it's not just one individual in your family that you're seeing be disadvantaged on occasion. They're seeing it happen with some frequency. None of us wants to be in this situation. I think all we can hope for is the best solution. And I appreciate all the work that has gone into this particular decision, but I remain concerned by Running's ability to pick this up, and the people who are going to be most concerned are perhaps the least able in our community to speak for themselves. If Running is Plan B, what is Plan C going to be if we become up in a very difficult situation and are experiencing a lot of blowback from our clientele?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 35:19

Well, I can tell you, we just recently went out for requests for proposal for vendors. We had three proposals done. Running won the award. The other one was another van company where the over the term of the contract was going to cost us an extra million dollars. The third one was not necessarily debarred, but the Federal Transit Administration made us terminate a contract with them previously, because they were non-

compliant with us. So, we have one contractor that we're working with. There's not a lot of contractors willing to bid on services. Running has assured me they're going to do the best job that they can possibly do to get it done.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 35:56

The complaints that were raised at the group home, have yet to be called in. I specifically asked a call in so we can talk about and try and fix it, yet that wasn't done. I would highly recommend that they do this so we can try and get it resolved. I'm not naive enough to believe that there's not going to be any hiccups when the service transitions. There—it's a big change, and there will be some hiccups in the road. Again, if we don't do this, the other alternative we only have to start canceling service, and I highly recommend not going down that road. This is a tough decision nobody really has a lot of excitement in having to make, clearly. If we weren't in his position, we probably wouldn't be here having this discussion, but we're in a position where we are having to do something today.

Rick Detienne (Commissioner) 36:53

I want to ask that at each month's meeting, at least for some time, we have this on the agenda, get a report on a number of complaints, on the feedback we're getting. I would love for this to go smoothly, and I'm just anxious that it's gonna be a problem for a lot of folks. Our best effort is gonna take a lot of [...] challenging, struggling around employment, or just [...], and I know none of us wants that, but I think we need to understand clearly what kind of feedback we're getting. Thank you.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 37:38

Yeah, I think we're all in agreement on that, Rick. Yeah, we will certainly bring the information back. We would do that anyhow, certainly. It's a new service; we need to report on it.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 37:46

So, comment from my daughter just turned 14 going into high school, and I was like, "Hey, you can take the take the van home for two bucks from the high school," and, you know, after the basketball game, so I was always excited. She's like, basically, "Is there an app? Well, how am I going to know what to do?" And she doesn't know. She could probably look it up. It could be a simple solution of making the app again, or have it available, literally, but does nothing but have like a phone number on there for that, or you know, the link to the bus map or something. You know, it could be a real simple one that you know, we could probably write ourselves. Just for the new generation of riders, they would—that's what they're looking for.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 38:33

Yeah, that's a good point. You know, and actually, we're all over the map in that regard, and because we had the public hearing, we had somebody who said, "I don't have a smartphone, I don't have the ability for a smartphone." However, we do have a lot of riders who do have smartphones. We actually have an appointment on next Wednesday, with the software vendor that we do all our scheduling with for the paratransit services, our ancillary services. They're going to demo their app and see what it is. My guess is it's probably a scheduling mode on there, which would be helpful for a lot of people. But we're taking a look at it and see what it is.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 39:11

One more comment. I know we're getting on negative on everything, because we're just actually [...] to the heart of it. But the reality is for Kaukauna, I think the actually going the late service on Friday and Saturday is a really good idea. I think that's actually one of the best things about it. Because now you're going until midnight, right?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 39:30

Connector always has been.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 39:33

Yeah, well, like so—but you will couldn't catch a bus at 10:30 in Kaukauna and make it back to Appleton.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 39:43

But nobody. I mean, I don't know anybody.

Larry Wurdinger (Commission Member) 39:44

You didn't know about it.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 39:47

But now, I mean, I think that's a good selling point.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 39:50

I agree.

Greg VandeHey (Commissioner) 39:51

And because the bus doesn't go to the Piggly Wiggly, doesn't go to the high school, and doesn't go to the industrial park in Kaukauna, of a sudden, that is opened up to all these riders. So I think there is some benefits to it.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 40:05

Yeah, I agree.

George Dearborn (Chairman) 40:10

Anyone else?

Michael Brown (Commissioner) 40:11

I just want to say, as a staff person, I know where Ron is coming from. I've been doing this for 20 years, on Ron sat at the table as well, and there are times when you have to make recommendations that aren't popular, or they're hard decisions to make for the elected or appointed bodies. So, I just want to give Ron credit for obviously, looking at all the different options that are available, because it's not easy.

Michael Brown (Commissioner) 40:41

You know, we deal with these types of things all the time, and, you know, it's the lesser of two evils at this point. You know, nobody wants to cut service. But the reality is, if we, if we don't, like you said, there's going to be cancellation of services, interruptions, even worse than, you know, known interruptions, right? So, by cutting service, yeah, it's going to affect, you know, 10% of the population, but they'll know, alright, this is what we have to deal with, and we can learn how to get around it. But if you keep the service alive, and then you end up having to cancel them randomly, that's really going to throw a wrench into everyone's schedule and their lives. So that's what I have to say.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 41:25

Thank you. And I really don't want to come across that we're cutting services. We're transitioning from fixed route bus service in the non-peak hours and putting more emphasis on the micro transit service. So, it's not

really—it's switching to a different mode of service, rather than just cutting and getting rid of service. And the passenger trips we believe allows us to transition to the micro transit service.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 41:54

And the other part, I just want to clarify for everybody, the connector service boundaries, we are going to be restricting from what they are today with this change. Right now, people are using the connector service in Greenville; they can use it in Vinland; they can use it in the town of Neenah. None of those places are part of our partnering municipalities in the transit system. Because of the volume and because of United Way not being able to partner with us anymore, we're going to restrict that service area to our nine municipal partners. So, people are going to have to reside, and their trip origin destinations are going to have to be within our partnering municipalities who work with Valley Transit. So, all of you that you represent, are in that service area. And we're going to provide the connector trip anywhere within your municipal boundaries.

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 42:50

So, and Mr. Brown, you know, that includes anywhere in Buchanan. Somebody needs a connector trip, they can take it for two bucks, and, but we're not going to we're not going to continue out into the other layers that we were doing previously, when it was set up. And again, that was with a partnership with United Way, and we're transitioning away from that by the end of the year. So just want to clarify that for the record.

George Dearborn (Chairman) 43:15

Yes. Another question?

Diane Dexter (Commissioner) 43:18

Thank you. Do we have a plan in place for transition education for the public at large who's talking about this, even if they don't ride the bus? And for the riders? Do we do we have a specific plan for education should we vote yes, on this today?

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 43:36

Sure. Well, first of all, I can assure you the media is going to be all over this. They have been already. Red Shoes will be putting out all kinds of information on social media. We have the ability to push messages out on our transit information, text alert. I'm actually scheduled to be on the live morning broadcast of WFRV Channel Five in Green Bay on Tuesday of next week. So, I'll be on there for about 10 minutes being able to talk about whatever changes we're making on a live broadcast. And then we'll certainly be putting out information the best we can, but, yes, there'll be information spread widely.

Diane Dexter (Commissioner) 44:20

I think it's real important to use that word "transition" and not "cutting."

General Manager Ron McDonald (Valley Transit) 44:25

Right, absolutely. And that's in effect what it is.

George Dearborn (Chairman) 44:32

Anyone else? You know it's not a pleasure that we vote on this. I feel the same that I hate to see the changes, but this seems to be the only alternative that's available based on the information provided. I appreciate staff's effort and Ron's effort on putting this package together. I don't see this as an end all. It's a it's a solution for the current situation. Hopefully sometime in the future, we'll see other changes, other funding sources, more people interested in assisting and driving buses so we can look at a ramp up at some point in the future. But right now, this seems like a good solution, a best solution to the situation. And I'm certainly, as said before,

there'll be a lot of input as we transition to this. We will get the information. If there are problems, I know that the staff and we will address those problems the best we can with the resources we have. So, with that in mind, I need a vote. All those in favor of the change, please say aye.

All But One Commissioner 45:39

Aye.

George Dearborn (Chairman) 45:40

Any opposed?

Larry Wurdinger (Commission Member) 45:40

Nay.

George Dearborn (Chairman) 45:42

Understand. Thank you, motion carries.