



Spring Legislative Day

April 6th, 2021 9:30am-12:00pm

Virtual Meeting



Zoom Information

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88475483061?pwd=L3hBaVpubGI1YzBHVndHcHozTHRwQT09>

Meeting ID: 884 7548 3061

Passcode: 515876

Agenda

In Attendance: Katie White, Julie Esch, Pat Daoust, Tom Wagener, Patty Kiewiz, Adam Lorentz, Ann Smith, AJ Wilson, Becca Smith, Derek Muench, Dan Boehm, Jessy Stammer, Jim Collins, Paul Woodward, Greg Seubert, Kara Ottum, Michael Maierle, Brian Engelking, Ron McDonald, Susan Lemke, Nick Musson, Mark Jones, Evan Goyke, Gary Goyke, Joy Neilson, Teri Downing, Steve Tomasik, Justin Stuehrenberg, Kristina Hoffman, Megan Newman, Brad Hentschel, Terry Katsma, James Thompson, Susan DeVos, T. Nelson, Jacqueline Zander, and Lynn Gilles

9:30 am: Tom Wagener, WIPTA Chair's Brief Welcome

9:30 am: Guest Speaker: Rep. Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee), Joint Finance Committee Member

Rep. Goyke ran down the budget provisions contained in the Executive Budget and spoke on the misconception that some policymakers have that federal assistance can offset biennial state funding and the importance to emphasize the necessity of consistent, appropriate levels of funding going forward. He also spoke of the importance of regionally funded transit option that would help with connectivity and efficiency. Finally, he suggested making sure that legislators understand the difference between capital and operating needs and speculated that because of the ongoing pandemic-related federal assistance as its impact, the state budget process might extend beyond the June 30th statutory deadline.

9:45 am: Guest Speaker: Rep. Terry Katsma (R-Oostburg), Joint Finance Committee Member

Rep. Katsma noted that the majority of operating assistance in the state budget is allocated to Tier A. He urged members and systems to have an ongoing dialogue both in the capitol and at home with their state legislators and to get to know them personally.

Tom Wagener, WIPTA Chair's Welcome Remarks

Tom discussed how public transportation is an essential service and how we all need to make sure our legislators understand the importance of public transportation. Transit funding directly impacts employee transportation travelling to work, younger generations who prefer public transportation and older generations who may not drive anymore.

10:15 am: Patty Kiewiz, Legislative Committee Chair's and Remarks

Thanks to all for attending and again, we stress the importance of keeping in touch with your local representatives. Funding from:

10:30 am: AJ Wilson & Katie White, HWZ Report and Review of Priorities

AJ Wilson: Reported on the status of VW settlement funds in which \$50m of \$60m thus far allocated has been awarded for bus replacement. AJ reviewed WIPTA's budget requests and compared them to the provisions contained in the Governor's proposed executive budget and discussed the condition of state finances including the Transportation Fund. He spoke of WI Policy Forum study that focuses on the state of transit in Wisconsin in light of federal assistance.

Katie White: Katie explained the budget process from its formal introduction in February to its present status in the Joint Finance Committee with agency briefings taking place as we meet. She explained that there will four public hearing including three in person and one virtual option as well will allow for registration two weeks prior. The schedule is as follows:

- Friday, April 9, 2021 UW-Whitewater, Whitewater, WI
- Wednesday, April 21, 2021 The Hodag Dome, Rhinelander, WI
- Thursday, April 22, 2021 UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI
- Wednesday, April 28, 2021 Virtual

The public hearings will begin at 10 am and conclude at 5 pm. The format will be similar to past hearings. Management at each of the venues will monitor capacity. Those wishing to testify at the virtual hearing will be required to register in advance, details to come on the registration process. A portal is available for individuals to provide input: www.legis.wisconsin.gov/topics/budgetcomments as well as an email address budget.comments@legis.wisconsin.gov.

In May, the finance committee will start the process of voting on and adopting budget provisions. This process historically takes 4-6 weeks. The statutory deadline for budget completion but does not impact operations as Wisconsin continues at current budget until a new budget is adopted.

Both Katie and AJ emphasized the historic participation of WIPTA members during the budget hearing process and encouraged it again so long as members are comfortable with participating.

11:15 am: "Legislative Outreach"

AJ and Katie led the discussion regarding talking to legislators and emphasizing local issues and priorities and how each system handled Covid-response both practically and from a services/budgeting perspective. There was emphasis in the discussion on federal assistance and the limitations of one-time money and how it cannot be relied on to fund operations into the future. The group also discussed the state of transit funding over the last decade. Since a 10% cut in 2012, funding has increased only 6% since that time leaving current level funding at a significant deficiency especially when considering inflationary costs.

WIPTA's budget requests included:

10% biennial increase to Mass Transit Operating Assistance, Paratransit Aids and Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities transportation aids. WIPTA requested the creation of a Transit Capital Assistance Program of \$10m per year or a Multimodal Grant Program with specific carve-outs for Transit grants. WIPTA also emphasized its support for statutory authority that would provide local units of government, individually or collaboratively, the ability to raise revenue for transit, infrastructure, and other transportation needs, particularly via local sales tax.

The Governor's proposed budget was very positive for transit, it includes:

5% biennial increase to Mass Transit Operating Assistance, Paratransit Aids and Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities transportation aids. The creation of Transit Capital Assistance Grant program funded at \$10m annually. This provision is limited to bus replacement and while WIPTA supports the program and funding is emphasizing that such funds should not be limited solely to bus replacement but all transit capital needs should be eligible. The Governor's budget also included a multimodal grant program of \$75m in which transit would be eligible to apply for funds. In addition, the Governor proposed expanding the WETAP grant program by \$8m over the biennium and expanding access to urban and rural transit systems for grants specifically for helping low-income persons get to their places of employment. The Governor's budget also includes backfilling lost tribal revenues that support the Tribal Elderly Transportation Grant program and giving local government the ability to raise sales taxes for any purpose. WIPTA supports all of the provisions in the Governor's budget.

11:45 am: Questions and Discussion

During the discussion period, attendees agreed that information regarding capital needs would be valuable as well as a primer on how mass transit aids are allocated by tiers to respond to any legislative inquiries. AJ and Katie also suggested that anyone who did not provide available times to meet with their legislators this week should reach out and individual meetings can be set up over the next few weeks. Tom thanked the group for participating and

the Meeting adjourned at 11:58 am.