

**ITEM 12-C.6.b**

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## LETTER: County will fulfill its duty to Seniors

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### YOUR VIEW

Published: June 25, 2009

Last week a letter indicated that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors had violated the American with Disabilities Act by eliminating daily transportation service to the Senior Centers and Adult

Day Care Center. Facing a \$190 million deficit in the fiscal 2010 plan, the Board of County Supervisors had to make many difficult choices to balance the county budget. This included laying off county staff, the elimination (and scaling back) of needed human service programs, and changes to the way we provide other services. Senior transportation services were among those programs that needed to be revamped in order for us to maximize available funding and still provide some service to our elderly residents.

We made the decision, knowing that staff was set to implement a pilot program on July 1, while they continued to work on a longer-term, permanent solution. I realize that getting to and from appointments is a top priority for senior citizens. Under the new program, free and/or reduced fare transportation services will be provided through a voucher program for taxi cabs and OmniLink passes (including deviation services). The Area Agency on Aging and the PRTC just received notification they were awarded a \$200,000 grant to plan and implement this program.

Our short-term program will consist of a voucher/coupon program for current Senior Center and Adult Day Care transportation customers. Income-eligible Seniors over the age of 55 with no other means of transportation will receive coupons that they can give to PWC taxicabs that are licensed by the Taxi Cab Review Board to get them to/from any location — Senior Center, doctor's offices, grocery store, etc. The Board of Supervisors unanimously supported my initiative to substantially increase the funding for this program.

Eligible Seniors will be provided free PRTC OmniLink daily bus passes. PRTC OmniLink buses deviate from their established routes up to three-quarters of a mile, and it's possible they can take you door-

to-door to the Senior Center. These free passes may be used to go to/from anywhere on the bus line. OmniLink service is available immediately to persons 65 and older or persons with disabilities. Free passes for current Senior Center transportation customers will be available around July 1.

Finally, I am working with a number of Woodbridge churches that have agreed to provide bus and van transportation services to Seniors who may not qualify for the pilot program described above. Church-provided services will be round trip from home to the Woodbridge Senior Center. Once we work through the details, I will host a Town Hall Meeting to share the details of all of these transportation services

and assist you with determining which is best for you. Current Senior Center transportation customers may set up appointments at the Senior Center they regularly attend to determine their eligibility and, if eligible, receive their coupons and/or passes.

Though we will be facing a challenging transition period over the next several months I am optimistic that we will be able to find a solution that will provide seniors who are unable to drive a variety of transit options.

## **FRANK J. PRINCIPI**

Woodbridge District Supervisor

Prince William Board of County Supervisors

## **Reader Reactions**

Posted by ( MikeHodge ) on June 25, 2009 at 1:23 am

Thank you! Our seniors need all the assistance possible.

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Page 1 of 1