

**CITY OF JACKSON
JTRAN PARATRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, July 17th, 2024 – As Adopted

Attendees:

- 1. Atty. David Knight – Department of Justice**
- 2. Atty. Mitzi Dease Paige – Department of Justice**
- 3. Atty. Hunter Robertson, Disability Rights
Mississippi**
- 4. Atty. Ramona Williams – City Attorney’s Office**
- 5. Ms. Leslie Barnes—MV General Manager**
- 6. Mrs. Ollie Beaton—vice Chair Paratransit
Committee**
- 7. Mr. Hank Beaton--Consumer**
- 8. Mr. Jason Bunch--Consumer**
- 9. Ms. Gwen Byrd—Paratransit Consumer**
- 10. Mr. Raphael Byrd—Paratransit Consumer**
- 11. Mr. David Chia – Consultant for FTA**
- 12. Ms. Lee Cole—ADA Council Chair**
- 13. Dr. Scott Crawford—Chair, JTRAN Paratransit
Committee**
- 14. Mr. John Day – Federal Transit Admin.**
- 15. Ms. Pam Dollar-ED of the Coalition of Citizens
with Disabilities**
- 16. Mr. Ricky Durbin—MV Fleet Manager**
- 17. Ms. Marilyn Guice – City of Jackson**
- 18. Mr. Mick Hintz—Paratransit Consumer**

19. Ms. Katrina Howard-Reeves—Paratransit Consumer
20. Mr. Herbert Humphrey—ADA Coordinator
21. Ms. Machele Kyles—TRANSCON Mobility Manager
22. Mr. Chaz Lewis—MV Operation's Manager
23. Ms. Sheila O'Flaherty—JTRAN Consumer
24. Mr. Donovan Speller—MV Safety & Training Manager
25. Mr. Joe Spicer—MS Industries for the Blind
26. Mr. Desmeon Thomas—LIFE of MS
27. Ms. Janet Thomas—ADA Advocate
28. Ms. Chaya Tong—JTRAN Rider-Reporter For The Clarion Ledger
29. Mr. Dionne Washington—MV Interim Human Resource Director
30. Ms. Christine Welch, Transit Services, City of Jackson
31. Mrs. Adaline Williams—National Federation of the Blind
32. Janice Williams – MS Department of Transportation

The meeting was held in the First Floor Conference Room of the Hood Building (200 South President Street, Jackson, MS) and via Zoom link

SUMMARY

The Paratransit Advisory Committee discussed various issues related to their services, including audio problems during meetings, fare increases, and the need for improved communication and driver training. They also addressed concerns about bus breakdowns, unreliable bus routes, and the need for real-time intelligence and feedback. The team agreed on the importance of sensitivity training for individuals with disabilities and the need for regular reporting of complaints and incidents.

I. Call to Order

Dr. Scott Crawford called the Meeting to order at 1:00pm. Members and guests on Zoom and in-person were introduced.

II. Adoption of the Agenda and Minutes

The Minutes of the May 15th Meeting were read by Ms. O'Flaherty. There were several corrections made. Mr. Byrd made the motion to adopt the minutes as amended; seconded by Mr. Bunch. The minutes were adopted with those corrections.

III. Updates:

a. The Status of the Consent Decree

Atty. Robertson (DRMS) – Currently the Consent Decree is stayed. Disability Rights MS filed a motion to extend the Consent Decree and filed a joint motion with the City

of Jackson to stay the Consent Decree pending on a resolution whether through the courts or agreements with the parties. We had our stakeholders meeting to discuss agreements and issues. We hope to have a proposal to present to the City soon.

Atty. Williams – I was just hired 2-weeks ago so I'm getting on the learning curve. If anyone has recommendations concerning the consent Decree, I'm here.

b. The Labor Dispute

Dr. Crawford – Obviously, we had the labor shutdown for 2-days which was hard on everyone especially for those using paratransit. Ms. Welch scrambled enough drivers to get people to dialysis. But a sudden stoppage is a disaster for all who ride JTRAN.

Ms. Barnes – We are keeping the lines of communications open. We've not had any disagreements between us and the Union. So hopefully, we're making progress there. We are scheduled to meet again tomorrow. Our weekly meetings with the Union are just between MV and the Union to discuss whatever concerns they may have and collaborate on how to bring the workforce together. We have those meetings weekly

with the Union and MV Management and the Executive Board. The meeting that we will be having tomorrow is with the Mayor amongst us as well to further address any concerns that they feel that we aren't meeting in house and the sick-out/work stoppage in April.

Dr. Crawford – It's reassuring that the Mayor is still involved and he'll be at that meeting tomorrow.

c. Addressing Bus Breakdowns and Paratransit improvements

Mr. Durbin discussed the increased bus breakdowns during summer due to overheating and external fan failures. To address this, they have implemented measures such as cleaning radiator cores, increasing their inventory of vans for quick replacements, and ensuring the correct amount of refrigerant is in the air conditioning system. He also mentioned starting a 7-day work week for the maintenance department to focus on preventive maintenance.

Additionally, he addressed issues with the current Paratransit bus system, including the lack of automatic announcements for stop names and the pronunciation system for Paratransit buses. They have recently acquired automatic enunciators and are in the

process of procuring smaller vehicles to address these issues.

Ms. Guice – We are in the process of getting those enunciators on the smaller buses because it takes 18-24 months to get the larger vehicles. So, in the midst of getting a Purchase Order and going through the process, we'll have to use the small buses and put them on the least productive routes. We'll put the Automatic Vehicle Locators (AVL's) on those 4 buses same as on the fixed routes.

Ms. Cole asked for clarification on the announcers on the paratransit buses.

Ms. Guice explained that the system is for the Fixed route not paratransit. The bus will announce the stops.

Ms. Barnes added that there are no announcers for paratransit. The drivers should assist in letting you know the bus location. She will investigate Ms. Cole's concern.

Ms. Byrd and Mrs. Williams expressed concerns about missing buckles on the seatbelts and not receiving text messages prior to the bus arrival. Mrs. Williams just gets

the robo-calls. Suggestions were made to ensure that you are updating your personal software so that you will receive the Ecolane updates when they come.

IV. Paratransit On-time Performance

Dr. Crawford reviewed the performance data. On-Time Pick-ups were 90%; On-Time Drop-offs for appointments is around 85% for the past 5-months. Missed trips are down from an average of 60 to 20-30 for the last 6-months. This is progress. Do we have an idea what has changed?

Ms. Guice – The improvement is largely due to effective training. Some miss trips occur because the driver comes and don't wait 5-minutes. MV implemented that the driver contacts dispatch, dispatch contacts the rider, then gives the driver permission to leave. This is time stamped.

V. Discussion

Mr. Hintz commented that calls and arrival times have improved and is working well for him.

Dr. Crawford continued the discussion of excessive ride times.

Mr. Lewis - So in operations right now, due to the driver shortage, we suffered in the month of June. That means that we had to basically move times on other routes to make sure that they get picked up. Right now, we have 5 drivers that will be out by next Thursday. We have 3 that are getting out of training on this Friday, and 2 more next Thursday, so that should improve our numbers, at least for the remaining month of July into August. For right now we do have a dispatcher as well as myself in both stations monitoring things while we're in the office to make sure that the rules are followed. That's why you see the influence.

Miss Tong – I'm wondering why the paratransit buses are used on the Fixed route? Is that because we don't have the 35-foot buses for spares?

Mr. Durbin replied that 2 buses are down and in need of repair so we have to use the smaller buses as spares. We can operate the Fixed route with 16 buses but 20 is our goal.

Ms. Tong then asked if using the paratransit buses takes away from the paratransit routes?

Ms. Guice – Paratransit buses are only in use when there's a need. If no bus is available, then the Fixed route is shut down for that trip.

Mr. Byrd requested that the passengers are notified when the paratransit buses are late or there is a breakdown.

a. Improving Driver Training and Customer Service

The members expressed concerns about the need for increased driver training, particularly in sensitivity towards individuals with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. We suggested that management should become more visible on routes to ensure that drivers uphold the training they have received. We also emphasized the importance of considering the needs of passengers with disabilities, particularly during the summer months, and urged operators to be cautious and stop for passengers if necessary. Mr. Bunch acknowledged these points, and stressed that the aim was to create a welcoming environment for all passengers.

b. Real-Time Intelligence and Consent Decree Updates

The team emphasized the need for real-time intelligence and feedback, and discussed the reporting of complaints through various

channels. They agreed to maintain a trackable spreadsheet for complaints and continue bi-monthly meetings under the terms of the 14-year-old consent decree. Potential changes to the meeting schedule were proposed, with a quarterly schedule aligning with JTRAN's fiscal year being agreed upon. Issues with the new computer system at Addie McBryde were reported, and the importance of sensitivity training for individuals with disabilities were highlighted. The team decided to continue bi-monthly meetings until the consent decree ends, and announced various upcoming events and initiatives.

VI. Announcements

The ADA Council will meet September 4th and the JTRAN Paratransit Meeting will be September 18th both at 1:00-2:30pm in the Conference Room of the Hood Building.

Ms. Kyles – The 3rd-Quarter TRANSCON Meeting will be held on September 27, 2024 from 10:00-12 Noon at the Jackson Medical Mall Community Room. Text 601-218-7674 to add your name.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting concluded at 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Ollie Beaton, Vice-Chair and edited by Dr. Scott Crawford, JTRAN Paratransit Committee.