

**CITY OF JACKSON
JTRAN PARATRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES - REVISED
Wednesday, September 18, 2024**

**NOTE: This meeting immediately followed a 2-
Week Labor Strike by ATU Local 1208.**

Attendees:

- 1. Atty. David Knight – Department of Justice**
- 2. Atty. Drew Martin – City Attorney**
- 3. Atty. Hunter Robertson, Disability Rights
Mississippi**
- 4. Ms. Leslie Barnes—MV General Manager**
- 5. Mr. Hank Beaton - Consumer**
- 6. Mrs. Ollie Beaton—Vice Chair Paratransit
Committee**
- 7. Mrs. Heather Bowser – Addie McBryde Rehab
Center for the Blind**
- 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
Dr. Scott Crawford—Chair, JTRAN
Paratransit Committee**
- 13. Ms. Pam Dollar- ED of the Coalition of
Citizens with Disabilities**
- 14. Mr. Mike Duke – MS Public Broadcasting**

- 15. Dr. Lashawna Fant – MS School for the Blind**
- 16. Mr. Sam Gleese – Former COJ ADA Coordinator**
- 17. Ms. Marilyn Guice – City of Jackson**
- 18. Mr. Mick Hintz—Paratransit Consumer**
- 19. Mr. Herbert Humphrey – COJ ADA Coordinator**
- 20. Mr. Chaz Lewis - MV Operations Manager**
- 21. Ms. Renata Ratliff --MS Industries for the Blind, Human Resource Manager**
- 22. Ms. Katrina Howard-Reeves—Paratransit Consumer**
- 23. Mr. Joe Spicer—MS Industries for the Blind**
- 24. Mis Adrianna Smith – LIFE of MS**
- 25. Mr. Desmon Thomas—LIFE of MS**
- 26. Ms. Christine Welch, Transit Services, City of Jackson**
- 27. Mrs. Janice Williams – MDOT**

This meeting was via Zoom Link – Virtual Only.

Summary

The Paratransit Advisory Committee meeting focused on introductions, addressing various issues such as audio problems, fare increases, and the need for improved communication and driver training. The team also discussed improvements made to the bus system, concerns about the current Paratransit bus system, and the need for real-time intelligence and

feedback. The conversation ended with updates on the consent decree, the recent labor shutdown, and plans for future discussions to address any remaining concerns.

I. Call to Order

Dr. Scott Crawford called the Meeting to order at 1:01pm. Members and guests on Zoom INTRODUCED THEMSELVES.

II. Adoption of the Agenda and Minutes

The Minutes of the September 18th Meeting were read by Mr. Thomas. There was one correction made. Mr. Bunch moved to adopt the minutes, and Ms. Gwen Byrd seconded. The minutes were adopted unanimously.

III. Updates:

a. Strike Ended

Ms. Welch- (After a two-week strike): “The buses are rolling today. They rolled out on time. Everyone returned to work; so, we are back in business.”

MS Barnes – “We’re grateful that we have come to a resolution for the providers and citizens.”

b. Consent Decree

Atty. Robertson (DRMS) – we drafted a settlement proposal based on the stakeholder meeting and sent that over to the city. So, they're currently reviewing that proposal. Hopefully, we'll have a resolution.

Atty. Martin agreed with Atty. Robertson. “We were talking about it this morning, both internally and externally, and I think we are very close to an agreement, and we'll be reaching out to Disability Rights in the next day or 2 to schedule a meeting and try to finalize anything that's left. But I think we're very close.”

c. Press Conference

Mr. Humphrey – I'm happy to see that MV and the ATU have come to an amicable resolution to the problems/issues and the buses are running again. I along with Dr. Crawford have extended an offer for ATU Local 1208 President Charles Tornes to speak with this Committee.

d. Addressing Driver Shortage and Performance Issues

Dr. Crawford discussed the on-time performance data for August, noting a slight decline to 80% and attributing it to a manpower issue.

Ms. Barnes explained that the issue was due to a shortage of drivers, with several workers on leave and others on light duty due to workers' compensation. She also mentioned that a recruitment team was working to address the issue.

Dr. Crawford then presented data on missed trips, ride times, and drop-offs, which Ms. Barnes attributed to the same driver shortage. Ms. Barnes shared that they were working on a plan to ramp up driver numbers and improve performance.

Ms. Cole asked about the recruitment process and starting pay for bus drivers, which Ms. Barnes confirmed as hourly and \$16.37 per hour.

Dr. Crawford suggested MV have a larger reserve operator pool to ensure that Paratransit can meet performance standards. Ms. Barnes confirmed that they were considering this and had already increased their driver recruitment target to 65.

**e. Vans for Paratransit Transportation
Discussion**

The committee discussed the potential use of smaller vans for transportation, particularly for paratransit community. They considered

the benefit of vans for better handling of rough roads, stability, and lower risk of tipping over wheelchair users. However, concerns were raised about accommodating passengers with large shopping bags. The committee agreed to consider these factors in their decision-making process.

Members reiterated the need for JTRAN to provide airport transportation. It currently does not.

App Usage, Ticket Acquisition, and Fare Changes:

The team discussed the process of using the app for trips and the need to specify the reason for the trip.

Mrs. Beaton shared her experiences at Walmart with the drivers securing her shopping cart during rides.

Mr. Spicer raised a concern about employees needing to get tickets and the difficulty in obtaining them, suggesting a mail-based system as a solution.

Mr. Hintz confirmed that tickets can be obtained by mail, but Mr. Spicer expressed concerns about the potential delays in mail delivery. The team agreed on the need for a

more convenient and quicker solution for obtaining tickets.

Mrs. Beaton, now retired, shared her past experience of giving checks to drivers in envelopes, which they would then exchange for passes. However, Ms. Welch clarified that this practice was stopped years ago due to confusion and misplaced checks.

Mr. Duke, another participant, disagreed and shared his recent experience of giving drivers checks until June, when the fare increased. He also mentioned hearing about a potential change in JTRAN's cash acceptance policy.

Ms. Welch said that the City will be moving to a form of electronic payment in the near future. They only need to complete the paperwork.

Contingency Plans, Rideshare Rally, and Program Updates:

Ms. Ratliff from MIB raised a question about contingency plans for providing service in case of a strike. Ms. Welch confirmed that they have a contingency plan in place, which would involve getting all necessary parts in play. In fact, if the strike hadn't ended, today the plan would have gone into effect. Ms. Barnes assured that they are working on a

contingency plan to present to the city, and are confident that the no-strike clause in the Collective Bargaining Agreement will prevent such a situation in the future.

Announcements

Mrs. Beaton announced a transportation network company protest against Uber and Lyft in San Francisco on October 15th, organized by the National Federation of the Blind, to which Mississippi will be sending a representative.

Transcon Meeting is September 27th in the Community Room of the Jackson Medical Mall from 10:00-12 Noon.

Mrs. Williams, who will be leaving her position with MDOT, on October 30th, expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve.

Mr. Thomas announced that the Salvation Army program that assisted with paying energy bills has run out of funding in Mississippi.

Ms. Cole reminded everyone about the upcoming ADA Advisory Council Meeting on October 2nd and November 5th at the Hood building from 1:00-2:30 PM.

The next ADA Paratransit Advisory Committee will meet November 20th at the Hood building from 1:00-2:30 PM.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ollie Beaton, JTRAN Paratransit Vice-Chair