Paratransit Advisory Committee

April 13, 2022

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

**Call to Order.**

Committee Chair, Brian Tricker called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm and introductions were made.

**Committee Members in Attendance**

Brian Trickler – Chair, Provider, Virginia Beach

Paul Atkinson, Jr. – Vice-Chair, Provider, Chesapeake

Mary Mathena – Consumer, Virginia Beach

Janice Taylor – Consumer, Virginia Beach

Travis Webb – Provider, Norfolk

Alicia Griffin – Consumer, Newport News

Saundra Hunter – Consumer, Portsmouth

Joann Mancuso – Provider, Extra member

Keith Ferguson – Consumer, Extra member

Deloris Haywood – Consumer, Portsmouth

Denise Wilkins - Consumer, Hampton

Catherine Tyler-Northan – Provider, Newport News

Rene Rodgers – Consumer, Norfolk

Troy Bowser – Consumer, Newport News

**Others in Attendance**

Keith Johnson – HRT

Ina Kreps – Former Committee Chair, Portsmouth Consumer

Cheryl Watson -HRT

Trevor Hunter – Coastal Cab

Michael Ortiz – VIA

Tess Gebretensai - VIA

Yesenia Covarrubias – VIA

Courtney Allred - VIA

Kyle Snyder – VIA

Jeff Raliski -HRTPO

Brian Kerrigan -VIA

Jason Inge - SSSEV

Linda Wheeler – Common Courtesy

Abel Tejeda- VIA

**Approval of Minutes**

* Brian Tricker announced the minutes were read prior to the meeting by Paul Atkinson Jr. Keith Johnson stated Janice Taylor will present her modifications that will become part of the packet. Motion to approve was made and seconded by Mary Mathena with corrections.

**Public Comment**

* No public comments discussed
* **Chairman’s Report by Brian Trickler**
* Brian Tricker stated in the subcommittee report prior to the meeting that VIA had concluded training to use the app. Mr. Tricker noted that the efforts made by VIA for improvement of the rider services that changes, and efforts made by VIA has continued to improve. In terms of membership Mr. Tricker stated some positions on the committee are becoming available, encouraging other members interested to participate. Mr. Tricker commended Janice Taylor on her efforts related to outreach. Ms. Taylor was recognized for her efforts regarding the legislative process at the previous commission meeting, letters have been sent to Congressman Bobby Scott, Senator Tim Kayne and Mark Warner regarding the budget to purchase and upgrade paratransit vehicles. Mr. Johnson added the letters are related to earmarked grant funding to purchase additional vehicles expanding the fleet and replacing vehicles.

Mr. Johnson appreciates the support of all the Advisory Committee, Eggleston Services, Insite Enterprises, League of Women Voters.

* Mary Mathena asked if we will have electric vehicles moving forward. Mr. Johnson stated they would not be in this proposal the electric vehicles do not provide the range for the distance to travel.
* Travis Webb stated the lift on paratransit vehicles the flap was broke and the some of the lifts were not straight and he could have fallen off. Mr. Johnson asked for a date so he could view the report to make sure the vehicle was repaired. Mr. Webb stated he did not report the incident.
* Mr. Keith Ferguson stated the service has improved over the last few months; he mentioned a situation where he was told the driver would be over 4 hours late. Mr. Johnson stated that was out of line and he would look into the situation because never should happen. Michael Ortiz said he will investigate directly after the meeting. Mr. Ferguson has had experiences where more than one vehicle has arrived for pick up. Mr. Tricker added that these incidents are very important to report. Mr. Johnson added incident as such should be investigated immediately by emailing him.
* **VIA Service Update**
	+ Michael Ortiz discussed the performance for February and March increases of demand hiring drivers included in the meeting package
	+ Kyle Snyder discussed Service Updates, Tech Improvements and Rider Experience and updates as included in the meeting package.
	+ Brian Kerrigan answered Travis Webb question why the times change on the app. Mr. Kerrigan explained that the app will show a projection of time as changes are made to a trip the app ETA will fluctuate. Mr. Kerrigan discussed coordinating with PAC members to set up date and time for sessions with the broader public. Mr. Kerrigan discussed the free rides for all clients on Earth Day.

**Subcommittee Reports**

* **Service Quality- Linda Gurley**
* Mary Mathena asked if we will have electric vehicles moving forward. Mr. Johnson stated they would not be in this proposal the electric vehicles do not provide the range for the distance to travel. Travis Webb stated the lift on paratransit vehicles the flap was broke and the some of the lifts were not straight and he could have fallen off. Mr. Johnson asked for a date so he could view the report to make sure the vehicle was repaired. Mr. Webb stated he did not report the incident.
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* Alicia Griffin stated on the previous Sunday she had a scheduled pick-up window beginning at 2:05 PM after 20 min had passed Ms. Griffin called reservations and the representative said her ride would arrive at 4:35 PM. Ms. Griffin said she was asked if she could get alternate transportation because we cannot schedule an earlier trip. Mr. Johnson said that they should never have ask if you have alternate transportation. Mr. Johnson said there is a no strand policy no one will be left behind it may be later after your pickup window, but we will not leave a client stranded. Ms. Griffin said she was told they do not have anyone to her up. Mr. Johnson said they will pull the audio calls and investigate. Ms. Griffin stated the call center employees needs to show a higher level of empathy toward the disabled community.
* Mr. Webb asked if they are late after the window will there be a penalty. Mr. Johnson stated if someone is picked up after the window there is not penalty to the client only to the provider of service.
* **Policy – Travis Webb**
* Mr. Webb mentioned that a driver did not exit the vehicle for other clients pick up. Ms. Taylor stated the drivers are not exiting the vehicle upon arrival.

Mr. Johnson stated the policy on mask mandates was due to expire but has been extended to May 3rd. Mr. Webb stated that Richmond Paratransit is fare free and asked why Hampton Roads Paratransit is not fare free, Mr. Johnsons stated that Richmond has chosen to go fare free until 2025. Ms. Taylor stated HRT’s funds were allotted differently than Richmond which wouldn’t allow free fare for Hampton Roads.

* **Membership-Paul Atkinson**
* Paul Atkinson Jr. stated 4 openings currently total, 2 for consumer for Chesapeake, 1 for Provider Hampton, 1 TDCHR Liaison.
* **Outreach -Janice Taylor**
* Ms. Taylor stated the Senate Bill 978 which was a tax that was defeated and thanking all that participated. The amount of funds was reduced although there are some funds being taken from HRT. Ms. Taylor stated the People to People had a series on March 31, 2022, which was the challenges on transportation that Ms. Taylor is on the panel. The next series will take place on April 25, 2022, Ms. Taylor encourages more participants to serve on the panel.

Ms. Taylor asked why we do not use Coastal Cab if we do not have enough vehicles in paratransit fleet.

* Michael Ortiz stated cannot guarantee they will pick someone up, so rides are moved around to insure no one is left stranded using the TNC’s and the vehicles they have in the fleet.
* Kyle Snyder added they will contact the Cab company however they cannot always honor the request due to a small amount of wheelchair accessible vehicles. Trever Hunter with Coastal Cab stated they have 18 to 20 wheelchair accessible vehicles that they cannot always dedicate to Paratransit, but they can do more ambulatory trips. It was discussed there are 84 independent drivers on the roster and 52 active.
* **Paratransit Operations Report – Keith Johnson**
* Mr. Keith Johnson gave the Paratransit Operations Report enclosed in the meeting package.
* **Old Business** –
* No old business to discuss
* **New Business-**
* Keith Johnson stated we will be reinstating the appeal panel process.
	+ Motion to adjourn was made and properly seconded, meeting adjourned at 2:34 pm.

The next paratransit meeting will be Wednesday June 8th, 2022. location 509 E 18th St. Bldg 4 Boardroom 2nd floor. Participants will have the option to attend virtually.

Submitted by Cheryl Watson

Paratransit Administrative Coordinator