

## Paratransit Advisory Committee

February 14, 2024

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Meeting Minutes

### **Call to Order**

A quorum was attained and Committee Chair, Mr. Troy Bowser called the meeting to order at 12:59 PM.

Introductions were made.

### **Committee Members in Attendance**

Annie Ascher, Extra Member Consumer - Virginia Beach (Zoom)

Troy Bowser, Chair, Newport News Consumer (Zoom)

Wanda Boykin, Chesapeake Consumer

Keith Ferguson, Hampton Consumer

Patricia Harvey, Newport News Provider (Zoom)

Delores Haywood, Portsmouth Consumer

Joann Mancuso, Virginia Beach Consumer (Zoom)

Mary Mathena, Virginia Beach Consumer (Zoom)

Jeff Raliski, HRTPO, Ex-Officio Position (Zoom)

Renè Rogers, Norfolk Consumer

Courtney Stovall, Hampton Provider (Zoom)

Janice Taylor, Virginia Beach Provider (Zoom)

Denise Wilkins, Hampton Consumer

### **HRT Staff in Attendance**

Tammara Askew, Administrative Support Technician

Amy Braziel, Director of Contracted Services and Operational Analytics

Linda Caroll, Southside Bus Operator Supervisor

April Garrett, Sr. Executive Assistant (Zoom)

Malik Greene, Administrative Coordinator

Monica Hatcher, HR Program Support Specialist (Zoom)

Danielle Hill, Director of Human Resources (Zoom)

Keith Johnson, Paratransit Service Contract Administrator

Christina Malcolm, Human Resources Compliance Manager (Zoom)

Noelle Pinkard, Organizational Advancement Officer (Zoom)

John Powell, Telecommunications Specialist

### **Others in Attendance**

Paul Atkinson Jr., Eggleston (Zoom)

Fonita Babb, Eggleston

Thomas Bryan (Zoom)

Tiffney Burke

Marcia Coleman-Smith (Zoom)  
Shawna Hadnot  
Uricka Harrison (Zoom)  
Trinetta Hayes, Eggleston  
Wray Herring, Paratransit Driver (Zoom)  
Trevor Hunter, Z-Trip (Zoom)  
Denise Johnson, TRAC Chair  
Ina Kreps  
Sherry Moltamore-Mallory, Norfolk Public Schools (Zoom)  
Michael Ortiz, VIA  
Catherine Tyler-Northan (Zoom)  
Michael Williams, Representing Mikka Williams  
Tammro Williams

The February Paratransit Committee meeting package was distributed electronically to committee members in advance of the meeting. The meeting package consisted of:

- Agenda
- Committee Roster
- Minutes from the Previous Meeting
- Paratransit Advisory Committee Guidelines
- Paratransit Operations & Certifications Reports

### **Approval of October 11, 2023 Minutes**

Ms. Janice Taylor will submit corrections to the meeting minutes at a future date. A motion was made to approve the October 2023 meeting minutes with Ms. Taylor's corrections by Ms. Mary Mathena and properly seconded by Ms. Annie Ascher.

### **Public Comment**

Mr. Michael Williams voiced a recurring concern regarding his daughter's rides to the base. Mr. Williams stated that his daughter's rides are extremely late, and she is being left at work for hours without a way to get home. Mr. Williams stated that he feels like the more he complains, the more these instances occur. Mr. Williams expressed that he has reached out to multiple people, but nothing gets done. Mr. Williams questioned who will be accountable for the actions that are affecting his child.

Mr. Michael Ortiz stated that he and Mr. Williams had a sidebar conversation about his daughter's rides. Mr. Ortiz said that there have been issues with drivers getting access to the gate. Mr. Ortiz assured that members of his staff personally went to all bases to ensure that all access lists are updated and that all drivers have proper identification.

**Action Item: Mr. Ortiz will talk to Mr. Williams after the meeting to rectify his daughter's rides.**

There was discussion regarding how many drivers have access to the various bases.

Mr. Williams questioned customer service not following up with complaints. Mr. Williams stated that he never receives a call within 24-48 hours. Mr. Williams also stated that the eta changes every time he calls to check. Mr. Williams emphasized that over the past two weeks his daughter has only gotten 4 days of pay.

Mr. Ortiz stated that his team has been handling more complaints and assured that with the measures taken, service should improve.

Mr. Keith Johnson suggested that the Eggleston team set up a travel training for the Circulator that goes on base.

Mr. Williams voiced appreciation for Mr. Ortiz taking accountability.

Ms. Taylor questioned if a backup list for the base can be created in case drivers call out.

Mr. Ortiz stated that Norfolk Naval originally proposed 18 drivers in total. Mr. Ortiz explained that drivers were selected by looking at attendance/reliability and performance, so there is no need to depend on a secondary list.

Ms. Taylor mentioned Mr. Williams daughter being stranded and how one cannot wait 24-48 hours for a call back in urgent situations.

Mr. Ortiz explained that VIA will always try to find a ride, even though sometimes it may be severely late. Mr. Ortiz said there have been unconventional means, i.e. uber, to make sure a rider gets transported. Mr. Ortiz stated that major complaints will be flagged and go to his team, so they are able to make contact and rectify the situation as fast as possible.

Ms. Amy Braziel stated that there are policies and procedures in place if a rider is stranded. Ms. Braziel explained that when calling reservations, there is a process that VIA goes through to flag and send to the local office immediately if a rider is stranded. Ms. Braziel emphasized the difference between a late ride and being stranded.

There was discussion regarding Z-Trip.

Ms. Uricka Harrison stated that she called reservations today to check on the rides she scheduled for Friday and Saturday, as well as her recurring rides for Wednesday and Sunday. Ms. Harrison explained that the automated system told her she didn't have any rides scheduled, but when she spoke to a reservationist, they were able to see the rides that she booked. Ms. Harrison said a similar situation also happened to her a month ago, but that time she was told she didn't have a ride and was never able to get one.

Mr. Bowser stated that Ms. Harrison's issue will be addressed in Service Quality.

There was discussion regarding getting more drivers to work.

Mr. Thomas Bryan voiced a complaint regarding rides coming from Norfolk to get him from Fort Eustis. Mr. Bryan stated that there have been instances when his rides have been 2-4 hours late. Mr. Bryan emphasized that he would like to see better service, especially for those who have conditions that make it difficult for them waiting alone outside of buildings after hours. Mr. Bryan stated that waiting outside of buildings after they close is a safety concern.

### **Chairman's Report – Mr. Troy Bowser**

Mr. Bowser declared that in the past couple of months the number of complaints received has decreased tremendously. Mr. Bowser stated that although less complaints are being received, the complaints that are being received are the same issues, such as riders being picked up late. Mr. Bowser stated that riders have not been receiving the 5–15-minute notifications.

Mr. Johnson stated that Ms. Rogers and Ms. Boykins have also stated they are not receiving notifications.

**Action Item: Mr. Johnson will open a ticket for VIA to investigate.**

Mr. Bryan and Ms. Taylor also stated that they are not receiving notifications.

Mr. Wray Herring voiced some of his concerns as a TNC driver.

**Action Item: Mr. Ortiz will call Mr. Herring to discuss his concerns.**

Ms. Noelle Pinkard requested support for HRT working with Congress to get additional operating funding over the next two years. Ms. Pinkard stated this funding will help with infrastructure, investing more money into operations, and particularly financing for a legislative study that will look at multimodal transportation needs throughout Hampton Roads, not just specifically HRT, but also including WATA (Williamsburg Area Transit Agency) and Suffolk Transit. Ms. Pinkard stated there is not a bill for these requests, but they are working to get these items included in the committee report which is released on February 18, 2024. Ms. Pinkard stated that she will send Mr. Johnson two letters of support, one for the committee and one that is individualized, so that these letters can be sent to Congress.

Ms. Taylor mentioned that the U.S. Department of Transportation has a list of grants online that may include multimodal transportation.

### **VIA Updates**

Mr. Ortiz reported on VIA updates as enclosed in the appendix of these minutes.

There was discussion regarding how many drivers are currently employed and if Z-Trip helps when there are shortages.

There was also discussion regarding the number of vehicles on the northside/southside, the number of drivers available during certain times, why some drivers go from northside to southside, and driver training.

## **Subcommittee Reports**

### **Service Quality – Ms. Janice Taylor**

Ms. Taylor mentioned an instance where she did not know the TNC driver arrived due to no sign being displayed on the vehicle and not receiving any notifications. Ms. Taylor also voiced a concern regarding a ride that took place on February 6, 2024, where the driver did not exit the van, had a faulty lift, and told her she did not have to assist her because it is not in her profile.

Ms. Taylor informed the committee that Mr. Bryan offered advice about information to access the base.

Ms. Harrison reiterated the issue she brought up during Public Comment with the automated system not showing her booked rides.

Mr. Bowser inquired if reservation numbers are given out when rides are booked.

Mr. Johnson stated that there is a ride request number that can be given out.

Ms. Mathena said on February 12, 2024, she was sitting beside another rider (Linda Midgett-Southard) that did not receive any notifications. Ms. Mathena also stated that another rider's (Karen Brown) rides were late on February 5, 2024, and February 12, 2024. Ms. Mathena mentioned the situation that happened to her on December 8, 2023, when she was stuck outside of the library after it closed due to a late ride. Ms. Mathena inquired why she couldn't get a ride with other riders that were leaving the library as well.

Mr. Ortiz verified what Ms. Mathena said and stated that his team is starting to call riders when rides are running late to let them be aware. Mr. Ortiz informed that this would allow his team to find another ride or contact Z-Trip.

Ms. Moltamore-Mallory stated that she would like the opportunity to develop one line of communication for Norfolk Public School students. Ms. Moltamore-Mallory said that their students are cognitively impaired as well as minors. Ms. Moltamore-Mallory mentioned that since there are multiple staff members responsible for the students, they would like one point of contact for when rides are late. Ms. Moltamore-Mallory inquired if one number could be put on Norfolk Public School students' profiles so that they can be contacted if rides are late.

**Action Item: Mr. Ortiz will get Ms. Moltamore-Mallory's contact information.**

## **Policy**

There were no new policy updates provided.

## **Membership – Mr. Johnson**

Mr. Johnson stated that Ms. Joann Mancuso will be moved from Virginia Beach Provider to Chesapeake Provider due to the service she works for being in Chesapeake.

**Action Item: Mr. Johnson will reach out to Mr. Thomas Vann regarding membership.**

Mr. Johnson expressed Ms. Moltamore-Mallory's interest in joining the committee.

Mr. Johnson informed the committee that there is an opening for a Portsmouth Provider.

There was discussion regarding expiring terms.

Mr. Johnson stated that Ms. Taylor is back on the committee as of today.

## **Training – Ms. Wanda Boykin**

Ms. Boykin stated that the last Driver/Sensitivity training was done on January 27, 2024, and January 28, 2024.

Mr. Ortiz mentioned another training possibly being in July.

**Action Item: Mr. Johnson and Mr. Bowser will plan the next customer outreach at Insight.**

## **Outreach – Ms. Janice Taylor**

Ms. Taylor stated that she represented Paratransit riders and the Committee as a part of the HRT campaign called "Why I Ride."

Ms. Taylor informed the committee of Transit Equity 2024 - Moving Forward Together: Navigating Equity in Transportation on February 15, 2024. Ms. Taylor stated that they will be talking about transportation resources, dignity, access, labor rights, and social mobility.

Ms. Taylor gave an update on the State of Transit Event: Transit Means Business.

There was discussion regarding the State of Transit Event.

There was also discussion regarding the Transit Equity Day event on February 5, 2024.

Ms. Taylor gave thanks to Ms. Braziel, Mr. Benjamin Simms, and Mr. Johnson for the State of Transit event.

## **Paratransit Operations and Certifications Report**

Mr. Johnson reported on Paratransit Operations and Certifications as enclosed in the meeting package.

Ms. Fonita Babb voiced a concern with drivers having no base access and dropping riders off at the commissary, leaving them to walk.

### **Old Business**

Ms. Braziel stated that an active procurement is ongoing for new Paratransit service that will take effect around the July timeframe. Ms. Braziel also informed the committee that Mr. Johnson is retiring by the end of June.

Ms. Taylor inquired if the committee is following the Transportation District Commission meeting protocols.

Ms. Braziel declared that these meetings should be following those protocols and will start adjusting.

Ms. Taylor mentioned committee members reading the updated guidelines and expressed getting riders to become a part of the committee.

### **New Business**

Mr. Johnson stated that he sent an invite out for the Ferry ribbon cutting on February 16, 2024.

Mr. Bowser adjourned the meeting at 3:21 PM.

**The next Paratransit Advisory Committee Meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, April 10, 2024, at 3400 Victoria Blvd., Hampton, VA 23661, Second Floor Boardroom.**

Submitted by Malik Greene, Paratransit Administrative Coordinator



# Hampton Roads Transit PAC meeting

Feb 14, 2023



Follow up from the PAC



- **Intro**
- **Service Review - Michael Ortiz**
- **Vehicle Updates - Javier Rodriguez**
- **Driver / Training Updates - Josh Swann**
- **Using the App - Michael Ortiz**





Service Updates



	Trips completed	Pickup/Dropoff On-Time - Performance	Average trip duration
Jan	27.3k 90%		22 min
Dec	31.6k 90%		23 min
Nov	33.3k 87%		26 min
Oct			26 min

Areas we are focusing on:

- Better communication
  - Calling riders about rides
- Better Process
  - TOS Retraining
  - Base Passes
- Better Capture
  - Credit Card Control
- Better results
  - Better OTP
  - Better distribution of riders
  - Less calls /complaints

VIA Proprietary & Confidential.



Driver Training / Driver Acquisition/Vehicles



Vehicles

- o Total Fleet: 100
- o Total SS - 79
- o Total NS - 21
- o Maintenance/Compliance
  - The HRT fleet remains 100% compliant with PMs and state inspection requirements. Shift Transit's main effort remains on ensuring all vehicles are safe to operate in a high operational tempo while addressing common concerns such as wheelchair lifts.

VIA Proprietary & Confidential.



- Driver hiring - We are still onboarding new drivers and have maintained two training classes per month. We look to continue this trend to accommodate current demand and any increase in demand we see.
- Refresher training - We held a successful refresher course on January 27th and 28th where we addressed issues such as, greeting the riders, assisting with boarding the vehicles, waiting on riders windows to start, contacting drivers center with any issues contacting riders at pick up, securments, and safe driving.

 Proprietary & Confidential.



Don't Worry, Get h **APPy**



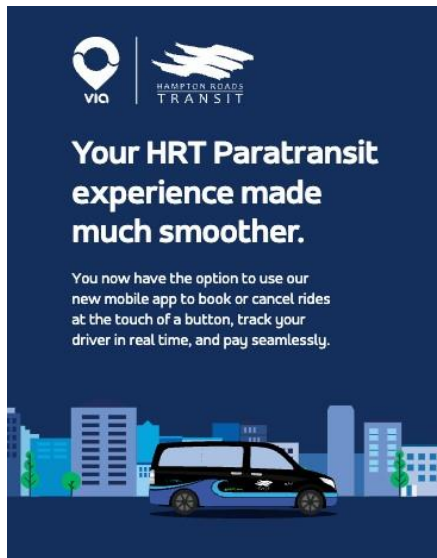
The power to book and look are in the palm of your hand!

Better experience!  
Faster booking!  
Feedback on your experience!

 Proprietary & Confidential.



Don't Worry, Get h **APPY**



## Gain full control of your experience with the HRT Paratransit mobile app.

- ✔ Book rides straight from your phone.
- ✔ Track your ride in real-time.
- ✔ See all of your upcoming bookings.
- ✔ Change and cancel rides.
- ✔ Leave feedback on your experience.



Don't Worry, Get h **APPY**



### Why should I switch to using the app?

- Book your rides even faster.
- Track your driver's location and exact arrival time at your pickup point.
- Pay simply through a credit or debit card on file.

### How do I download the app?

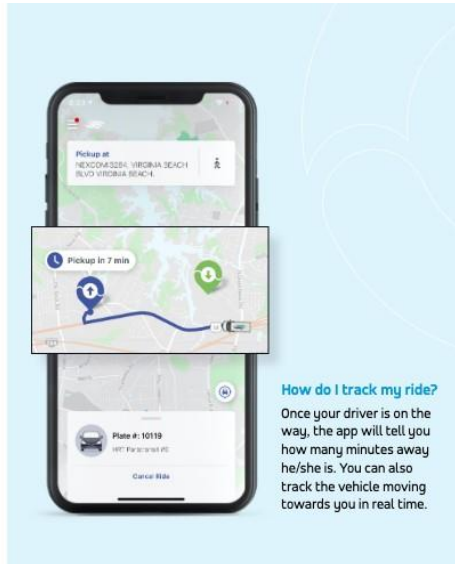
Head to the **App Store** or **Google Play Store** on a smartphone or tablet and search **HRT Paratransit**.

### How do I log into my account?

Click on the **Login** button. Your HRT ID is your username. Click **Retrieve Password**. We will send you a text message and a phone call with a password to login.

### How do I book a ride?

Enter your pickup and dropoff addresses, and choose **Depart at** or **Arrive by time**. Select your travel reason. Choose from the series of ride proposal windows.



### How do I see all of my pre-scheduled rides?

Head to the app menu by tapping the top left corner of your screen. Click on **Scheduled Rides**.

### How do I cancel a ride?

Head to the app menu by tapping the top left corner of your screen. Click on **Scheduled Rides**. Find the ride you'd like to cancel from either the calendar or list view options. Click the small **Cancel Ride** text in the bottom right corner.


### How do I track my ride?

Once your driver is on the way, the app will tell you how many minutes away he/she is. You can also track the vehicle moving towards you in real time.

Learn how to get started at: [gohrt.com/paratransit/app](http://gohrt.com/paratransit/app)



Until the last day.

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