

---

## THE ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA MEETING MINUTES

March 22, 2006

### NOTABLES

- All AACT members are asked to come prepared to discuss a new format, topics for discussion, "Moving AACT into the Future with the MBTA", and ideals for the "Transportation Bond Bill"
- Please, sign in at all meetings. Keep your attendance current to ensure your right to vote or hold office
- All meetings are equipped with assistive-listening devices
- As a courtesy to the hosting vendor, the Passenger Assistance Training sessions are to be attended for the full day. Members, please plan your day accordingly
- Distribution of handouts should be at least fifteen minutes before the meetings

### ATTENDANCE

Philip Beaulieu, Marilyn MacNab, Jim Oliver, Paul Barresi, Kathryn Piccard, Michael Smith, Thomas Gilbert, Reggie Clark, Frank Taverna, Phil Semans, Lillian Haynes, Richard Nurt, Almeata Collins, Pauline Lincoln, Jeff Grant, Cheryl Ravalli, Tammy Perrault, Lea-Ann Markuns, Rick Johnson, David Tarrant, Jack Buckley, Cheri Lieberman, Constance Muloahy, Richard Mahoney, Elizabeth Commerford, Gloria Mastro, David Mortimer, Jim Wice, Loretta Williams, Barbara Garlington-Carrier, Karen Nurt, Pam Rogers, and Ben Haynes

#### Agency Representatives:

Richard Chapman and Cynthia Guise – Massachusetts Commission for the Blind  
Sharon Harrison – Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

#### MBTA Representatives:

Carol Joyce-Harrington, Robert Rizzo, Michael Festa, Michael Hulak, Kathy Cox, and Ron Mariani, and Dorothy Winn,

#### Vendor Representatives:

Joint Venture – Carlton Jones and Victor Herrera  
GLSS – Jacquelyn Dunlop and Dennis B  
Kiessling Transit, Inc. – M. Claire DiPillo  
Veteran Transportation Services – John Tuttle

**Central Transportation Planning Staff:** Janie Guion



10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150  
Boston, MA 02116-3968  
(617) 973-7100  
Fax: (617) 973-8855  
TDD: (617) 973-7089  
E-mail: [AACT@ctps.org](mailto:AACT@ctps.org)

---

## **AGENDA**

- Self-Introduction of the Audience
- The February minutes were presented; the motion to a move was seconded and passed unanimously.

### **Chairman's Report**

- Announced the passing of Mr. Vince Lique, Executive Director, of the Greater Lynn Senior Services. Mr. Lique had been with the company for twenty-four years until his recent retirement (please see the attached).
- Thanked the AACT Board for keeping the meeting focused and on schedule.

He asked for questions. None were presented. The report was accepted.

### **MBTA/OTA Fixed-Route Services Report:**

Kathy Cox, Manager of Fixed-Route Services for the MBTA/OTA (Office for Transportation Access), summarized the activities of February and March by announcing the following information (report attached).

### **Highlights:**

- OTA/Back Bay staff attended the annual Legislative Reception at the State House
- OTA /Back Bay staff made presentations to provide information on MBTA accessible programs and services for persons in senior-housing developments
- Automatic Fare Collection equipment is installed at the Courthouse (Silver Line) and South Station and Quincy Adams (Red Line) Stations
- Stop Announcement monitors continue to ride buses to determining compliance with the ADA requirements for calling out stops
- The Stop Announcement compliance rate for February is 77.7 percent.
- She gave a brief update on MBTA vehicle procurement

She then asked for questions.

**J. Oliver:** Who is funding the new retrofitting of the old Green Line cars?

**K. Cox:** The MBTA is paying for the retrofitting of the older #7 cars. The manufacturer is paying for the modifications being made to the low-floor, #8 cars.

**J. Grant:** Why is the compliance rate on Stop Announcements still very low?

**K. Cox:** We look forward to a 100% compliance rate when the fleet is fitted with the automated system. We continue to require our workforce to make all required stop announcements. The T has suspended workers without pay and some operators have been let go.

**R. Mahoney:** Is the complaint summary only from AACT members or the general public?

**K. Cox:** The general public complaints are included.

**R. Nurt:** I just found out that persons who are legally blind are entitled to a special pass from the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MBC). I have the MBTA special needs pass. What is the advantage?

**K. Cox:** Persons who are legally blind may register with the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) and, if found qualified, may be issued an MCB Card. Persons with an MCB Card are automatically eligible for the new MBTA Blind Access Card, which entitles the bearer to free fares on MBTA buses, trains and subway. Persons who use the MBTA Transportation Access Pass ID are entitled to reduced fares on all fixed route services: 25 cents on local buses; 35 cents on subway; and 1/2 of the full fare on commuter rail, zone/express buses and commuter boat.

**K. Nurt:** I have trouble getting on trains when only half of the door opens and the platform gap.

**K. Cox:** Anytime there is a problem with malfunctioning doors on the train please note the date, car number, line, and time of incident. The gap between the platform and the car could indicate a train suspension system or track alignment problem. Please report the car number, door, and station platform to my office at 617-222-5976. The MBTA will continue to meet with the disability community to discuss how to address best the train/platform gap.

**Consumer:** Often times when I try to take an elevator I have trouble getting on with my motorized chair.

**K. Cox:** We are making progress with elevator repairs. Today we have one elevator down compared to a few months ago when we were experiencing numerous outages.

**Garlington:** Are bus operators required to kneel the bus?

**K. Cox:** After a couple of meetings with the MA Senior Action Council, where the kneeler feature was discussed, the MBTA agreed to put a notice near the front door of the bus indicating that the kneeler will be provided upon request.

The report was accepted.

### **AACT Fixed Route Coordinator Report**

Frank Taverna began his report with the following comments:

- Site visits were made to several MBTA stations to monitor elevators
- A visit was made to the MBTA Charlestown Garage to observe ADA training and the hands-on training of new-hire bus operators
- I have been asked to participate in future ADA personnel trainings

He then asked for questions.

**J. Grant:** Will there be more re-training of current drivers as it was in the past?

**K. Cox:** There will be training in the future. The Authority plans to re-train all operators. It is in the pre-planning stage.

**B. Haynes:** Why was this training not announced? What material is being presented at the training?

**F. Taverna:** Ron Mariani invited me to the training. I could perhaps get you a copy.

**P. Barresi:** Are the complaints you receive from people with disabilities?

**F. Taverna:** Yes. I get them from Ron Mariani.

**R. Mariani:** The summary reflects the many sources of where the complaints are from.

**B. Haynes:** According to 49 CFR Part 37 Sec 37.137 trainings are to be opened to all users. We should be invited to the planning. Why have I not heard about fixed route training?

**K. Cox:** the entire K. Cox: training material have been reviewed or been written by B. Haynes Consultants.

The law does state that users participate. A new training is being planned five-days at four hours a day. Everyone is invited.

The report was accepted.

### **MBTA/OTA Paratransit Contract Operations Report**

Bob Rizzo, Manager of Paratransit and Contract Operations for the MBTA, distributed the attached February and March reports. Mr. Rizzo also gave a more detailed announcement on the life of Mr. Vince Lique, Executive Director of Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS), and what he meant to his community and GLSS, and all who knew Mr. Lique will miss him.

### **He gave a report on OTA Activities and Updates:**

#### **Highlights:**

- Veterans Transportation Services hosted THE RIDE Safety Committee meeting with OTA staff and Contractor representatives
- The OTA staff members attended a logistical meeting for the impending move to the fifth floor, Room 5750 Staff participated in the Executive Office of Transportation committee review of vehicle bids related to the statewide procurement of accessible vehicles
- A site visit to the new location of the Boston Center for Independent Living with the Boston Transportation Department to establish a convenient drop-off location
- OTA participated in the following informational meetings: Executive Office of Elderly Affairs, THE RIDE Appeals Committee, on-going Access Study, and contractor representatives of THE RIDE
- A purchase order was issued for 21 (THE RIDE) sedans; drive cams will be added to help monitor safety

## Service Updates:

- Ridership increased 7.8 percent for the month, compared to February 2005 (from 104,071 to 112,195)
- Fiscal year (FY) 2006 ridership year-to-date (YTD) ridership trend continues with trips up 9.8 percent (from 866,915 to 952, 102) over FY 2005, while maintaining a zero for “Not Available” (NA)
- The on-time performance (within 30 minutes of scheduled pickup time) was at 98.1 percent, YTD 91.7 percent (within 15 minutes of scheduled pick-up time)
- YTD complaints have decreased by 42 percent from February 2005 (from 244 to 142). February complaint levels are below 200 for the tenth straight month
- YTD average is 9.85 complaints per 10,000 trips requested, or 1.32 complaints per thousand trips delivered
- YTD vehicular accidents are down 7 percent (from 417 to 388), while vehicle accidents for the month were down 41 percent compared to last February (from 71 to 42)
- OTA and THE RIDE contractors have re-instituted the monthly Safety Committee meetings
- Mr. Rizzo thanked the Committee for their efforts in helping to improve the safety performance of THE RIDE

He then asked for questions.

**B. Haynes:** Are accidents and incidents collectively counted or are they counted separately? How do you identify incidents on your report?

**B. Rizzo:** Motor vehicle accidents are reported to the registry. We measure complaints separately.

**J. Grant:** What progress has been made with THE RIDE vans having the van number in the vehicles? Why haven't this issue been met since the new RIDE contract?

**B. Rizzo:** I will need to do some research for the next meeting.

**P. Barresi:** What is the process when you file a late card for THE RIDE?

**B. Rizzo:** Your account will be credited.

**M. MacNab:** What is the process if your office is responsible for the delay in re-certification?

**D. Winn:** We will give extra time for processing.

**K. Piccard:** Last winter THE RIDE implemented new fare software that generated many complaints. Were complaints less this year than last winter?

**B. Rizzo:** Yes.

The report was accepted.

## AACT Paratransit Coordinator Report

Paul Barresi presented topics of scheduling problems, poor performance, late pickups, and

citizens' reports and addressed each from the vendors' hardcopy.

He then asked for questions. The report was accepted.

**J. Grant:** In the interest of time don't read the vendors' report. The vendors will be sharing that information during their report. Please tell us about conversations you have had with the vendors to address these problems.

**P. Barresi:** I don't agree.

**Consumer:** Would you give more details on the complaints?

**Chairman Beaulieu:** The vendor will give more details during their report.

**B. Haynes:** Why is the complete name of the consumer filing the complaint listed and only the employees' first name and initial appear on the complaint? Consumers have been hassled and feel threatened because of this process.

**R. Rizzo:** If a consumer feels there have been reprisals, please contact OTA at 617-222-5123.

### **Project Advocacy Group Member and Water Transportation Coordinator Report**

Kathryn Piccard began her report with the following comments:

The Project Advocacy Group scheduled a March meeting that was delayed due to final negotiations of the class action lawsuit against the MBTA, which had been postponed for two months. The next meeting will be in May.

She then asked for questions. There were none. The report was accepted.

### **Vendors' Reports**

#### **Joint Venture of TTI /YCN, Inc.**

Carlton Jones, Safety Manager, read from his report for the month of February (report attached).

He then asked for questions.

**J. Oliver:** Do you have anyone monitoring your road supervisors?

**C. Jones:** Supervisors are tracked by their paperwork at the end of day.

**J. Grant:** What percentage of your same-day requests are accounted for by trips that is not local to your base area?

**C. Jones:** I will need to do some research.

**J. Wice:** What can you tell us about union negotiations and strike contingency plans?

**R. Rizzo:** One company has concluded negotiations with the Teamsters local and another is concluding. A strike would not be something the MBTA would look favorably on.

**B. Haynes:** Where are you with developing criteria for a “no-show” policy with this new technology you have implemented?

**C. Jones:** We have been discussing the issue. We have no answers yet.

The report was accepted.

**Veterans Transportation Services, Inc. (VTS)**

John Tuttle, Operations Manager, read from his report for the month of February (report attached).

He then asked for questions.

**C. Lieberman:** Are you aware of consumers giving tips to drivers? Drivers have been giving little to no door-to-door service and that concerns me.

**J. Tuttle:** There should be no giving of tips and drivers should not be accepting them. Door-to-door service is required and every consumer should be given that service. Consumers should file complaints concerning door-to-door service.

**P. Barresi:** Reading through the complaints I took note of the one where a seat had fallen on the consumer. Can you give an update on how this was handled?

**J. Tuttle:** We have checked every van. All vehicles will continue to be checked for malfunctioning seats and preventative maintenance will be done.

**B. Haynes:** Mr. Chairman, Board members should not ask questions ahead of the audience. Board members have direct access to phone lines of both the vendors and members of the MBTA staff.

The report was accepted.

**Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc.**

Jacquelyn Dunlop, Director of Transportation, read from her report for the month of February (report attached).

She then asked for questions.

**J. Oliver:** Do you have anyone monitoring your road supervisors?

**J. Dunlop:** The Operations supervisor.

The report was accepted.

**Kiessling Transit, Inc.**

N. Claire DiPillo, General Manager, read from her report for the month of February (report attached).

She then asked for questions.

**J. Oliver:** Do you have anyone monitoring your road supervisors?

**C. DiPillo:** There is no one. That will change.

**J. Grant:** How often is a same-day request accommodated into Boston?

**C. DiPillo:** I don't have any statistics but I'll try and get them for you.

The report was accepted.

### **MBTA Police Report:**

Lt. Donald O'Connor read from his report for the month of February.

- Parking enforcement at bus stops continues in the City of Boston
- MBTA Deputy Chief continuing in his quest to address legislation to change the violation for illegally parked cars at the MBTA bus stops. The fine would be the same as parking in a handicap space
- I will research who has legal jurisdiction for the of THE RIDE when there is an accident (Boston Police or MBTA Transit Police)

**R. Rizzo:** The MBTA presently owns about 60 percent of the fleet and are marked THE RIDE. All vehicles have a unique color stripe that indicates the vendor vehicles. Vendors only own 40 percent of the vehicles. In the past if an accident occurred in which an MBTA vehicle was involved the MBTA officers would have the jurisdiction. If a vendor owns the vehicle the local police has the jurisdiction.

**D. O'Connor:** I will do more research.

**M. McNab:** Will the increased fines be for all bus stops?

**D. O'Connor:** The MBTA has its own parking tickets and we also issue tickets for the City of Boston. The MBTA tags cars in MBTA parking garages; those funds go into the general fund. We would like to be able tag bus stops as MBTA property. We would also like to increase that fine to be equal to that of parking in a handicap zone.

**B. Haynes:** The passengers on THE RIDE vehicles are considered MBTA passengers by virtual of the fact the MBTA contracts with private vendors and those vendors stand in the shoes of the MBTA. Why wouldn't both the local police and the MBTA work together?

**D. O'Connor:** It is difficult to answer. I have not heard of many responses to accidents.

**R. Clark:** When you get the legislation passed you should get the local jurisdiction to help enforce fines for illegally parked cars.

**D. O'Connor:** This is a very difficult matter. Just as soon as one car is towed, another one pulls in. The Boston Transportation Department has been very cooperative with us.

**B. Haynes:** I would ask that most of you please refrain from using the word "handicap". The bus stops are designated to the MBTA by the city that they are in. Are you saying city patrolman want help ticketing cars? MBTA employees are sometimes violators themselves. Is there any reason not to ticket and tow those vehicles?

**D. O'Connor:** The Boston Transportation Department is very cooperative. Employees have been warned about illegally parking.

**J. Grant:** Is there a process for employees who illegally park at bus stops? Is the process enforced?

**D. O'Connor:** There are rules against it. We have had to counsel employees on illegally parking. We don't get many complaints about their parking.

**J. Grant:** I have called many times. Often times no one takes responsibility.

### **Open Discussion:**

#### **Madam Vice-Chair McNab led the open discussion:**

She began the discussion by commenting on the following items:

- AACT has accomplished much; this is an opportunity for the audience to share their thoughts and concerns about the future of AACT
- Members should send in their comments, concerns, and ideas on what AACT should focus on and address to: AACT, c/o CTPS, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116

**C. Liberman:** I am concerned that AACT is not using time wisely. I look forward to a more problem-solving format. I would like to see a discussion of a question a month.

**B. Haynes:** The consumers are abusing THE RIDE system. Consumers need to be aware that this is shared-service operation. More should be done to educate and train the consumer to help make THE RIDE run better.

**J. Oliver:** I did receive an e-mail from Dr. Liberman in early April. I'm not sure what happened with that document. I did not act on it since it was around the time I was dealing with personal issues. More time should be given to discuss these very important issues.

**Chairman Beaulieu:** We are inviting the MBTA General Manager, Daniel Grabuskas, to speak at the April meeting. It is still early so we don't have the confirmation at this time. Should the General Manager not be available we will have the open discussion back on the agenda.

**M. MacNab:** Item #7 was given prior notice and allotted 25 minutes. Chairman Beaulieu made an Executive decision to move it to the last item of the day. When I opened the discussion I stated that you could send your comments to Janie Guion, the Coordinator, or call 617-973-7507 and leave a message or e-mail at [AACT@CTPS.ORG](mailto:AACT@CTPS.ORG). I have been approached about a panel discussion with the vendors. I have also gotten ideas for fixed route issues. I have been getting many ideas from the members.

**J. Grant:** I would like to hear more reports from the MBTA Design and Construction Department.

**Old Business:** None was presented.

**New Business:** None was presented.

**Announcement:** A reminder: AACT Spring Party will be on April 26, 2006 at 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM. Please, pay in advance. No money will be collected the day of the party.

**The meeting was adjourned.**