

# **THE ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA MEETING MINUTES**

**SEPTEMBER 28, 2005**

## **NOTABLES**

- Board member Kathryn Piccard presided over the meeting at the request of Madam Chair Maselli who was hospitalized
- Please, sign in at all meetings.
- Keep your attendance current to allow for your right to vote or hold office
- Due to the resignation of Chairman Oliver, a special election will be held to fill the Chair's seat
- All meetings are equipped with assistive-listening devices
- As a courtesy to the hosting vendor, 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
- It was reported that former Chairman Oliver would be returning home at the end of the month

## **ATTENDANCE**

April Maselli, Richard Chapman, Philip Beaulieu, Kathy Mooney, Marilyn MacNab, Frank Taverna, Cheryl Lieberman, Lillian Haynes, Paul Barresi, Mark Kalashian, Thomas Gilbert, Kathryn Piccard, Cheryl Ravalli, Phillip Semans, Richard Mahoney, Almeater Collins, Karen Nurt, Richard Nurt, Richard Troise, Ann Troise, and Lloyd Caswell

### **Agency Representatives:**

Jeff Grant – Milton Commission for the Disabled  
Richard Chapman and Cynthia Guise – Massachusetts Commission for the Blind  
Kathy Roach – Massachusetts Office on Disability  
Ben Haynes – B. Haynes Consultants  
Debra Freed – New England Paralyzed Veterans Association

### **MBTA Representatives:**

Carol Joyce-Harrington, Robert Rizzo, Dorothy Winn, Alex Murkison, Mike Festa, Mike Hulak, Paul Fitzgerald, Carl Merrick, Lt. Donald O'Connor, Kathy Cox, Paul Strobis, Ron Mariani, Patricia Houston, and Tangela Burgess

### **Vendor Representatives:**

Joint Venture – Gerry Alfonseca, GLSS – Jacquelyn Dunlop; Kiessling Transit, Inc. – Claire DiPillo; Veteran Transportation Services – John Tuttle

### **Central Transportation Planning Staff:**

Janie Guion                      Steve Levine

Board Member Kathryn Piccard, called the meeting to order at 1:05 P.M.

## **AGENDA**

- Members and guests introductions
- Agenda read by board member Paul Barresi
- Meeting Minutes: The July minutes were unanimously approved

## **Remarks were made on the following:**

- A special election for a new Chairman will be held at the November Meeting
- According to AACT bylaws members must approve the election with a two-thirds vote at two consecutive meetings prior to the election (at this and the October meeting)
- Only members who have attended at least two meetings in the previous four months are eligible to vote; The first vote will take place today under new business
- The public hearing on disability issues will be held
- Individual complaints should be addressed privately with OTA or the vendor
- The Partners in Transportation will be celebrating Disability Awareness on October 19
- First-time members were welcomed

She then asked for questions.

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

Kathy Cox, Manager of Fixed-Route Services for the MBTA/OTA, summarized the activities of August/September by announcing the following information (report attached).

## **Highlights:**

- A request for bids for 152 low-floor buses was advertised. Bids are due in October with expected delivery from fall 2006 to summer 2007
- Funds were approved by the MBTA Board of Directors for the Morton Street stop in Mattapan on the Fairmount Line
- MBTA staff participated in two public outreach events at the Brookline Senior Center and the Roxbury Multi Service Center
- Repair of the ten low-floor Green Line cars has been completed and they are back in revenue service. The cars still continue to be monitored daily. Another ten owned by the MBTA will undergo the same intensive repair. Future decisions about the project will be made when the work has been completed on the additional ten cars

- MBTA transit police have increased efforts to ticket and tow illegally parked cars in bus stops and in spaces designated for persons with disabilities. AACT members have been very diligent in providing information about specific locations
- The ADA monitoring of buses continues with the compliance rate for buses at 82.4%
- On August 3 the Savin Hill Station on the Red Line opened to public
- The MBTA will add 600 new “spider” maps to the system to include the Silver Line and accessible stations
- Silver Line Phase III from Dudley to Airport station is on hold to hear more public input
- Monitoring of the elevators continues

### **Ongoing events:**

#### **The following activities are continuing:**

- The installation of stop announcement equipment; drivers will announce stops, should there be an equipment failure
- Reduced fare replacement cards, with the Transportation Access Pass (TAP), senior citizen Access Pass or an ID card issued by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
- The Free Travel Training program, which promotes independence to THE RIDE consumer
- New-vehicle purchases and deliveries

She then asked for questions.

**R. Chapman:** The MBTA Charlie Card has a 15-minute waiting time on the cards. What can be done to help ensure who finishes an assignment earlier and returns only to find she has to wait to go through the gate?

**K. Cox:** This is done to stop fare evasion of others being handed-off the card for entry into the system. I will pass on your concerns.

**M. Kalashian:** What success have you had with the commuter rail complaints?

**K. Cox:** The staff is new. Anna Barry, who is in charge of Rail Operations, will be here at the October meeting.

**J. Grant:** Why are bus/train schedules moved from stations weeks before the next rating? You return a few weeks later and still the new schedules are no place on site.

**K. Cox:** Operations planning or perhaps the station official is responsible for all the distribution of schedules. I will pass on your concerns.

**K. Mooney:** To what areas will your outreach extend?

**K. Cox:** We have an extensive outreach program that consists of senior centers

and buildings that hold a large number of people. Contact my office at 617-222-1542 or the Web site at [www.mbta.com](http://www.mbta.com) for further information.

**P. Semans:** Is Back Bay Station the place to go for the senior pass?

**K. Cox:** Yes, you may also go to Downtown Crossing Station at the Orange Line location. It is located on the Chauncy Street concourse near the shoe repair shop.

The report was accepted.

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

Bob Rizzo, Manager of Paratransit and Contract Operations for the MBTA distributed the attached August/September report.

He gave a report on the following OTA activities:

#### **OTA Activities:**

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- THE RIDE staff and vendors attended the re-instituted safety committee to be held monthly to collectively address vehicle accidents
- Staff participated with representatives from the State Auditor office
- Representatives from StrataGen System and Ontira Communications demonstrated the last application to THE RIDE contractors and OTA staff
- There was a presentation by OTA at the Brookline Senior Center
- Dottie Winn participated in several meetings on transportation options for the elderly in the commonwealth
- Paratransit staff participated in a StrataGen System Users' Conference held in Seattle, WA
- Chelsea Soldiers Home held the annual Elks baseball game night at Fenway Park with THE RIDE services provided by the Greater Lynn Senior Services
- Staff participated in the TranSystems public forums to gather information from consumers on MBTA accessibility. Five meetings have been scheduled
- There was a site visit to VTS with General Manager Grabauskas for an overview of THE RIDE
- A letter of appreciation was received from the organizers of the entertainment concert on the Esplanade with reference to Carol Frazier of (VTS) for her hands-on commitment to persons with disabilities during the Fourth of July celebration

#### **Service Updates:**

Good News

- Ridership increased 8.9 percent for the month compared to August 2004 (from 111,383 to 121,389)
- Not since 1977 has ridership been this high
- Year-to-date 2006 ridership increased 6 percent over fiscal year 2004 and the “Not Available” (NA) rate was at zero, the same as fiscal year 2005
- The on-time performance (within 30 minutes of scheduled pickup time) was at 98.6 percent year-to-date
- June complaint levels, at 142, have stayed below 200 for the fifth straight month, with 8.5 complaints per 1,000 trips delivered

#### Bad News

- There was a 58 percent increase in complaints year-to-date over August fiscal year 2005
- Year-to-date vehicular accidents are up 44 percent over fiscal year 2005
- OTA and THE RIDE contractors have re-instituted the monthly Safety Committee meetings to address this trend

He then asked for questions.

**Consumer:** I report THE RIDE when it is 30-minutes late. I do not hear if I am right or wrong.

**R. Rizzo:** Please contact my office. We have sixty-day backlog.

**P. Barresi:** How will your office establish, without a ticket from THE RIDE, that the late card entitles me to a free ride?

**R. Rizzo:** You can check your balance on-line; if you call OTA we can check with the Revenue Department.

**C. Lieberman:** What is the rule for multi-rides on the same day?

**R. Rizzo:** The policy is that there must be an hour between rides.

**K. Nurt:** Do drivers have any discretion to drop off passengers differently from the way it is logged on the route sheet?

**R. Rizzo:** I would like for each vendor during reports to explain the type of latitude that is given their drivers.

**J. Grant:** How many active riders are there in the system?

**R. Rizzo:** We have 65,000 eligible riders; not counting those who have moved away or are inactive for a variety of reasons.

**P. Strobis:** We have 18,511 active riders since last December.

**P. Semans:** Where can I get the late cards?

**R. Rizzo:** I will ask that all vendors make sure all drivers have cards before they

leave the garage. A staff member from my office will give them to you.

**P. Barresi:** Do all vendors have toll-free services?

**R. Rizzo:** This service is not offered by the MBTA. We only offer the in-state toll-free number. Our contractors offer the out-of-state toll-free number to customers.

**K. Piccard:** Are you encouraging participation in the upcoming meetings? Why were flyers not given out on a daily basis?

**R. Rizzo:** We were not instructed to give out the flyers daily. We did have two specific days to hand out flyers on THE RIDE vehicles.

The report was accepted.

### **Vendors' Reports**

Vendors were asked to comment on the type of discretion given to drivers for flexibility on passenger drop-offs. All vendors basically agreed that drivers are to use their own discretion and common sense, since the key element is time.

### **Greater Lynn Senior Services, Inc. (GLSS)**

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

She then asked for questions.

**K. Roach:** A passenger asked to be dropped off at home before the driver drove to Norwell, but was not. She stated that the driver had to pass by her house.

**J. Dunlop:** Drivers are asked to use their own discretion.

The report was accepted.

### **Kiessling Transit, Inc.**

M. Claire DiPillo, General Manager, read from her report for the month of August/September (report attached).

**Consumer:** What is a 60-minute zone trip?

**C. DiPillo:** If you make a South Shore-to-South Shore or a Boston-to-Boston trip, it trip is the same zone. Boston to South Shore is two zones; this takes more time.

**P. Semans:** Do I have the right to ask a driver to turn the radio to an English speaking station?

**C. DiPillo:** Absolutely!

The report was accepted.

## **Veterans Transportation Services, Inc.**

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

He then asked for questions.

**M. Kalashian:** Why are your drivers incapable of leading persons who are blind?

**J. Tuttle:** There may be a problem with escorting a person through a doorway. We concentrate on leading a person who is the visually impaired in our training.

**J. Grant:** What is the difference in “verbal warning” and “spoken to”?

**J. Tuttle:** A “verbal warning” means that we have determined that a violation occurred and that he will be placed on the disciplinary track. “Spoken to” means that we were unable to substantiate the claim.

The report was accepted.

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

Gerry Alfonseca, Operations Manager, read from his report for the month of June (report attached).

He then asked for questions.

**M. Kalashian:** What are you doing to improve your numbers of missed trips?

**G. Alfonseca:** We are adding to the fleet and updating with the new software and working with the schedulers.

The report was accepted.

## **MBTA Transit Police Department**

Lt. Donald O’Connell, MBTA Transit Police liaison to AACT, reported on the following issues.

The MBTA:

- Has increased enforcement at bus stops and accessible locations
- Is unable to enforce illegal parking tickets in other cities and towns; the issue will be brought to the next command staff meeting
- Is working on station communication lines

He then asked for questions.

**R. Chapman:** Regarding the incident at Fields Corner Station, were there any other injuries other than the one death on the third rail?

**D. O'Connor:** There were no other injuries.

**B. Haynes:** Why is there no enforcement of illegally parked cars on the Charles Street entrance of this building?

**D. O'Connor:** This area is monitored. When you tag and tow, another car will gather in the space.

**K. Mooney:** There are violators at the Salem train station.

**D. O'Connor:** You can call that in to the local police station.

**J. Grant:** I have often observed MBTA vehicles blocking this building's bus stop.

**D. O'Connor:** MBTA vehicles are moved right away.

**Old Business:** None was presented.

**New Business:** A motion was taken to vote to have an interim election. The motion was carried by a two-thirds vote of the membership.

**Announcements:** The Partners in Transportation will be celebrating its annual Disability Awareness Month on October 19. Everyone is invited.

**The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 P.M.**