

Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts *Bay Transportation Authority (AACT)*

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Members Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

Board of Directors:

Chairman – James F. White

Vice Chairman – Lisa Weber

Executive Board

Nadine Jones

Mary Ann Murray

Beverly Ann Rock

James Tozza

Lisa Weber

Meeting opened at 1:08 PM.

Reading of the Agenda

Introductions

Attendees:

Jim White, Nadine Jones, Eric Lane, Lisa Weber, Dee Whittlesy, Mary A. Murray, Gail and Malvin Weinstein, Debbie Weathers, Nancy Miller, Mary Dennesen, Kevin Wilson, Richard Welch, David Vieira, Elizabeth Crocker, Reggie Clark, Angela Manerson, Christine Daniels, Stephen Jukins, Sylvia Mekler, Carl Slegland, Jennifer Workman, Millisa Garside, Kevin Eaton, Ester Minor, Sadie Simone

MBTA Staff:

Carol Joyce-Harrington, Rob Sampson, Mike Hulak, Dana Nye

Vendor Staff:

Elizabeth Hickey, Victor Herrera, Kevin MacDonald, Steve Epps, Linda S. Salazar, Chris Woznac, Lynn Hutchins

Other:

Judge Patrick King, Patricia Mendez, Gerald Plante, Jessica Podesva, Nancy Houghton, Rhoda Gibson, Tom Gilbert

Approval of Meeting Minutes

None were presented.

Chairman White acknowledged and thanked the members and friends who attended the Summit earlier today. He was pleased that many remained for the AACT meeting.

Chairman's Report

He stated the following:

- An expression of gratitude to the CTPS staff and others for all their hard work for this year's Summit, a wonderful event.
- On May 17 two AACT members attended MBTA Bus Training school in Charlestown. He invited members to attend training and

make arrangements with the AACT Coordinator at 857.702.3658 or by email at aact@ctps.org.

- On May 16, he attended the System-Wide Accessibility External Engagement meeting for the Plan for Accessible Transportation Infrastructure.
- On May 12, he attended the Paratransit Task Force meeting.
- On May 4 and 18 he attended Community Engagement meetings.
- On May 2 he attended the 2017 Massachusetts Community Transportation Coordination Conference in Holyoke.

He then asked for questions. There were none.

Chairman White introduced the Honorable Judge Patrick King; the court-appointed independent monitor for the MBTA Settlement agreement gave an update on the future consolidation of AACT into a new committee.

Community Engagement Committee Update

Honorable Judge King thanked Chairman White for the opportunity to address the members of the Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT). He then recognized the many who have worked over the last eleven years to make the MBTA a much better service for passengers with disabilities.

He acknowledged the chairman for his continued involvement with training programs for bus operators and commented about the marked improvement of the bus service over the years.

He credited the chairman, those involved in the Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL) settlement agreement, and the MBTA managers and employees who have worked to make accessibility improvements on the MBTA system over the years. Everyone involved should be proud of their work, he said.

Judge King noted that last month was the eleventh anniversary of the signing of the BCIL and MBTA's settlement agreement and that the MBTA will have fulfilled all but a couple of its obligations under the settlement agreement in the next two years. His role as independent monitor overseeing the settlement agreement will be reduced and then eliminated altogether over next few years.

He said that there should be a strong organization in place that can work with the MBTA after the settlement agreement ends to ensure that persons with disabilities have a voice and influence in MBTA policy-making decisions and so that progress on accessibility issues continues.

He noted that the plaintiffs and the MBTA are having discussions about what is going to take place once the settlement ends. The plaintiffs want certain assurances going forward, including for the continuation of the internal monitoring program that ensures MBTA employees are complying with accessibility standards.

As a result of discussions with the plaintiffs, an Ad Hoc Committee, which includes members of AACT and others, was formed. This committee compared the current structure of AACT to the structure of similar organizations around the country to determine if the structure of AACT maximizes the ability of the community to interact in a positive and a corrective way with the MBTA.

The committee decided that certain changes to the structure of the organization would be beneficial. Jessica Podesva, Judge King's law clerk, will provide more details about the proposed new structure.

Judge King also noted that there will be a new memorandum of understanding between the MBTA and the new organization by the end of the summer. The new organization will build on the strengths of AACT and have greater influence with the MBTA. The new

organization will involve many of the same people who have been active with AACT.

Jessica Podesva, Law Clerk

Jessica Podesva stated the following, noting that some details are subject to change:

- For the past several years, she has worked with Judge King, the named plaintiffs, and AACT. After initial research, she gave a recommendation of how the new community engagement group should be structured to maximize involvement with the T. She then began work developing the Ad Hoc Committee (AHC) to implement the new community engagement group.
- The members of the group were decided upon through one-on-one interviews with persons in the disability community. The members are:
 - Bill Henning, Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL)
 - Carolyn Villers, Massachusetts Senior Action Council
 - Jim White, AACT Chairman
 - Lisa Weber, AACT Vice Chair
 - Rick Morin, Bay State Council of the Blind
 - Joanne Daniels-Feingold, named plaintiff
 - Andrew Foreman, named plaintiff
- The AHC has met nine or ten times and currently meets weekly. The current task is establishing bylaws and ultimately creating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the new group.
- The new group will have an executive board and a general membership. The Executive Board will be comprised of both organizations, in addition to individuals with disabilities and seniors; there will be six individuals and five organizational seats. This will be a strong Executive Board that can give the feedback the MBTA needs and keep them accountable.

- The initial composition of the Executive Board will be chosen by the current AHC and the MBTA, with members given staggered terms. At the conclusion of the first term, a voting and nomination process will begin. The nomination will occur within the general membership. If a nominee chooses to accept, they will then submit a resume and letter of intent to the Executive Board. The Executive Board will then make the decision of who fills the empty seat. She acknowledged concerns about the fairness of this process, but stated that the AHC wants a vetting process for nominees.
- The general membership will be very similar to the AACT general membership. However, while individuals need to attend two AACT meetings to become a member in the new group you only need to attend one where your voice will be heard.
- The role of Coordinator for the new group will be different from the current role of the AACT Coordinator. The AACT Coordinator is largely administrative, while the future Coordinator will have both community outreach and advocacy roles. Tasks include finding alternate meeting locations, membership recruitment, work with the new leaders, and social media work. The Coordinator will implement the changes created by the AHC. Details of this position are still under discussion.
- When the new group is ready to begin, the MBTA will withdraw from its agreement with AACT and enter into an agreement with the new group. The new group will be the formal group that meets the MBTA's ADA requirements. There will be no gap in representation, and the transition should be smooth. The new group will bring two different groups into one strong, cohesive group and unify many advocates.
- The tentative timeline is that the new group will begin at end of the summer of 2017.

She then asked for questions.

R. Gibson asked if there is a website that previews the Ad Hoc Committee's work. *J. Podesva* stated that there is not a website at the moment, but the new group will have its own website. She expressed hope that there will be an active blog and Twitter account. She noted that the new group does not currently have a name, adding that the Ad Hoc Committee is open to suggestions.

N. Houghton asked if Ms. Podesva could compile a list of email addresses of interested persons to provide updates. *J. Podesva* stated she could, adding that there will be updates at future AACT meetings as well.

G. Weinstein asked for an overview of the BCIL settlement agreement. *J. Podesva* stated that the settlement agreement was brought forward in 2002 by eleven named plaintiffs in BCIL; the settlement was reached in 2006. In the settlement agreement, there are hundreds of items the MBTA agreed to in order to improve accessibility. Over the next two to three years, all of the terms will be met; the new group will keep participants in this process engaged with the MBTA. The new group will advocate for THE RIDE and fixed-route services.

Vice Chair Weber asked if AACT members can email Ms. Podesva with ideas of what roles the new Coordinator would fill. *J. Podesva* agreed to this, adding she is willing to discuss any aspect of the new group.

MBTA and Vendor Reports

MBTA Office for Transportation Access (OTA) -THE RIDE Program
Mike Hulak, Manager of Paratransit Contract Operations, had no report at this time, but did share the following:

- TREC is now located at 1000 Massachusetts Ave., on the second floor in Boston. Contact information will remain the same, 617.337.2727.
- GLSS has now transitioned over to Global as of May13 for trips. Scheduling and Dispatch will begin on May 20 at same number at 888.319.7433.
- He gave some details for the Parade of Sails Boston event. He asked that members book early for the parade. MBTA will be running a shuttle from JFK Station.

He then asked for questions.

N. Houghton noted that she lives in Beverly with no weekend bus service. She asked about her travel on the weekend. *M. Hulak* noted she was correct that there is no fixed route service on the weekend. She would need THE RIDE and pay for premium service.

J. S. Workman asked if there was less staff on hand at Global weekends. *M. Hulak* noted there were some transition difficulties with services this past weekend. He explained that staffing is lower at all vendors on the weekend due to a reduced call volume.

R. Welsh asked with the new call center if there would be new options for dispatch purposes and locating customers. *M. Hulak* noted there is discussion going on now about ways to make it easier for the consumer.

K. Wilson stated that THE RIDE driver has not been using the GPS to get him to his destination. *M. Hulak* noted that the GPS is there to assist and guide the driver. He also noted that the driver may have travel information that a passenger may not be aware.

R. Gibson noted that she is very dissatisfied with the TRAC staff. She explained that when calls for THE RIDE she is on hold for a long time and eventually the call is disconnected. She is very unhappy with the

scenic tour on THE RIDE for about three hours. She noted that a trip from Logan Airport took her to Brockton. *M. Hulak* noted that there have been difficulties with the phone service. He explained to her how the scheduling software works. He noted that he will be working closely with the staff at Global and assured her that there will be changes.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Hulak for his report.

MBTA System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA)/Fixed Route Services Rob Sampson, Manager reported the following:

- He noted that Judge Patrick King will have is evening public meeting on Wednesday, June 7th from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM to discuss compliance on the MBTA /BCIL Settlement Agreement.

She then asked for questions.

E. Minor asked about the CharlieCard program that was put on hold some time ago. She asked when would those promised the CharlieCard would be receiving one. *M. Hulak* noted that this was a pilot program presented by former management in 2012.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Sampson for his report.

MBTA Transit Police Department, Dana Nye, Community Outreach Coordinator explained the following:

- Over a three-year period that a number of citations transit police had issued for vehicles that block bus stops have decreased. She noting that these figures do not include any municipalities' citations.
 - 2005 – 1100
 - 2016 – 617
 - 2017 – 300

- She noted that violators are spoken to before a ticket is written which is the officer's discretion and with an explanation of the importance of avoiding blocking bus stops.

She then asked for questions.

A consumer stated that the city issues parking permits to commercial vehicles without regard to safety. He noted the regardless of the permit if it is a bus stop vehicle should be ticketed. He stated Transit Police should encourage patrolling of violators with the local city police. *D. Nye* stated that the MBTA as 250 officers, 150 on the streets for all three shifts and 10 officers on the midnight shift serving 175 cities and towns. There 140 officers per squad. She noted that the motorcycle units are patrolling and checking for violators. She noted that they have been reaching out to owners of shops near bus stops to express to customers or post a sign in the window not to block bus stops.

A consumer asked would it help if a picture of the vehicle violating the stop be sent to you. *D. Nye* encouraged taking a picture and asked that pictures be sent to the Transit Police. She stated that this would help track down the person with their plate number. Chairman White asked that you use caution when taking pictures. *M. Hulak* asked that you not become confrontational with the motorist.

Global Contact Services, LLC

Chris Woznac, General Manager, TRAC submitted her report and stated the following.

- GLSS has now transitioned over to Global.
- Global as no intention of service disruption to customers. She apologized, noting that there is an improvement in service delivery.

She then asked for questions.

R. Gibson asked were staff hired who are users of THE RIDE. She also asked if staff were hired from the vendors who had transitioned over. *C. Woznac* explained that Global hired five RIDE customers, others with experience from NEXT and GLSS. She noted that staff is constantly being trained. She noted that a special staffer has been hired to work closely work with dispatchers.

E. Minor stated that she has a subscription service with her vendor. *C. Woznac* explained that there is no need contact Global there will be no service disruptions.

K. Wilson noted calls to Global waited a very long time only to be disconnected. *C. Woznac* explained that when calls come in at a high volume often calls do drop due to the over load.

A consumer asked whose decision it was to have the centralized call center (CCC). *M. Hulak* explained that the discussion began in early 2010 to improve efficiency. He noted that the MBTA was the only transit system in the country without a CCC.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Woznac for her update.

Keolis Commuter Services (KCS), LLC

Elizabeth Hickey, Manager and Title VI/ADA Enforcer, announced the following:

- Construction on the Fairmont Line is due to begin June 3; a new schedule for the project will be released.
- Construction on the Commonwealth/BU Bridge project due to begin July 26. No weekday disruption to service.
- The weekends of July 29 and August 5 there will be some busing between Wellesley Farms and Riverside on the B line.
- Construction at Canton Junction project the Providence side pedestrian bridge is closed for construction. T-Alerts and notices

about the detour will be online and throughout the station and around where the detour is.

- Weekend of June 3 there will be no train between North Station and Malden Center.

She noted that General Manager, David Scorey, invited guest at today's Summit announced some positive improvements that have occurred on commuter rail:

- New bridge plates installed in various platforms and on coaches to assist with accessibility. She noted that complaints are down 76 percent.
- In discussion with System-Wide Accessibility to develop a more in depth new hires orientation. Training for assisting person with disabilities will now be extended from one day to two days.
- In addition, recertification will be held over the next 18 months for conductors currently employed.

She then asked for questions.

M. A. Murray asked will there be Salem Station shuttle service to move the customers during the station closure. **E. Hickey** explained that they are in talks with a paratransit service. She explained that Keolis is only the operator of the service, they do not own it. She stated that there is nothing in place and she apologized.

A consumer stated that Keolis conductors are very formidable. **E. Hickey** thanked her for her kindness.

Chairman White thanked Ms. Hickey for her update.

Veterans Transportation (VT)

Kevin MacDonald, Project Manager distributed his report and announced that passenger assistance training (PAT) class would take place on June 27 from 9 AM to 3 PM.

He then asked for questions.

A consumer commented that she finds drivers are not very sensitive. *K. MacDonald* noted that the training is approved by the MBTA.

K. Wilson noted that he has seen drivers eating and talking on the phone while driving. *K. MacDonald* explained that if you see something that makes you uncomfortable report it right away to OTA or the vendor.

Chairman White thanked Mr. MacDonald for his update.

Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)

Steve Epps, Director of Transportation, submitted his report and announced the following:

- GLSS has transitioned their dispatch, reservationist and schedulers over to Global.
 - NEXT was the first vendor to transition.
 - GLSS worked to find the best practice to ease the transition.
 - GLSS is working hard to identify issues so that they may be addressed early.
 - GLSS is working diligently to make sure that customers are not impacted by the transition.
- PAT class will be on Monday, June 5, from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM at 330 Lynnway, Lynn.

He then asked for questions.

R. Welsh asked his opinion on how the transition went. *S. Epps* explained that discussions had been in the works for months. NEXT went before us which helped to eliminate many of the problems. He noted that many of the staff from GLSS has been hired.

K. Wilson noted he was confused over a recent call to add funds to his account. *M. Hulak* noted that he would no longer speak with the

vendors that function is handle by Global. It was a matter of your loading funds outside of normal hours.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Epps for his report.

National Express Transit (NEXT)

Victor Herrera, General Manager, stated the following:

- He is pleased with the transition but it is still a work in progress.
- PAT class will be on Tuesday, June 6, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

He then asked for questions. No questions were asked.

Chairman White thanked Mr. Herrera for his update.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Notables

The AACT Executive Board will meet from 10:00 AM to noon and the Membership meeting will be conducted from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM on the fourth Wednesday of the month, except when noted.

Notices of AACT meetings are posted on the website of the MBTA at http://www.mbta.com/about_the_mbta/public_meetings/. Visit the MPO's calendar page at <http://www.bostonmpo.org/calendar/month> to find AACT agendas, meeting minutes, and past meeting minutes. For more on AACT, see the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MBTA and AACT, the AACT Bylaws, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations at <http://www.mbta.com/aact> .

Also, find articles about topics discussed at AACT meetings in the MPO's newsletter, *TRANSREPORT*, at

<http://www.bostonmpo.org/transreport>. For more information on accessibility at the MBTA, please visit www.mbta.com/accessibility.

Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to Chairman James White by contacting the AACT Coordinator, Ms. Janie Guion, at 857.702.3658 (voice) 617.570.9193 (TTY), AACT@ctps.org (email), or c/o CTPS, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116 (US mail).

The AACT meeting location is accessible to people with disabilities and is near public transportation. Upon request (preferably two weeks in advance of the meeting), every effort will be made to provide accommodations such as assistive listening devices, materials in accessible formats and in languages other than English, and interpreters in American Sign Language and other languages.

The MPO complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal and state non-discrimination statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. The MPO does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, English proficiency, income, religious creed, ancestry, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or military service. Any person who believes her or himself or any specific class of persons has been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI, ADA, or other non-discrimination statute or regulations may, her or himself or via a representative, file a written complaint with the MPO. A complaint must be filed no later than 180 calendar days after the date on which the person believes the discrimination occurred. A complaint form and additional information can be obtained by contacting the

MPO (see above) or at www.bostonmpo.org.

Members needing service information or wanting to inquire about MBTA services should do so through the MBTA Marketing and Communications Department at 617.222.3200 or 800.392.6100, TTY 617.222.5146, Monday through Friday 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM. There are no weekend or evening hours. You can log on to the MBTA website at www.mbta.com/customer_support/feedback/.

Please sign in at all meetings.

Announcements are always welcome. Please be prepared to give as many details as possible: date, time, location, contact person, and phone number. A written notice is always appreciated.