



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Amended ADA TRANSIT SUBCOMMITTEE TO THE TRANSIT AND PARKING COMM

Monday, November 21, 2011

5:10 PM 15 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Room LL-130 (Madison
Municipal Building)

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Also present: Jeanne Brunette-Tregoning

Staff: Crystal Martin, Ann Schroeder, Mick Rusch, Jennifer Bacon, Ann
Gullickson

Present: 5 -

Kenneth M. Streit; Ida W. Nathan; Michael A. Huckaby; Carl D. DuRocher
and Mary E. Jacobs

Excused: 2 -

Bridget R. Maniaci and Susan M. De Vos

1. PROPER MEETING NOTIFICATION

The meeting was properly noticed.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. DuRocher moved approval of the minutes; Mr. Huckaby seconded. Mr.
DuRocher checked to see if the time of dismissal of last meeting was accurate.
The motion was approved by voice vote/other.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public appearances.

4. DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

There were no disclosures or recusals.

5. [24563](#) Meeting Date for January 2012 - MLK, Jr. Holiday

Attachments: [2012 ADATS Meeting Schedule.pdf](#)

We need to reschedule our January 2012 meeting because the regular meeting date falls on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. January 2012 has five Mondays. We could have our meeting on the 5th Monday of that January when there wouldn't be any other normally scheduled meetings. That is January 30th. Mr. DuRocher suggested we make this decision at the December meeting. Mr. DuRocher moved that we reserve January 30th but review the need again at the December meeting; Mr. Streit seconded. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

6. [24564](#)

Metro Customer Service - Staffing Q & A
a. Mick Rusch, Marketing Unit Manager

Ms. Martin introduced Mick Rusch, Transit Marketing & Customer Service Manager and Jennifer Bacon, Transit Marketing Specialist 2. At the last meeting there were some questions about procedure and staffing changes, so they've come to talk about those issues. Mr. Rusch said that he was here a couple of years ago with Scott Mau when changes started to happen.

Mr. Rusch said we've started to record calls. We can go back about a month, so we do a lot of research into incorrect ride bookings. That's been really helpful in meeting with customer service representatives (CSRs) and talking about what might have been wrong and what we could do to improve the booking process in the future. Next year, we will probably have the ability to not only record the calls but also capture the screen shots so we can compare and see where mistakes might have happened. That's taking improvements a step further.

Ms. Martin had mentioned there was talk about turnover in the unit. We have had turnover due to a retirement and having some people who didn't meet expectations. Mr. Rusch said we're not perfect, but it's the best group since I've been at Metro. Even with new people starting and going through training, they are 100% dedicated to our customers at Metro. One thing that has happened with our new people is that we don't have a lot of absenteeism anymore, so we're better staffed and able to answer calls more quickly with less hold time. The ADA requirement for on hold is two minutes, and we average less than 45 seconds if it doesn't go straight to an operator. We haven't been able to entirely track it, but it's a high percentage how many go straight to operator. We hope to be able to track that better with new technology.

For fixed route, we now have Google Transit and more people are using that. It helps free up operators to answer other calls, including paratransit. From June through August, we used 9,000 or 10,000 fewer Ride Guides than we have in the past for that period. We haven't been able to quantify web hits for Google Maps. Scott Mau gets five calls per operator pulled per day. He makes sure they are accurate and follows up on any problems. Those are random calls every day. If there is a complaint about the way the ride was booked or how the call was handled that is reviewed too. We also have a little more supervisor support for CSRs. There is always someone on-call by cell phone

should a supervisor not be in the building. Some of our most senior CSRs have taken on more of a leadership role in our group and are taking an active part in trying to improve the staff.

Ms. Nathan said that on Sunday the phone waiting time is several minutes. Ms. Bacon said we're in discussions about adding more staff on Sunday. We've been tracking that for the last two months. Call volume on Sundays has increased. We hope to alleviate that when we are at full staff. There are two vacancies now. Mr. DuRocher asked how many people are on staff on Sunday. Two people. Mr. Huckaby said there used to be an iPhone app called LocoMatix. It tracked buses in real time, location, bus stop information. It was a great app and really accessible using voice over on the iPhone. But it is no more as of October 1st. Is there any hope of getting something to replace that? Mr. Rusch said UW Mobile is the replacement. Mr. Huckaby said that app is not fully accessible. Mr. Rusch wasn't aware of that; he'll bring it up with the developers. The other app is BusRadar, but that is only for the Android platform.

Mr. Rusch said there were also questions about selection criteria for CSRs. We get 60 or more applications and those are certified by City Human Resources (HR). Then we get about 8 candidates to interview and choose from. Bacon said after HR filters the pool, we interview 8 to 10 people for each position. We're looking for people with customer service, call center or retail experience. We also prefer people who have a bit of technical savvy because of the booking software. We have 2 or 3 people on the panel from different parts of the organization including paratransit. We ask lots of questions and do a good screening process with the interviewees.

Mr. Huckaby said he was at Metro 2 or 3 years ago trying the screen reading software with the scheduling software Trapeze. They were not compatible. He wondered if there had been improvement or if it would be possible to try it again. Ms. Bacon said there have been some Trapeze upgrades but doesn't know if that has helped with screen reader. Ms. Martin said we've had a couple of upgrades in the last few years. Some have increased the options of things we could be doing but limited things we could previously do. So upgrades have been a mixed bag. Mr. Huckaby asked: so without someone coming in and testing the software, it would be a waste of time to suggest that blind or visually impaired people apply for the jobs. Ms. Martin said that is something to note and check on. Mr. Huckaby said there have been major updates in screen readers.

Ms. Bacon said we always welcome comments and suggestions from groups like ADA TS such as criteria or training processes to be added to the training manual. Communicate any ideas or suggestions to Ms. Martin, and we can see how they fit in with our training process.

Mr. DuRocher said the criteria are people with previous experience in call centers and also some technical expertise with software and the ability to learn. He strongly suggests that it is also important to have people with experience riding buses who know about paratransit and rules and regulations. He gets such different responses when booking rides. He was issued a no load when he canceled a ride that was already 25 minutes late. Perhaps there could be some follow up training. There are some CSRs who

say the door to door requirement is fulfilled by someone who rings the doorbell then goes back to sit in the van. He hopes when the interview panel is put together that an ADA TS member would be on the interview panel. Lots of people get the job who have always driven to work and continue to drive to work and don't understand not only paratransit issues but even about waiting for a bus.

Ms. Nathan said whenever she books a ride to her accountant's office on 6200 Gisholt Drive, she is told paratransit doesn't go there. It usually takes 10 or 15 minutes while the CSR figures out how to do this. She wonders if it would be possible for Metro to get that address into the system. Ms. Martin said that address is right on the line, that's the problem. It's right next to Monona. It's so close to the line of what is inside of and outside the service area. That's why twice a year this is an issue. When it pops up on the computer screen, we have to blow it up right down to the fine lines to find out if it is inside the border. The accountant's stationery says Madison. You can live in nearby towns and use the right zip code and show a Madison address.

Ms. Bacon said Mr. DuRocher's comments were very good. With hiring, there is a test given with questions relating to fixed route and paratransit service. An applicant won't even get to interview without having some understanding of the system. They have to know how to read a map and ride guide. Let us know about things that happen so we can deal with them during our regular meetings going over calls with CSRs.

Mr. DuRocher said of course it's important to find people who sound professional on the phone and also understand technology, but also they need to know about bus service. Ms. Bacon said they get extra points in the interview process if they are bus riders.

Ms. Martin said it was a couple years ago when Scott Mau started and worked hard listening in on recorded and also live calls and keeping track of criteria we wanted on every call. Customer Service has been working on that as a group for monthly goals. She mentioned that to the group and many commented on the changes they noticed. She passed that on to Ms. Bacon and Mr. Rusch.

Mr. Huckaby said that the accuracy level has improved dramatically since he last spoke with Ms. Bacon. Personalities have improved greatly. Ho hum attitudes are fewer and further between. Even bad news is now delivered in a pleasant way. He asked about telephone automation. Ms. Martin said we are looking at the interactive voice response system. Through Trapeze, it allows customers with a touchtone phone to call and confirm or cancel rides or choose to talk to a CSR. There's also an online component that can be activated for that program. Implementing that technology has been on our list for several years but keeps getting postponed. Mr. Huckaby said it would also be helpful for fixed route information. Ms. Martin said Metro is interested in pursuing that for both fixed route and paratransit customer service. Metro is currently working on a number of IT solutions that have us at our staff capacity. As we're able to move on to the next one, we do.

Mr. Rusch said we're not perfect but we definitely would like to be. To help, let us know what is going on. In terms of accuracy, there is a lot to learn and that

is learned over years. Please let us know about mistakes because that helps us make improvements.

Ms. Nathan said CSRs have so much initiative and she's seen no show of impatience. Mr. Rusch said that is nice to hear. It is difficult to find candidates with all the hiring criteria we are talking about. What you are talking about is really important. If they are not active bus riders, they can learn that. But people who have initiative are good to get. The group thanked Mr. Rusch and Ms. Bacon for coming.

Mr. DuRocher wondered if he was the only person who feels that it is valuable to try to insert input from this committee into the selection process. If he is, he'll just drop it. Mr. Huckaby said that while it might be minimally helpful to have someone from the committee on the interview panel, he thinks Metro has a good handle on what they are looking for and what they need. With the current crew they have they've done pretty well. He asks questions when he calls for fixed route information such as whether a stop is nearside or farside, and they don't hesitate. It wouldn't hurt to occasionally have someone from this body on the panel. The police and fire commissions in many cities often have a citizen on their oral panels, but he doesn't know that we need to spend a great deal of time pushing for it. The seed has been planted; let's see where it goes.

7. [24565](#)

Feedback Comparisons During Contractor Transitions

- a. Complaints
- b. On-Time Performance
- c. Late Ride Reports

Attachments: [Complaints Across Service Transitions.pdf](#)
[On Time and Feedback.pdf](#)

Ms. Martin said there was a question about how Abby Vans is doing and looking over their statistics each month and some further discussion. Most former Badger Cab rides are now with Abby Vans. The previous transition from First Transit to Badger Bus was a similar group of rides that transferred over to the new contractor. People who require a wheelchair space, for example, would only get specific vendors. It's just a result of the scheduling process. Vendor assignment is really in order to accommodate mobility devices and efficiencies in the schedule. Questions have come up about that, so Ms. Martin prepared some different statistics to compare how they are performing and also compare this to other transitions we've had. We have ten years of late ride reports and complaint numbers now. We started keeping track of on time performance in 2006 and late ride reports and number of complaints in 2000 or 2001.

For late ride reports, we use the number per 1,000 rides so it's a meaningful indicator. Looking at Abby Vans numbers and then for the same period for the first quarter of the previous three years, we can see that Abby Vans' late rides were less than half of Badger Bus' best year. The October number for Abby Vans is 304 compared to Badger Cab which was higher by that time of year. So even though Abby Vans had the dramatic change in the summer with

LogistiCare, their transition numbers compare favorably to Badger Cab.

Complaints show similar information for Abby Vans. The numbers are not as good as the prior year, but are similar to 2008 and 2009. During June they were training for the brokerage implementation. October complaints are much higher, and that can be compared to the transition from Laidlaw to Badger Bus. Complaints are higher, and there is an adjustment that shows up in the data for transition years. We do expect more complaints when we go through these transitions.

On time performance and feedback measures show that Abby Vans performed well compared to other service providers except for July. That was not unexpected because of the brokerage implementation. We knew there would be a big transition there. But they were right back up in August and September.

Mr. Huckaby said he thinks that one of the problems people have found with Abby Vans that he is hearing about is that there is very little communication between the office personnel at Metro and the office personnel at Abby and the drivers. The drivers get information from the office very late and it's not correct information. When a customer calls Abby Vans, there is a ho hum ok we'll get around to it kind of attitude. It seems like the office staff is unaware of what they are supposed to be doing out there. One suggestion that has come to his attention for all providers is that we get together and have a discussion with representatives from ADA TS, the contractors and drivers all in one room. One of the big problems with Abby is the car seat issue. They told Mr. Huckaby their policy is that they had to have a car seat for his 7 year old. He said he had just talked to Ms. Martin and that is not a policy. But it is an ongoing issue. There seems to be no communication going on. If we can get representatives from all the concerned parties together for an hour or two in one room, a lot can be hashed out and set straight.

Ms. Martin said she has to agree because she has the email Mark at Abby Vans sent to all employees about the car seat issue. Ms. Martin said the issue is the requirement for car/booster seats for children and infants. Some Abby Van drivers are being quite insistent that those items be present. Because Madison Metro is a common carrier, that doesn't apply and they are operating in our shoes. Martin has verified that with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Abby Vans has taken great care to educate drivers about safety matters, so now the perception is we're arguing against safety measures. That's also part of the problem.

8. [24566](#)

Reports

- a. Transit & Parking Commission
- b. Commission on People with Disabilities
- c. Dane County Specialized Transportation Commission
- d. Other Community Meetings
- e. Performance Indicators
- f. Report from the Chair
- g. Staff Report - Paratransit Service Boundary Items

Attachments: [Para Indicators Sept11.pdf](#)
[Pending List 11 23 11.pdf](#)

- a. Transit & Parking Commission – Mr. Streit said he had nothing to report.
- b. Commission on People with Disabilities – Ms. Bond is not present. Ms. Martin said that Ms. Bond is our liaison for this commission. She let Ms. Martin know she will not be continuing with CPD and will no longer be our liaison. Ms. Martin thanked her for her participation and good feedback to the subcommittee. Ms. Bond wanted to let the subcommittee know how much she enjoyed attending. We will be looking for a new representative from that commission. Mr. DuRocher said a former member of this body, Bill Tangney, had been a liaison. If nobody has been lined up, should Mr. DuRocher check with him? Ms. Martin said CPD doesn't check with us on who their liaison is; they'll let us know.
- c. Dane County Specialized Transportation Commission – Mr. DuRocher said the main issue at this meeting was the budget.
- d. Other Community Meetings – There were no reports on other meetings.
- e. Performance Indicators – Ms. Martin said ridership for the year is down about 1%. The rides cancelled are up a little but not out of the norm. Cancellation rate is 15%. At times it's been up at 18% or as low as 13%. We're in the middle. No shows are at 2.2%. Ms. Martin wondered if anyone on the subcommittee has received a new no-show card besides Mr. DuRocher. Ms. Nathan said she had a ride and return to the west side mall. About 45 minutes before the scheduled ride, she couldn't find the receipts which was the purpose for going to the mall. She called 35 minutes beforehand and said she knew it had to be an hour. Then at the time of the ride there was a bus. She told the driver she cancelled. The driver didn't know. She did get a no show for that. Ms. Martin said that's why we we're asking for an hour notice, so we have time to let the driver know about cancellations. For example if the dispatcher is dealing with another situation, he may or may not consider the cancellation information a priority. If it were a Transit Solutions van that comes to pick up, and Metro doesn't give the company enough time, we don't want to charge the customer for the no show but we want to make sure we mark it so we pay the company because we didn't let them know. Ms. Nathan said she normally gives several hours notice. Ms. Martin said those things happen and because there is a sliding scale threshold, it's ok. You're allowed that many. It's only if you become chronic that you get a notice. We're getting feedback after the first month on how the no show and cancellation policy changes are working. We are hoping 6 or 9 months into this we can put together some information that shows what behavior does and doesn't change.

Mr. Streit said when you do banking and things like that over the phone you get a confirmation number. Would that make sense in this situation? It would be nice to have the confirmation number for cancellations. Ms. Martin said that the phone number would work because all calls are recorded; we can go back and listen to that. Mr. Huckaby said a confirmation number would be a problem if one is leaving a message on the cancellation line. Ms. Martin said

yes, but the line is recorded.

Ms. Jacobs said frequently after a cancellation the ride still shows up and then a no show is issued. What is happening there? Ms. Martin said she doesn't know. If you call the day before to cancel a ride, that ride shouldn't even get on the schedule. When you call customer service, they look up your ride in the software, click a key, and they don't call anyone. The dispatcher can see 5 or 7 cancels appear on his screen. The dispatcher clicks some buttons and those cancellations get faxed to the contractor(s). Customer Service doesn't have to call the contractor on weekdays. That is done through the dispatcher. If the cancellations are coming in and the ride was cancelled the day before and it still shows up, that's something we need to know about so we can research that, figure out why it is happening and re-train if necessary. Mr. Huckaby said that's a lot of what is happening at Abby Vans. The office is getting the faxes and they aren't letting the drivers know. Ms. Jacobs agreed. Ms. Martin said that is expensive for them because if we let them know in time they still send a ride, they don't get paid. Mr. Huckaby said there seems to be no consequences for the office staff.

Mr. Streit said a lot of it is culture. For example, the changes in customer service are a change in culture. That's why he didn't think Mr. DuRocher's idea of having an ADA TS member on the interview panel was necessary. But he thinks maybe that is a culture issue at Abby Vans. They are proud of their safety regulations. Would it be helpful to give them copies of all the complaints and ask them if they see a pattern in two or three things? There is a learning curve, but months later if you're still having a dysfunction in the communication between dispatchers and the drivers, that's a problem. It would be helpful if Metro said to Abby, there are a lot of complaints; we want you to come back with a plan for changing this pattern. Ms. Martin said not just Abby Vans, but she is preparing a list of things to go over on site visits with all the contractors. Sometimes things are best discussed in person with contractors so they can look at trends. She will be having that type of conversation, not just with Abby Vans, but also with all vendors.

Ms. Nathan said she is very happy with Abby Vans most of the time. Mr. Huckaby said he is, too. Ms. Nathan likes the step stool they use for helping people into the van. It is long and heavy steel, and drivers usually have it out. The driver stands by when you get in. Some will actually take your elbow. This is in contrast to Transit Solutions that has a small plastic step stool. When you stand on it, the top feels like you are going to go right through. Transit Solutions drivers are fairly indifferent and don't pay attention to getting in. She wishes that could be on the list of things to suggest to Transit Solutions. She's suggested it to drivers but thinks it would be better coming from an authority like Ms. Martin. Mr. Huckaby said as far as drivers physically assisting people, they are in a catch-22. We all know people who get really offended when a driver so much as touches them. Some people really like the assistance. Drivers never know from person to person. They're walking a very narrow line. In terms of the step stool itself, yes they could do better. But they should always ask; don't just touch someone. They can ask if the person needs assistance and that settles the problem.

Mr. DuRocher said usually Metro's on time performance is good, but for September it's 91%. Ms. Martin said it's going up. Ms. Martin said for Metro

the on time performance recorded is when the driver hits the button in the vehicle to say they've arrived. For contractors, it is when the driver marks on the schedule they have arrived. If they leave the pickup location and realize they forgot to write it down, they estimate. But for a Metro Plus driver who forgets to push the button and pushes it later, that's just the time that gets recorded. We're doing better for on time performance because our button pushing has improved. Late service reports are strictly a result of people calling in to report that about their rides.

f. Report from the Chair – The chair had no report.

g. Staff Report – Ms. Martin said there are developments with the paratransit service boundary. Meriter has built a clinic that is outside of our service area on Broadway. It corresponds with the Dean Clinic built not long ago on Stoughton Road. Clinics are being set up on the periphery. We have customers call and request service to the Meriter clinic on East Broadway. The closest we can get them is a park on Femrite Drive that is in Madison. The sidewalk doesn't go all the way to the clinic and you have to cut across a parking lot. Also Access to Independence moved close to the Milwaukee Post office. That's in the Town of Blooming Grove. We've been working with them to let customers know, checking out the post office for curb cuts. They're a government agency, so they'll be clearing snow. But these are challenges in getting people where they want to go and continuing to working with our partners to make sure people get access. Ms. Martin is letting subcommittee members know in case they get comments about access to these locations.

9. [08706](#)

Other Transit Related Announcements

Mr. Streit will be moving on to the Parking Council for People with Disabilities. Mr. DuRocher said Mr. Streit has contributed a lot to this committee and he's sure he speaks for the committee when he says we'll miss your contribution and appreciate your contributions in the past. Ms. Jacobs added her thanks to Mr. Streit on behalf of the committee.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DuRocher moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Nathan seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.