

LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2023
3:30 P.M. - CATA BOARD ROOM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Deb Wiese, Chair
Kellie Blackwell, Vice Chair
George Hanley
Erin Shannon
Diana Paiz
Ethan Devereaux

ABSENT: Geneva Smith, Darrin Fowler, and Jeffrey Allshouse

CATA BOARD MEMBER: Doug Lecato

CATA PERSONNEL: Craig Frazier, Todd Brooks, Marshea Brown, and Renee Sumerix

TRANSDEV PERSONNEL: Nancy Lohr

GUESTS: Gloria Johnson-Cannon

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Wiese called the meeting to order at 3:43 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

APPROVAL OF APRIL AGENDA

MOTION:

A motion to approve the April 2023 Agenda was moved by Kellie Blackwell and supported by Ethan Devereaux.

VOTE:

Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY MINUTES

MOTION:

A motion to approve the February 2023 Minutes was moved by Diana Paiz and supported by Kellie Blackwell.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

LAC CHAIR COMMENTS – Deb Wiese

None

BOARD LIAISON REPORT – Doug Lecato

See attached report.

Diana Paiz inquired about alternate payment options for bus fares.

Doug Lecato stated that CATA is looking at contactless payment options.

Chair Wiese reported that at CATA's January Board Retreat, CATA staff and Board members discussed contactless payment options and the necessary elements that will need to take place before implementing.

Doug Lecato further stated that Dan Goodemoot, Director of IT, and his team have provided transparency and timely feedback on this subject.

Todd Brooks, Director of Operations, stated that he serves on the committee that is reviewing vendors and farebox options. The committee is comparing products based on mobile apps and features such as one-scan capability and the ability to reduce boarding complications. The committee is also looking at possible start dates while allowing for testing and training to be completed. Mr. Brooks further noted that the LAC can look forward to more user-friendly features coming soon.

CATA CEO REPORT – Bradley Funkhouser

Bradley Funkhouser was absent from the meeting.

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS – Todd Brooks

Todd Brooks reported that employees from Operations and HR are planning to attend the MICareerQuest Capital Area Event scheduled for May 19. This event will inform ninth graders about future career opportunities at CATA.

Todd Brooks further reported that on Easter Sunday, April 9, CATA will offer Holiday Service. Mr. Brooks explained that rides may be scheduled until 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 8.

Todd Brooks stated that the Operations Department has two (2) vacant positions which include CATA's Street Supervisor and MSU Supervisor. Job descriptions are posted on CATA's website. Mr. Brooks further noted that internal candidates have applied for the positions that possess strong skills and knowledge pertaining to regional routes.

Todd Brooks reported that CATA is currently training 13 new operators and another class is scheduled to begin on May 8.

Todd Brooks reported on fixed-route ridership and compared pre-pandemic ridership with post-pandemic ridership. Mr. Brooks shared that CATA's ridership in December 2019, was 3,121,017 and in December 2022, it was 1,992,728 which is

approximately down by 36%. Paratransit's ridership in December 2019, was 116,114 and in December 2022, it was 76,384, which is down approximately 34%. Mr. Brooks further noted that CATA's ridership is consistently rising due to HR recruiting new operators, MSU students returning to campus, the extension of Route 3, and the reinstatement of late-night Route 1.

Chair Wiese thanked CATA's Operations Department for their quick response time to the shooting at MSU and requested Mr. Frazier and/or Mr. Brooks to report on the incident.

Todd Brooks stated that on the evening of this tragic event, multiple supervisors contacted him with preliminary information that was being reported. Staff focused on getting CATA buses to Ramp 1 as a staging location. Mr. Brooks reported that as more information became available, CATA decided to have drivers pick up as many students as possible and transport them to Lot 89, which was designated as a safe area. Many of CATA's drivers stepped-up and volunteered to be on standby. Some of the students indicated that they had no place to go; therefore, CATA buses provided a warm and safe place for them to stay while other students were transported to local convenience stores and gas stations in order to use restrooms. CATA staff also provided food for students and remained on duty until the threat was lifted.

Craig Frazier reported that CATA's sub-contractor, Transdev, under Nancy Lohr's direction, proved to be instrumental in transporting riders to the Lot Link. They also continued to serve Night Owl riders once the threat was lifted and Paratransit service was clear to resume. Mr. Frazier recognized how the combined efforts from CATA and Transdev proved to provide community support during this crisis.

Deb Wiese commended staff and operators for their support and continued dedication to serving our community, especially in times of crisis.

George Hanley echoed Chair Wiese's comments and reconfirmed that during the uninterrupted power supply (UPS) unit failure, every extra driver was on the road making sure that riders were not left stranded.

Todd Brooks confirmed that CATA's supervisors were dispatching vehicles to multiple locations where riders were believed to be waiting for their ride. Mr. Brooks recognized and gave credit to CATA's staff and the dedicated group of operators who made this possible.

Diana Paiz inquired whether the Holiday Service scheduled for this coming Easter Sunday is for Paratransit riders only.

Todd Brooks explained that CATA's Holiday Service will begin with a piloted project to provide limited service and is available to all riders. The service will be operated by the Paratransit fleet and run from 8:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m.

Diana Paiz inquired whether the service is limited to ADA-certified riders.

Chair Wiese explained that the service is open to the public regardless of status.

Diana Paiz inquired about where the Holiday Service is being advertised other than the CATA website.

Todd Brooks stated that CATA's Marketing Department will issue a press release. He also stated that unfortunately, he is not aware of any other forms of advertising that CATA will use.

Kellie Blackwell stated that CATA will advertise through social media.

Chair Wiese indicated that the Holiday Service is already posted on CATA's website and on other social media outlets.

George Hanley stated that CATA's drivers are also promoting the Holiday Service.

Diana Paiz inquired about CATA installing cameras on buses and requested an update.

Todd Brooks stated that CATA's IT Department is looking at installing cameras on buses; however, at this time, they are only reviewing options.

PARATRANSIT OPERATIONS MANAGER REPORT – Craig Frazier

Craig Frazier reported that the Paratransit Supervisor position was posted and interviews have been completed. He stated that an internal candidate will be presented with an offer soon. Mr. Frazier further noted that adding this position to the Paratransit Department will improve the day-to-day efficiencies.

Craig Frazier stated that he has reached out to CATA's Marketing Department in order to obtain additional passes that were requested at the last SQS meeting. Mr. Frazier noted that the passes will be available at local Meijer stores.

Craig Frazier addressed the inquiry that was made by Ms. Paiz concerning the Sparrow Health System building and the confusion over the various pick-up locations. Mr. Frazier has communicated with the operators and provided updated maps which have each entrance labeled to avoid confusion when scheduling a trip.

Craig Frazier stated that the Wait-Stop Program has been averaging 20 rides per week, and the process is improving day-by-day. He also thanked Chair Wiese for providing new language to help explain the limit of wait-stop trips per day to riders.

Craig Frazier reported that the Paratransit call volume has been averaging 800 calls per day.

Craig Frazier reported on the recent UPS unit failure that occurred at CATA while he was on vacation. He commended the Paratransit staff and all operators for the incredible job they did. He also stated that backup procedures are being built into CATA's systems and the Operations staff are holding weekly planning sessions for

disaster/service interruptions. Mr. Frazier further noted that these plans will be shared with Transdev to maintain secure and consistent service.

Craig Frazier spoke on behalf of Mr. Funkhouser and emphasized the need to recruit new members to EATRAN's LAC. Mr. Frazier also distributed EATRAN's LAC application to CATA's LAC members in hopes of spreading the word.

Craig Frazier also stated on behalf of Mr. Funkhouser that the extension of Route 3 into Delta Township may begin as early as May 2023. This extension will expand Spec-Tran service to Willow Highway in the north, Nixon Street to the west, and Mt. Hope Avenue in the south.

SERVICE QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE (SQS) – Kellie Blackwell

Chair Wiese stated that the concerns regarding punch cards are being addressed and the solution was to attach a hole puncher to the vehicles.

Craig Frazier confirmed that this solution is being implemented.

Chair Wiese commented on the proposed language that she offered to help explain the Wait-Stop Program to users. She also proposed that the LAC take a vote to approve the revised language.

Diana Paiz inquired whether the language includes information that will help explain that riders are only allowed one (1) wait-stop per trip.

Chair Wiese indicated that the additional language did not address allowing riders only one (1) wait-stop per trip. She then requested that Mr. Frazier please read the portion of the Wait-Stop Program that relates to the number of trips allowed per day.

Craig Frazier quoted, "How many wait-stop trips may be arranged per day? Only two (2) wait-stops trips may be arranged per day. Exceptions may be permitted on an as needed basis with paratransit supervisor approval."

A motion to approve the new proposed language for the Wait-Stop Program was moved by Erin Shannon and supported by George Hanley.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Kellie Blackwell, aye; Ethan Devereaux, aye; George Hanley, aye; Erin Shannon, aye; and Deb Wiese, aye.

Diana Paiz abstained.

Geneva Smith, Darrin Fowler, and Jeffrey Allshouse were absent.

Motion passed with five (5) votes in favor and one (1) abstention.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

New Member Applications

Chair Wiese deferred to Mr. Frazier to announce the new LAC applications that were submitted.

Craig Frazier first introduced Gloria Johnson-Cannon who was present at the LAC meeting.

Gloria Johnson-Cannon stated that it is a big world and that she would like to piece together the inner workings of how this puzzle comes together.

MOTION:

A motion to approve Gloria Johnson-Cannon membership was moved by George Hanley and supported by Ethan Devereaux.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Wiese stated that the application will be forwarded to the CATA Board for final approval.

Craig Frazier reported on Leah March-Pons' application.

MOTION:

A motion to approve Leah March-Pons membership was moved by Erin Shannon and supported by Kellie Blackwell.

Chair Wiese stated that the application will also be forwarded to the CATA Board for final approval.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.

Diana Paiz inquired whether accommodations have been given for virtual attendance.

Chair Wiese stated that she and Mr. Frazier will have a conversation with Ms. March-Pons about in-person attendance. She also noted that at the March SQS meeting, it was discussed and agreed that the LAC will meet in-person unless a situation arises that requires the meeting to be virtual.

MEMBER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chair Wiese introduced her new service canine, Hops and explained that he is a cross between Golden Retriever and Labrador.

George Hanley welcomed the new LAC members and commented on how nice it is to meet in person.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

MOTION:

A motion to adjourn was moved by Diana Paiz and supported by George Hanley.

VOTE:

Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Wiese adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Sumerix
Operations Administrative Coordinator