

LOCAL ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MEETING

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2023  
3:30 P.M. - CATA BOARD ROOM

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Deb Wiese, Chair                      Diana Paiz  
George Hanley    Erin Shannon, Vice Chair  
Gloria Johnson-Cannon                              Leah March-Pons  
Geneva Smith    Darrin Fowler  
J. Caleb Adams

**MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM:** Leah March-Pons

**ABSENT:** Kellie Blackwell, Jeffery Allshouse, and Ethan Devereaux

**CATA BOARD MEMBER:** Doug Lecato

**CATA PERSONNEL:** Darren Horn, Todd Brooks, Craig Frazier, Ericka Hartigan and  
Bradley Funkhouser

**TRANSDEV PERSONNEL:** Nancy Lohr, General Manager

**GUESTS:** None

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Wiese called the meeting to order at 3:38 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None

**APPROVAL OF DECEMBER AGENDA**

**MOTION:**

A motion to approve the December 2023 Agenda was moved by Geneva Smith and supported by Darrin Fowler.

**VOTE:**

Motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MINUTES**

**MOTION:**

A motion to approve the October 2023 minutes was moved by Geneva Smith and supported by Diana Paiz.

**VOTE:**

Motion passed unanimously.

**LAC CHAIR COMMENTS – Deb Wiese**

None.

**BOARD LIAISON REPORT – Doug Lecato**

None.

**CATA CEO REPORT**

**EATRAN Update**

Bradley Funkhouser stated that the EATRAN Board of Directors have approved bringing back the Charlotte Connector service and Saturday service. The Charlotte Connector will begin at the old courthouse in downtown Charlotte and stop at the new courthouse before traveling to the Delta Marketplace where riders can connect to Route 3. Mr. Funkhouser shared that the service will operate Monday through Friday and have regular service hours. He also stated that EATRAN will be connected to the Transit App so riders will be able to track EATRAN buses through their mobile devices. Mr. Funkhouser further noted that EATRAN just completed a survey report. The report is vital in gaining support through the surrounding jurisdictions for regional transportation and funding for additional services to Eaton County.

**CATA's Ridership**

Bradley Funkhouser stated that CATA's ridership continues to climb and there have been gains not only with MSU service, but with fixed-route as well. He also noted that paratransit has shown great increases in trips.

**New Buses**

Bradley Funkhouser stated that CATA has ordered new buses; however, there have been some production challenges. Mr. Funkhouser explained that Nova has decided not to produce any more buses in the United States; therefore, CATA will purchase two (2) new battery electric 40-foot buses from New Flyer and Gillig, LLC.

Chair Wiese requested an update regarding cameras on buses.

Bradley Funkhouser stated that CATA has put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) and is in the process of reviewing bids. He noted that cameras will be implemented sometime mid-summer 2024.

Darrin Fowler inquired about issues with hiring new operators.

Bradley Funkhouser stated that some of the issues at EATRAN had to do with their starting wage; however, now that EATRAN has increased their wages to be more competitive, they have been able to hire more operators. He also noted that some of the new hires at CATA do not like driving the 40-foot buses and have opted to work at EATRAN instead where they only use smaller buses.

Diana Paiz inquired about CATA's and Transdev's wages.

Bradley Funkhouser stated that EATRAN's starting wage is \$18.00 per hour and CATA's starting wage is \$18.00 per hour while training and then increases to \$24.93 per hour after completing ninety days. He deferred to Ms. Lohr for Transdev's wages.

Nancy Lohr stated that operators who have their CDL earn \$17.98 per hour. Non-CDL drivers earn \$16.98 per hour.

## **DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS**

### **Holiday Parades**

Todd Brooks reported on CATA's parade participation for this holiday season. Mr. Brooks explained that again this year CATA used two (2) vehicles including a 60-foot CATApillar Bus and a Chevy Tahoe LadyBug. Both vehicles were decorated with lights and appeared in Lansing's Silver Bells parade, Mason's parade, and Williamston's parade. They will also participate in the Leslie parade this coming Saturday, December 9.

### **MSU Service**

Todd Brooks reported that MSU Basketball season is upon us and CATA's MSU service is ready to assist those in need of transportation to and from the Breslin Center. Mr. Brooks also commented on MSU's football season and noted that this year, MSU did not provide any additional assistance; therefore, CATA had to recruit more staff to handle the football games. Mr. Brooks commended his staff for handling the extra work without issue.

### **Events**

Todd Brooks reported that the Operations Staff, including Craig Frazier, attended the "Stuff the Bus" event last Saturday, December 2. The event was sponsored by JCI Lansing (Lansing Jaycees) which is part of the Michigan Junior Chamber and Junior Chamber International (JCI). They also attended the Tri-County Office on Aging (TCOA) dinner and auction that took place on November 16.

### **Holiday Service**

Todd Brooks commented on CATA's Thanksgiving Day service. He noted that although CATA only had forty-nine trips, there were no issues reported. Mr. Brooks stated that CATA's Christmas Day service will run from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and rides can be booked from December 10, to 5:00 p.m. on December 20.

### **Operations Department Staffing**

Todd Brooks reported that Operations is looking to fill two (2) vacancies: an Operations Center Supervisor and the Operations Administrative Coordinator.

### **New Operators**

Todd Brooks reported that CATA currently has a class of eight (8) operators in training and another class scheduled to start on January 15. Mr. Brooks expressed that his department has spent a lot of time updating the training manual in hopes of improving the process.

Chair Wiese inquired whether CATA will be offering any New Year's Day service.

Todd Brooks stated that at this time, CATA will not be offering any service on New Year's Day.

### **PARATRANSIT**

Craig Frazier stated that CATA's ridership has reached pre-pandemic levels and call-takers have been averaging over 850 calls per day. Mr. Frazier explained that he will be looking to hire more staff to assist with CATA's increased service.

Craig Frazier thanked Gloria Johnson-Cannon who invited him to attend the RSVP program where one (1) of Transdev's new vans was on display.

Chair Wiese requested an update on CATA's wait-stops.

Craig Frazier stated that CATA has been averaging approximately thirty wait-stops per day.

LAC members commended CATA's service and expressed that the wait-stop program has been very successful and will continue to improve.

Diana Paiz expressed her concern over CATA's public perception regarding late rides.

Chair Wiese stated that although CATA has had some late rides, their process works. Ms. Wiese noted that Mr. Frazier and his department have been very receptive to complaints and improving service.

### **SERVICE QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE (SQS) – Erin Shannon**

Erin Shannon shared that at the Service Quality Subcommittee meeting, some users stated that they are still having issues with the MyRideCATA app updating once they are outside of their window.

Craig Frazier stated that he will have CATA's IT Department look into this issue.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

None

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Annual Grant Application**

- Specialized Services Service Description (Ericka Hartigan)
- Coordination Plan for Specialized Services (Ericka Hartigan)
- Vehicle Accessibility Plan Update (Ericka Hartigan)

Ericka Hartigan explained that CATA receives support from MDOT and each year, CATA applies for match dollars on the application. As part of the application process, it is necessary for the LAC to be involved and their approval is required in order to move forward. The three (3) forms have been provided to the LAC for review.

Chair Wiese confirmed that all three (3) forms are the same as in past years and asked for a motion to approve the annual grant application.

George Hanley inquired whether ridership has increased on CATA's Shopping Bus.

Craig Frazier responded that there has been a slight increase in CATA's Shopping Bus ridership.

Chair Wiese inquired whether the increases are documented in the grant application forms.

Ericka Hartigan stated that there is an estimated number of trips documented in the forms.

Diana Paiz inquired whether an "affiliation" indicates if that person is speaking on behalf of or serving as a representative of that organization.

Chair Wiese explained that in this case, an "affiliation" is not a person representing an organization.

**MOTION:**

A motion to approve the Service Grant Application forms was moved by George Hanley and supported by Geneva Smith.

**VOTE:**

Motion passed unanimously.

**MEMBER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

None

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Darrin Fowler inquired whether CATA is involved in Transdev's Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

Nancy Lohr stated that CATA is not involved in Transdev's CBA; however, they are involved in the process related to the service that Transdev provides to CATA riders.

Darrin Fowler expressed his concern over Transdev's CBA and how Transdev does not reward their operators for their years of service nor provide any incentives for better service.

**MOTION:**

A motion to adjourn was moved by Diana Paiz and supported by Geneva Smith.

**VOTE:**

Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Wiese adjourned the meeting at 4:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Darren Horn  
Paratransit Operations Supervisor