

Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, November 7, 2018

Committee Members Present: Chair Patty Thorsen, Sam Jasmine, Christopher Bates, Darrell Paulsen, Heidi Myhre, David Fenley and Richard Rowan.

Committee Members Absent: None.

Committee Members Excused: Ken Rodgers, Robert Platz, Kari Sheldon, John Clark, Diane Graham-Raff and Margot Imdieke Cross.

Council Staff Present: Jan Dietrich and Doug Cook from Metro Transit, David Russell, Sara Maaske, Christine Kuennen, Susan Duffy and Alison Coleman.

Public Present: None.

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Thorsen called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:38 p.m. on Wednesday, November 7, 2018.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Bates, seconded by Rowan to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Bates, seconded by Jasmine to approve the minutes of the October 3, 2018 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

BUSINESS & INFORMATION

1. TAAC ByLaws

Chair Thorsen read over the proposed changes to Article I of the ByLaws. Discussion ensued. Bates moved to adopt Article I as amended. Jasmine seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Chair Thorsen read over the proposed changes to Article II. Discussion ensued. Bates moved to adopt Article II as amended. Fenley seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Chair Thorsen read over the proposed changes to Article III. Discussion ensued. Bates moved to adopt Article III as amended. Jasmine seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The rest of the ByLaws will be discussed at the December TAAC meeting.

2. Metro Mobility Updates

Christine Kuennen spoke to the TAAC committee. She introduced Susan Duffy, the new Project Administrator at Metro Mobility. She is replacing Dana Rude. She started in August. She comes to the Council with a great deal of experience in public transit. Over 20 years. She has worked both in the private side and the agency side. Contract administration. Contract oversight. Rules and regulations. She comes with a lot of wealth and experience with that. She has had some national exposure. She is a graduate of the Leadership APTA program. The American Public Transit Association's program. It is an executive leadership program. She is well versed in a lot of areas of public transit. Prior of coming to the Council, she was bus and rail primarily on the fixed route side. Like me, she comes to Metro Mobility with this being her first exposure working directly within paratransit. I wanted to make sure the TAAC committee is familiar with her name and the position she holds.

We have three Project Administrators on staff. We divide the contracts up amongst the three for oversight work. The contracts that she has been assigned for oversight is the First Transit South Burnsville contract as well as the taxi contract and two supplemental provider contracts. That is the work that she has been doing and learning about those systems.

We do have in MTS two additional staffing updates. That will be forthcoming. Not just within Metro Mobility, but within Metropolitan Transportation Services. The first is a technology manager, whose job it will be to oversee the onboard technology on our fleet. This is really a complex system. And the technology manager's job it will be to oversee the function of those component equipment to make sure they are serving our system. There are like positions over at Metro Transit. This is the first of its kind in MTS.

Also, I have budgeted for next year. We will be putting this out for working with HR to get this out soon is a Business Systems Analyst to support the Trapeze PASS system in 2019. This is the system that does all of the scheduling for Metro Mobility and Transit Link.

Other updates for our program. We had our fall convening at Wilder on October 24. That was two weeks ago today. It was very well attended. The best attended convening in my tenure. Over 70 riders participated as well as advocates from this committee and other support staff. There were well over 15 tables. It spilled over to the overflow room. There were seven or eight people per table. It was a very busy day capturing a lot of conversations. I am very pleased with the turnout.

I have a summary report here that I can generally describe. Staff is taking a look at some of the comments that we have collected and working on a work plan around it. This is the first convening that we had the Council Chair attend. Alene Tchourumoff was able to attend the convening for a portion of it and sat at a couple of tables. I found her very interested and attentive to the conversation. Some key themes were just general communication was a theme for improvement. Generally, still the confusion about the difference between the ADA and the non-ADA service area and how that impacts rides. How the same day service works. Looking for more information about that taxi program and improving communication with that.

We have had for the last two newsletters, updates on those programs but we need to continue informing about how our program actually works. Driver empowerment and training was a key theme. Generally empowering drivers to make decisions and familiarization with various customer service issues related to disability. So that was a key theme. Routing was a key theme. Reliability and tardiness. Making sure there is some consistency in our service performance.

There were some facilitator questions regarding the regular route transit project. Just some comments around that. There were also some comments about the online booking upcoming service. This is just a summary report. We are in the process of looking at the overall feedback that we got and creating a workplan around that. Then the best way to get the feedback out to the participants. Our next convening that we have planned will be in April of next year.

Other updates. We began service under the new contracts on October 1st. This was the Transit Team contract. It is a five-year contract. This is the contract we have been talking about that the transition took place. This is where we have had to restructure some of the service so that we have service to agencies under the contract. Only within the ADA area. Not the non-ADA area. Also making sure that we have onboard fare payment for those customers rather than bill the agency directly for the ride. That was a contract that was awarded to Transit Team in April of this year. It initiated on October 1st.

There has been transition and change that we have been managing over the past few weeks. That is starting to settle down in our performance. It is starting to stabilize with that. I mentioned the fixed route pilot. That also was initiated on October 1st formally where we invited a little over 80 customers who have conditional eligibility to participate in a free ride on the fixed route system. We invited them. We got participants enrolled. Mailed out the welcome letter. Mailed out a free ride card. Then offering travel training and follow up information about our fixed route network. That work is being done this month by our Customer Service Department. Doug has been involved in that. We are in the process of reaching out to those customers and offering those follow up services. We are now tracking the rides and seeing if there is any feedback or improvement as far as use of the fixed route system from those customers. It is a six-month pilot. The free rides will run through April. Then there will be a period of time where we assess the activeness of the pilot.

The online booking pass web system that we had hoped to launch this fall has been delayed again. Issues of testing on the Trapeze side has been delayed a month. The test version has been delayed a month on the new

schedule. So we are confounded with project delays on the software development side. It is still a high priority project for us. As soon as we release the test version, we will convene our group again to do some accessibility testing and user testing on that product. It is now updated to be released in February 2019.

We have been talking a bit to this committee about the best way to represent our service performance statistics and our key performance indicators. I want to make sure we have a good indicator to represent information. Both in a summary way as well as a detailed way. How we are doing with our on-time performance, our on board times, our appointment times, our ridership. Our customer complaints by contract. Making that transparent for both committees and advocates such as yourselves but also within our own departments and to the public. Making some public facing information available.

We did onboard reports rider in the spring of this year who has been working with the Council. Metro Mobility has been working with him and giving access to our database and having him pull together some data and some visualizations for us. In order to make them accessible for distribution. We have been working with Ken Rodgers and subject matter experts within the Council. We are not quite there yet. Because the software he is using to pull together this data is somewhat limited. We need to look at alternative ways to represent data in an accessible format. That is a work in progress. This is the kind of data that Dave Russell is going to be presenting to this committee. I think when there are questions regarding this performance. I will let him walk through what we have to date. Nothing that we were able to put up on a screen and show everybody because it wasn't accessible. But he can walk through our service performance as we have collected it through quarter three of 2018.

Those are our general updates. This is a project that we have been working on. This committee brought forward the issue of a number of months ago now that there wasn't a good track through or even a good understanding for customers of who they should be calling if they have complaints on the taxi service and how that functions. We are working on that. I will have Susan help me on the current status of it. I know she has been working on it too. But we have added to our internal application all of the categories needed to identify the complaint and how it relates to the taxi company contract verses any other contract. If any customer were to call Metro Mobility, which they should, to complain about the taxi service, that complaint is documented in the system. It is assigned to the taxi complaint. That complaint is sent, not electronically, to the taxi provider for response. It is hand managed that way.

What the merge of the systems you are referencing is to bring the taxi provider, as a user to the same application, so that the interactive response of the complaint where they are documenting their response to the complaint. It is sent back within the application, to our staff for response and approval or rejection. That piece that is automated with our other contracts is not yet in place, but we are close. Maybe Susan you can help me with that.

Susan Duffy spoke to the TAAC committee. We are very close. Our person from IT here with the taxi provider. Their developer. We are looking at code and back office information that needs to be put in place before they can get that moving. That is what we are working on now is getting the back office set up.

Jasmine asked if there is a timeline.

Kuennen said I will have to get back to you on that. I will find it is unacceptable if it goes past the end of the year. Our IT developer is actively working on it right now. We had to switch the server that it resides on and how they would access it to a more secure maintained server. That has added some complexity to the automation of it.

Jasmine said in regards to feedback. The taxi service has implemented their own feedback. I don't know if you are aware of this. They give you a "Rate your driver" after you take every ride. One small problem. It is not accessible. It is a star rating. You get on your cell phone and I can't see the stars. So it helps me not. It is a fantastic idea if we can just implement something that will be accessible that we can rate the driver. That in itself is good feedback. And then if you guys can link to that. Maybe there is an easier way here. Maybe we are recreating things too much.

Kuennen said that is great information to have. Thank you. I will ask Susan to take that back and find out what can be done with that.

Paulson said until we look at breaking up that one dispatcher for all of the taxi service. You are going to have skewed information. You are creating a service that the ones that use the service on a regular basis. it works for them. But if you use it once in a while, you are not guaranteed to get a ride. My wife and I both use chairs.

We have to take separate vehicles because there are not any vehicles that take two chairs. But there is in Wisconsin. In Wisconsin they have a similar service. But they allow two chairs in their vehicles. I am suggesting that you talk to them. See if the information on our taxi service gets tracked and whether it gets recorded properly.

Myhre said how do we make a complaint to make sure people with disabilities are treated properly?

Kuennen said we have had some feedback on how the taxi service is working. We also talked about this at the Convening a couple of weeks ago. About how the taxi service really functions. The taxi service is just that. A taxi service. It is not ADA Paratransit. It is not public transit. It is a subsidized taxi ride. The Council will subsidize \$15.00 for a taxi ride for any Metro Mobility customer who books one. Because of that contracted relationship, and the extension of the public trust. It is important to me that the Metro Mobility Service Center be the central point of contact for complaints related to the taxi contract in the same way that they are responsible of complaints related to the other contracts on our ADA Paratransit system.

The system that member Jasmine was referencing. As a way for me to be able to do that more seamlessly and to create more accountability to the provision of that service. So to answer your question, any concerns related to the taxi service, a taxi trip, on time performance, driver behavior, rudeness, whatever. I would encourage to come through the Metro Mobility Service Center.

We do have contract terms that we hold the taxi service to as far as timeliness of service, if they want to get paid the \$15.00. Those kind of issues. The project administrator that is on my team, was assigned to that contract, is responsible to receive the data about the rides that were performed. Make sure it vets against the information. Make sure the cost of the rides make sense for the addresses they were booked to as part of their contract compliance work.

Susan has the taxi contract as well as the two supplemental service contracts in her purview for contract compliance. They are held to contract terms for service compliance in the same manner as the other Transit Team and First Transit contracts are.

Bates said I live in a building with seniors and people with disabilities. One taxi would not take a service dog. They have to because of federal law. How do we make sure that that is done?

Kuennen said this would be a complaint. As processing of that complaint, we would hold them accountable to that law. Within the contract our providers have to follow state law and the ADA and everything that relates. I have had, in my tenure, other complaints like that. They have been investigated and brought to the provider. So, that is the process that we would ask you to go through.

Bates said is there something we could put into that contract?

Kuennen said it is already in the contract. They face non-performance of contract penalties. It is the same as any other contract.

Bates said what impact can we have with Transit Link? We have Transit Link drivers who don't meet with the blind people like Transit Team does.

Kuennen said I would ask the committee to invite Transit Link representatives to respond to those kind of concerns. If there are complaints about the service, that that system is being utilized, because Transit Link contracts would be managed and held accountable in the same manor that Metro Mobility contracts are.

Bates said I wish I would have known about the non-ADA and the agency. My area, which is Precinct B. It covers Carver County, Scott County and Southwest Hennepin. It is a lot of non-ADA. It would have been nice to know that you were making that change in procedure ahead of time.

Kuennen said I did make several updates to the TAAC as well as the Transportation Committee last fall and winter when we were putting together the analysis of the restructure in advance of the RFP going out. I then also updated the committee when the contract was being awarded. After the contract was awarded I came to the committee and discussed the changes as well as the transition plan. I respectfully disagree.

Bates said what is the deal with the Penn Avenue project? And the concrete dividers?

Kuennen said I am not exactly sure but I can assume what project you may be referring to. This is a Minneapolis project, not a Council project.

Jasmine said could you please go through, I think there is something I missed in regards to the non-ADA that you just brought up in regards to the contract.

Kuennen said this contract, about a year ago, we were coming on the term in 2018, of the current agency contract. It was set to term in September of 2018. We were then looking to put together a RFP for services for the agency contract. The contract that serves the agency sites. The agency contract.

Thorsen said could you define for everybody, just for context, the agency contract? What that is.

Kuennen said yes, I would be glad to. We have four major contracts for our region. We have three demand contracts. That is the typical book your ride one to four days in advance. Those are the three zones of our system. Those three contracts are held by First Transit and Transit Team. They expire in 2020. The fourth contract is what we call an agency contract. This was a five year, extended to six-year term. That would provide service to a set of day training and rehabilitation centers and defined locations. The rides were billed to the agency. The contract was to perform the rides for customers going to these agencies in the morning and coming back home in the afternoon. Like a school bus might. We had over 20 agencies that we provided service to. The contract was held by First Transit Roseville.

The agencies existed in the ADA service area as well as the non-ADA service area. All the rides were standing order. All the rides were guaranteed as standing order. Regardless if they were ADA or non-ADA. That was the way the structure of the service had been since the beginning of the contract. As we were looking to the next contract for agency service, there were a couple of stressors that we had to deal with from regulatory compliance standpoint. The first was FTA compliance as far as prioritizing ADA rides in our system verses non-ADA. It was clear that the structure, the agency contract that we were guaranteeing rides that were non-ADA rides that were on a daily basis while we were denying other non-ADA rides in the rest of our system. There was a conflict. So we had to look at that.

From a point of view of public transit service, having customers pay for their own rides on a GoTo card system or another way, verses billing an agency directly, much like a charter service might. Is also a concern. We made that change as well as far as how the rides were being paid for. Whether they were paid by the agency or the customer. Because we were looking at that kind of restructuring, we also looked at ride data. Figure out what was going to be the most efficient use of the Council funds. We needed to see that the contract was the same size and dollar value moving forward for the next terms and because that is the budget we have. We basically looked at ride data. We did some restructuring and consolidated what was about 20 agencies throughout our system to about 12 of the largest agencies that were just ADA. That was the restructuring that took place about a year ago at this time that was generally discussed. The RFP was issued in January or February. The contract was approved and signed in April and May. The new service began in October.

There is not a fuel efficiency incentive in the contracts. There is a productivity requirement in our contracts for revenue hour. The way we structure that with our contracts is to provide a productivity rate per how many customers on board per revenue hour. We hold our contractors to that. There are bonuses in performance. These incentives are relative to our productivity rate. There is also a balance. I would actually say that over the course of the past year we have had a lower productivity rate because of the stress on the system with higher demand in order to meet our on time performance requirements and other customer service quality issues is actually to reduce the productivity. The longer people are on board the later the service might be. It is always a balance between productivity and on time performance. But that is how we hold the contractors accountable for efficiency.

David Russell spoke to the TAAC committee. What I am going to offer up is that I am going to have you share these statistics in the format that we were presented to the committee to be able to evaluate if that is an appropriate and acceptable format. And to provide any input or direction of how to correct or make that format accessible. We are working with a staff writer to generate this report. The report is being generated on a system that is not inherent or specific for us. We are going to be limited in what we can do to manipulate that. So what we may end up doing is garnering the data and give it a simple text format.

We are able to break it down. We do have numbers of people and things like that that are above and beyond statistics and percentages. I am going to give you a quick example of that information. We are looking at the last three quarters of data. We were able to break it down into chunks. For example, on-time performance. Being beyond our 30-minute window. We broke it down to zero to five minutes, five to 10 minutes, 10 to 20 minutes, 20 to 30 minutes and 30 or more minutes. Not only does it give you an idea of what percentage it is, but it gives and idea of how many passengers it is affecting. That is broken down. I need to have that

information requested. If you do have information or further questions, please email me and I will be able to get that information generated and gathered prior to the meeting. So that I will be able to give you the information in the meeting. The more complex, the more time needed.

As far as the information we got, one of the things I am reluctant about presenting this material is that if it is not accessible I will not present it to anybody. That is not acceptable. Until then I will provide you with information that is accessible verbally.

Kuennen said what Dave is going to be presenting verbally is the same information that was provided to you yesterday by email that can be distributed to you, the committee members. It includes graph data that has some text associated to it as well as excel spread sheets. That should be accessible for anybody getting it by email. David is in the position to provide statistics through quarter three service performance verbally today. Regarding visualization, we want to make it accessible. We brought in a reports writer. We brought in Ken Rodgers and we are working with the team. That is ongoing work.

Ken met with us a couple of weeks ago. We tested the screen readers. It is all part of the project scope to create a presentation with those kind of visualizations. Not only for this committee, but also public facing that would be accessible. We are not there yet. That is an ongoing project. In the meantime, David is able to provide information about our service performance.

Russell said so this is through the third quarter. We are looking at some big numbers. The total rides are near 2 million. We are thinking about this and why we are at this level. We are providing almost 2 million rides. When you are hitting those numbers, it's not easy. To be infallible it is amazing. We exceed what the FTA requires us and we expect that those numbers are exceeded. When you are looking at things like we have, there are a lot of numbers.

Within the first three quarters of this year, of those 2 million rides, those that were over 30 minutes late, that would be 2,873 rides. Just for Transit Team, that averages out to about 2.4 rides per day that were over 30 minutes late. On-time daily performance measures that are about 6,00 to 8,00 rides per day. I think that to be able to provide 6,00 to 8,00 rides and to have a little over two of those to be over 30 minutes late is astounding. You are looking at those numbers. How many people are being impacted? The big number is 659 passengers in three months. Just at Transit Team. Their ride is over 30 minutes late. This is including January, February and March of this year. There is snow and problems we cannot foresee. We exceed the national performance standards, which is absolutely amazing. Where we do tend to see the most rides that are beyond being on time. We are going to pick you up at 12:52. We don't make it at 12:52. There is the zero to five-minute range. If we are late, for the bulk of the rides, it is only about five minutes or less that we are not at that exact time to show up.

When we broke those down. Ten minutes or less rides for being late. Those percentages were 60 percent of the rides. Over half the rides that were past 30 minutes were less than 10 minutes late. Sixty percent of four percent were less than 10 minutes late. The most common complaints I receive are that Metro Mobility is always late.

Transit Team West, for the first three quarters of the year 12,014 rides were only five minutes or less late. For rides beyond 30 minutes for the first three quarters were 34,982 were zero to five minutes late. One 18,495 were five to 10 minutes late. Fourteen thousand and seven were 10 to 20 minutes late. Four thousand two hundred and thirty-nine were 20 to 30 minutes late. Two thousand eight hundred and seventy-three were 30 minutes or more late.

For the max onboard time for the first three quarters of the year, 29,827 were zero to five minutes over the max onboard time. Twenty-one thousand, three hundred and eighty-three arrived 10 minutes beyond the max onboard time. Twenty-four thousand four hundred and seventy-three were 10 to 20 minutes past the onboard max time. Eleven thousand six hundred and fourteen were 20 to 30 minutes past the onboard max time. Eight thousand eight hundred and seventeen were 30 minutes or more past the onboard max time.

The rest are going to be not as specific, but they are going to be the bigger numbers. The minutes beyond scheduled trip end time. The total number for zero to five minutes beyond that was 10,497. Ten minutes past

the drop off time was 9,855. For 10 to 20 minutes beyond their appointment time was 10,086 rides. For 20 to 30 minutes it was 3,716 rides. For 30 minutes or more was 2,586 rides. That was for First Transit only.

MEMBER COMMENT

Chris Bates said I wish to introduce the following resolution and ask that it be adopted today.

“Be it resolved that the TAAC Committee requests the Met Council to give an ex-officio (non-voting) seat on the Transportation Committee and further resolve the member will be elected from the TAAC Committee.”

And to speak to that, TAB currently has a non-voting seat on the Transportation Committee and has been asked by a couple of the Council members why the TAAC doesn't have one. Because we haven't asked for one. So now we are going to ask for one.

Ex-officio means that we can participate. We will get all the information that the Transportation Committee gets. We can make sure that our stuff is in conjunction with the Transportation Plan of the Met Council. We just can't vote up or down on anything. But we can fully participate in the conversations. This was at the suggestion of two Metropolitan Council members who said that we should have a seat on the Transportation Committee. It was suggested that we elect somebody.

The Transportation Committee is represented by different interests. It is represented by Met Council members and others. They approve the Transportation Plan and its implementation. They are the ones that report to the Met Council. It would also require the TAAC member to report to the Transportation Committee on what the TAAC is doing.

We would have somebody at the table. We will not be able to vote. That is the same as what the TAB does.

Jasmine seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Chair Thorsen said I have made the decision that my term is up as Chair in January 2019. I have made the decision that I will not reapply. It is for two reasons.

1. I am not playing to my strengths. This committee needs more than I am able to give it.
2. I have some health issues (tremors) that are exacerbated right now.

I will be continuing as a member of TAAC. I will be working with Diane Graham-Raff. Moving to be a representative of the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:38 p.m.

Alison Coleman
Recording Secretary