MARTA ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary

**Date: November 12, 2019**

**Time: 10:00 am – 11:30 am**

**Location: MARTA Headquarters – Atrium**

**ATTENDANCE**

**Committee Members Present:**

**Leonard Stinson**, Vice-Chairperson

**Robert Smith,** Representing seniors

**Brent Reynolds**, Representing the blind community

**Mark Gasaway**, Representing the deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf/blind

**Robert Lossie,** Representing Upper/lower extremities

**Dr. Brad Fain,** Representing Organizational Upper/lower extremities

**Paula Nash,** Executive Director MARTA Office of Diversity & Inclusion

**Committee Members Absent:**

Kay Sibetta

Jordan Hall

Sandra Owen

Jimmy Peterson

Jorge Urrea

**Staff Present:**

Denise Brown

Evelyn Richards

Tonya Allen

Adoraeu Jouett

Katrina Jones

Thomas Young

D. Scott Forman

Freda Hardage

Shomeka Brown

Roberta Abdul-Salaam

Collie Greenwood

Jalyn Radziminski

Natasha Rankins

Leslie Porter

LaHoya Blount

Roosevelt Stripling

Keith Chambers

Toni Thornton

Roderick Frierson

**CALL TO ORDER**

Leonard Stinson – Vice-Chairperson: Called the meeting to order on November 12, 2019, at 10:10 am with Member introductions

Mr. Stinson began the meeting by thanking MARTA for the Mobility Townhall Meeting which was attended by many members of the Mobility Public as well as many MARTA Executives and Board members at that meeting. He stated that there were excellent comments and he thanked the public for coming and letting MARTA know your concerns. Mr. Stinson also stated that he and the MAC members are looking forward to working with the public and MARTA to address the concerns.

Ms. Paula Nash, Executive Director of Diversity & Inclusion, introduced Mr. Collie Greenwood, Assistant Chief of Bus Operations, who made the following comments regarding the MARTA Townhall Meeting on October 29, 2019. Mr. Greenwood commented that public participation in the Townhall was encouraging. He also stated that the MAC will be the conduit and central point of contact to MARTA’s ability to identify and address the issues discussed during the Townhall. He stated that MARTA intends to establish MAC as an active force between MARTA and the Community to vetting the comments. MARTA’s approach to improving service didn’t begin that night but is an ongoing effort. Mr. Greenwood recognized MARTA Board Chair, Ms. Freda Hardage and Board Member Roderick Frierson, who were present at today’s meeting and is a testament to show our commitment to the increased level of accountability and oversight we intend to assign to the MAC.

Tom Young, Acting AGM for Bus gave the following comments: the Townhall Meeting was a great event we did direct mailers and flyers to all customers 7 days before the event so that reservations can be made right away. Within 2 days we had over 300 people registered for the event; which put the Atrium at capacity; so other programs were put into place such as live streaming and received many comments not only from people from the event but others who were unable to attend made comments via email. MARTA has a transcript from the event, and we will break them down by person and the comments that were made and set up an internal triage to break down comments and come up with solutions not just for Mobility, but all services MARTA provides. Mr. Young stated that the resolution of the comments will be an active conversation between staff and the customer with the MAC being an active part of the education process. As MARTA is planning to make this an annual event; we will report back at the next event to show these are the issues we reviewed and here are the steps we’ve taken. Mr. Young also stated that as the ridership continues to grow; we will review our process and procedures to make positive changes as needed. Currently, we are changing the way the service is administered and adding other paratransit service providers so that we will have better coverage of our service areas. A meeting attendee asked if the transcript of the Townhall will be posted on the website, Mr. Young confirmed that it would be. Mr. Stinson asked if the communication of the resolutions to customers will be through MAC and how will MAC be involved. Ms. Nash responded to the question and stated that the MAC and MARTA will meet to develop how best the MAC can assist in the resolutions of the comments and communication to the customers.

Mr. Stinson asked the subcommittee chairs to give their reports:

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Customer Focus Committee:** The Customer Focus Committee did not meet.

**No-Show and Appeals Committee -** Brent Reynolds: The No‑Show Appeals Subcommittee did not meet. There were no appeals.

**Accessibility Committee -** Leonard Stinson: The accessibility committee, did not meet.

**MARTA Diversity and Inclusion - Executive Director Updates –** As there were several new people attending this meeting; Ms. Nash gave an overview and purpose of the MAC. MAC serves as an advisory committee to MARTA and advises MARTA on a multitude of areas; such as accessibility, customer focus, and Mobility No Show appeals. The Committee is made up of individuals from the disability and senior community as well as; representatives from organizations that serve those communities. There are 13 members on the Committee. MARTA wants to work hand-in-hand with individuals from the senior and disability communities and we welcome your input on how to best serve this population. We want to provide the best possible service and that comes from the top. Ms. Nash reintroduced the Board members and expressed appreciation for their support.

Mr. Stinson added that the MAC is here to serve the customers as representatives of the customers. He reiterated the importance of hearing from the customers so that MARTA can hear what is important to the customers. The MAC meetings are the second Tuesday every other month. MAC members are not on the Committee to serve their personal needs but to communicate the needs of the customers to MARTA. He encouraged attendees to come to the meetings and to bring others to the meetings. If the meetings are not on a convenient day or time the Committee would like to hear that.

Ms. Nash introduced another Board Member who entered the meeting; Ms. Roberta Abdul-Salaam, who was very instrumental in getting the Townhall meeting coordinated, scheduled and put together. She was also the facilitator at that meeting and did an excellent job.

**MARTA UPDATES**

**ADA Related Customer Inquiries**

LaHoya Blount. Provided the ADA customer complaints about August 2019. There were 1,066 Authority wide complaints, 227 were ADA Linked complaints; 119 were valid complaints at 52.4 percent. Mobility received 199. Bus Operations received 7. Mobility Maintenance received 5. Mobility reservations, 6. Vertical transportation received 3. Customer Service received 1. Bus Maintenance 1. Top complaint categories: Late drop-off, 41. Late pick up 30 plus minutes, we received 45. No shows, 20. Tone of voice, 9. Excessive time on the van, we received 26. Top non-Mobility complaints; elevators/escalators; will not let board 2. Incorrect reservations received 2. We received 75 authority-wide accommodations. Of those, 37 were mobility 49.3%

Questions/Comments: a couple of attendees said they felt the numbers are not correct and should be higher and they do not get complaint numbers. Ms. Blount agreed to meet with those attendees to get more information and investigate the concern. Mr. Stinson suggested that when submitting a complaint request the complaint number and put it in writing. The email address for customer service is custserv@itsmarta.com. Mr. Stinson asked if someone could explain the process when a complaint is submitted. Ms. Blount explained that when a complaint is submitted it is entered into the system, it is distributed to the appropriate department, then investigated by that department and the results of the investigation are sent back to Customer Service and entered into the system. Customer Service contacts the customer and provides them with the resolution or update. Board Secretary, Ms. Roberta Abdul-Salaam reminded everyone that the Townhall was not the end. It will be a collaborative and continuous process and a written report of finds/recommendations will be completed. The complaints and suggestions will be written up and submitted to the appropriate department/staff members and Board Chair.

**AVIS – Audio Visual Information System**

Katrina Jones – Project Manager, gave the following report: She introduced the CIO of MARTA Kirk Talbert the Project Sponsor. She informed the Committee that the software will be installed on November 19th and the project is at a point where the MAC members will be asked to come to the 5th floor of HQ sometime in December to give feedback on the content and layout of the sign. Once the feedback is received, and the re-configurations have been changed; the MAC will be asked to come to the Bankhead Station, where the software and speakers will be installed, for final feedback. The Project is 67% complete, 25 million dollars expended so far. Currently working on the North/South Line Stations and working heavily at Five Points, East/West Lines are almost totally complete.

Questions/Comments: one of the attendees commented on the poor audio of the current public address system and asked if that was going to be upgraded also. Ms. Jones explained that the current project includes the replacement of those speakers and they are working to install 5000 new speakers in all the Stations. The speakers in the current project were upgraded which was a contract increase of $300,000 additional cost. Mark Gasaway spoke about options being developed for deaf/blind customers. Mr. Talbert answered; since this issue is beyond the scope of this project; other options should be explored at a later date to see what technology exists for this population. An attendee suggested that Mobility have an app like the app for the fixed-route bus so Mobility users can find out when their bus will arrive. Mr. Talbert stated that there have been discussions about the mobile app for Mobility.

**Elevator and Escalator Renovation Project**

Keith Chambers, Director Vertical transportation – North Avenue #5 elevator is close to completion, there is a second elevator on the south end of the platform, this elevator will be finished in the next couple of weeks. Lindberg #9 has started, and the anticipated date of completion is January 2nd, and GA State #2 just started and the anticipated date of completion is January 30th. Mr. Chambers reiterated his previous commitment to the MAC that after the completion of these elevator renovations; non-critical units will be worked on such as Bus and Train Facilities until the accessibility issues are solved. Mr. Chambers informed the Committee that Project Management, Mobility, Marketing, Diversity & Inclusion, Rail, Outreach, and several other departments are working to solve the issues of inconveniences/accessibility taking elevators out of service. The goals are to have a clear communication plan and process in place before taking elevators/escalators out of service.

Questions/Comments: An attendee explained her experience when an elevator at the Decatur Station went out and the operator didn’t communicate the outage and she could not get any immediate help from anyone; it took a half-hour to forty-five minutes for this to be resolved. Mr. Chambers agreed that communication has been the issue and that is one of the issues that Project Management is working to improve.

**Mobility update**

Scott Foreman, General Manager MV Transportation gave the following report:

Two updates – New buses transitioning into service, MV is down to 25 buses that need to be put into service and that will happen within the next 30 days. The second item - This is his last MAC meeting he introduced the new GM is Shomeka Brown. Ms. Brown stated that she will take over the GM duties starting December 1st, she stated she has 11 years of experience with MV Transportation and is looking forward to improving the customer experience.

Questions/Comments: on attendee asked about using the subcontractors to be positioned out at other locations in the service areas to work more efficiently. Tom Young answered - MARTA is working on a process to decentralize the paratransit operations process much like bus operations were decentralized. As MV sits on the west side of the service area; we are working the Gresham Transportation to be based out of the southeast side of the service area. There will be a third provider coming aboard and asked to find a facility on the northeast side of the service area.

An attendee spoke about all the different subcontractors have different rules and procedures and he feels that they are should work as one with one process. This attendee also commented that operators who are driving long hours without breaks are a safety issue. Ms. Brown stated that they are work on that issue; they are working on a new run/cut schedule to help alleviate that issue. another attendee asked if the addition of the other Transportation Providers will change the issue with the drop times. Ms. Brown stated that the decentralization of the facilities would improve drop times. Brent Reynolds asked about contracting with Lyft or Uber. Ms. Nash stated that is a decision MARTA has to decide and it is being considered. An attendee spoke about getting Lyft or Uber instead of the subcontractors, she also spoke about another passenger who had confidentiality issues and spoke about issues with dispatch communicating confidential information over the radio. Bob Lossie spoke about technology that could give real-time vehicle information to patrons. Mr. Young answered the question by stating that MARTA has an IVR System that will give the individual information on when their bus will arrive and an On-time Reservation System; Mr. Young stated that he will have one of his staff members come to the next meeting to give the Committee an update.

Leonard Stinson adjourned the meeting at 11:40 am. The next MAC meeting is January 14, 2020.