

WMATA Riders' Advisory Council

Wednesday, March 4, 2015
6:30 P.M. Regular Meeting

MINUTES

Place: Lower Level Meeting Room, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Headquarters (Jackson Graham Building), 600 Fifth Street NW, Washington, DC

Present: *Members*
Barbara Hermanson, Chair, VA, City of Alexandria
Daniel Turk, Vice-Chair, District of Columbia
Frederick Walker, Vice-Chair, VA, Fairfax County
Stephanie Beechem, District of Columbia
Benjamin Chou, At-Large
Pablo Destefanis, District of Columbia
Katherine Kortum, MD, Montgomery County
Karen Lynch, Maryland, MD, Prince George's County
Debra MacKenzie, At-Large
Ryan Nalty, District of Columbia
Lorraine Silva, VA, Arlington County
Deborah Titus, VA, Fairfax County
Wil White, MD, Prince George's County
Mary Ann Zimmerman, MD, Montgomery County

Other Individuals

Mr. Ronald Bodmer, Director, MTPD Office of Emergency Management, WMATA
Mr. Mortimer Downey, Chairman, Board of Directors, WMATA
Jennifer Green-Ellison, Board Secretary, WMATA
Mr. Denton Rourke, Manager, MTPD Office of Emergency Management, WMATA
James N. Jackson, RAC Staff Coordinator, WMATA

Absent: *Members*
Bob Fogel, Vice-Chair, MD, Montgomery County
Thaddeus Johnson, District of Columbia
Caroline Kim, District of Columbia
Jeremiah Bush, VA, Fairfax County
Deborah Christian, MD, Prince George's County
Avani Gala, VA, Arlington County
Pat Sheehan, At-Large/Accessibility Advisory Committee, Chair

Presider: Barbara Hermanson, Chair, VA, City of Alexandria

I. Call to Order:

Ms. Hermanson called the February 2015 meeting of the Metro Riders' Advisory Council (RAC) to order at 6:35 p.m.

Ms. Hermanson announced that Riders' Advisory Council members were unable to comment publically regarding the January 12, 2015 Metrorail incident at L'Enfant Plaza. This was due to federal laws surrounding the National Transportation Safety Board investigation.

II. Public Comment Period:

Ms. Hermanson recognized members of the public who were signed up to speak.

Ms. Barbara Milleville, representing National Capital Citizens with Low Vision, spoke regarding collaborative efforts with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to improve lighting conditions within indoor Metrorail stations. She thanked the RAC for the service that they provide to Metro customers.

Mr. Jeff Larrimore, spoke regarding ridership numbers on the Metrorail blue line. He requested that the RAC adopt a resolution asking WMATA to restore 1-2 trains per hour to the Metrorail blue line.

As there were no other members of the public who were signed up to speak, Ms. Hermanson closed the public comment period.

III. Approval of Agenda:

Without objection, the agenda was approved.

IV. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Nalty moved, seconded by Ms. Zimmerman, to approve the February 4, 2015 minutes of the Riders' Advisory Council.

The motion was unanimously approved.

V. WMATA Board of Directors Introduction

Mr. Mortimer Downey, Chairman, Board of Directors, WMATA, was present to introduce himself to the Council and respond generally to questions and comments.

The Council and Mr. Downey discussed issues of concern to the RAC and the Board of Directors.

Ms. Hermanson thanked Mr. Downey for this attendance.

VI. Discussion on Customer Safety and Emergency Response

Mr. Ronald Bodmer, Director, MTPD Office of Emergency Management, WMATA, was present to discuss WMATA emergency preparedness, procedures, functions of the Office of Emergency Management and to respond generally to questions and comments. Mr. Bodmer introduced Mr. Denton Rourke, Manager, MTPD Office of Emergency Management, WMATA. Mr. Bodmer provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Metro Transit Police Department: Office of Emergency Management*, which consisted of the following slides:

- Vision & Mission
- Response Standards
- SOP 1A – Command, Control and Coordination of Emergencies on the Rail System
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Types of Evacuations
- Evacuation Options
- 1st Responder Equipment and Tools
- Persons with Disabilities
- Training and Outreach
- Previous Exercises
- Silver Line Training – 3 Exercises
- Office of Emergency Management Planning
- Next Steps

Mr. Turk inquired if there were personnel responsible for researching and exploring possible scenarios and events that could occur within the Metro system. Mr. Bodmer responded in the affirmative stating that Office of Emergency Management (OEM) staff members study the worst case scenarios. He continued saying that Metro Transit Police participate in the gathering and sharing of intelligence. It was also noted that fusion centers and local jurisdictions also contribute to the task in question. Mr. Bodmer described a previous Metrorail Silver Line training exercise and reviewed future training initiatives.

With regard to the presentation given, Ms. Hermanson questioned Mr. Bodmer as to what feedback was expected from the RAC. Mr. Bodmer responded that staff was looking for feedback indicating what emergency response personnel could do better in the event of an emergency incident.

Commented on overcrowding in the Metrorail system, Mr. Turk asked what methods could be employed to address crowd control and improve customer safety. Mr. Bodmer stated that Metro staff received regular first-hand experience with crowd control. He reviewed several methods used to address crowded Metrorail platforms such as assisted loading, shuttle buses and increased customer communication efforts.

Mr. Nalty commented that WMATA was lacking in “simplistic safety branding.” He continued saying that there needed to be emergency/safety related signage that customers are able to review quickly and proceed to the safety.

Ms. Zimmerman questioned staff about the emergency communication training that was performed with/for customers and not for emergency personnel. Mr. Bodmer responded stating that one of the most routine techniques was to provide the affected train(s) with additional “assets” to increase the level of communication with customers and provide detailed instructions. Mr. Destefanis concurred with Ms. Zimmerman’s question, but commented that emergency communications were actually a security issue that warranted a significant investment in the rail

cars. He then added that there should be some kind of communication device/apparatus in the Metrorail tunnels.

Ms. Kortum asked how much of OEM emergency management preparedness was focused on terrorism/criminal acts versus accidents/malfunctioning equipment. Mr. Bodmer stated that the OEM used an “all-hazard” approach with regard to emergency management preparedness as the emergency responses were handled in a very similar manner.

Ms. Silva questioned if emergency preparedness efforts included training or resources to assist non-English speaking customers. Mr. Bodmer stated that attempts had been made to identify bilingual emergency personnel, but that in the event of an emergency other customers would be utilized to communicate with each other in their spoken languages. Ms. Titus concurred, adding that emergency personnel who were trained in American Sign Language would also be helpful.

VII. Committee Reports

- Chair’s Report to WMATA Board of Directors (February 2015) – Ms. Hermanson

Ms. Hermanson stated that the Chair’s Report for the month of February 2015 was included in the agenda package for review. She noted that she shared the RAC’s budget option priorities with the Board of Directors during her report.

- Chair’s Report from February 26th WMATA Committee Meetings – Ms. Hermanson

Ms. Hermanson informed the Council of public meetings that were held: Safety and Security Committee, Board of Directors and the Finance and Administration Committee. With regard to the Safety and Security Committee meeting, Ms. Hermanson stated that at the Committee received an update on the Early Safety Actions (10) related to the January 12th Metrorail Incident at L’Enfant Plaza.

- Budget and Finance Committee – Mr. Bush

Ms. Hermanson provided a brief report in Mr. Bush’s absence. She stated that she spoke with Mr. Mark Schofield, Director, Financial Planning and Analysis, WMATA, who suggested that if the RAC wanted to explore fare simplification that it should be done in the next several months. This would coincide with the FY2017 budget formation process.

At Mr. Nalty’s request, Mr. Walker provided a brief synopsis of the RAC’s work on fare simplification.

- Customer Service Committee – Mr. Fogel

Ms. Silva provided a brief report in Mr. Fogel’s absence. She stated that the Committee met on February 19th and developed four areas of interest to explore during this calendar year. She presented the following prioritized items:

1. Safety and Security: Communications
2. Metrorail Station Operations
3. Metrobus Stops
4. Metro Sales Centers/Offices

Ms. Hermanson added that the Metrorail blue line service issues should also be a focus of the Customer Service Committee.

▪ Programs, Projects and Planning Committee – Mr. Turk

Mr. Turk provided a brief report summarizing the previous meeting of the Programs, Projects and Customer Service Committee (PPP). He stated that the Committee met on February 23rd and developed four areas of interest to explore during this calendar year:

1. Cellular Phone Use for Customers
2. Priority Seating
3. Jurisdictional Coordination
4. Mobile Applications (Apps)

VII. Announcements

Ms. Hermanson announced that WMATA New Electronic Payment Project launched on February 23, 2015.

She also announced that the Council had been invited to participate in the WMATA Emergency Response Training to be held in Maryland at the Greenbelt Metrorail Station on Sunday, April 19, 2015. Mr. Bodmer provided a brief overview of the exercise and encouraged RAC members to participate.

VIII. Adjournment

Without objection, Ms. Hermanson adjourned the regular session meeting at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

James N. Jackson
Riders' Advisory Council Coordinator