



Customer Advisory Committee Minutes February 5, 2024: 5:30 pm to 6:45 pm Mott Branch Library ~ 1010 Dorr Street, Toledo

Committee Members Present: Becky Opperman, Brandon Brown, Jennifer Seibel, Jodie Summers, Joyce Allen, Katie Wilson, Sara Soper

Committee Members Absent: Angie Goodnight, Cindy Kerr, Loren Sengstock, Rebecca Blair

TARTA Staff and Board Members Present: Susan Gettum - *Chief of Staff*, Rick Bailey - *Chief Customer Experience & Mobility Officer*, Jessica Rood - *Customer Care Manager*, Michelle Price - *Quality Assurance Coordinator*, Richard Russell - *Transit Outreach & Education Coordinator*, Kendra Smith - *Board of Trustees President*, Mary Morrison - *Board of Trustees Vice President*

Guests from VIA: Jesse Ozdamar - *Strategy & Ops*, Elias Pratt - *Strategy & Ops (local)*, Katie Knapp de Orvananos - *Partner Success Principal*

- **Welcome / Introduction of TARTA Staff, Guests and Board Members present**
- **One-Word Check-In (ice breaker)** - Some of the words shared included anticipatory, disorganized, relaxed, calm, vacation-ready, grateful, peachy, humble, hopeful, peaceful, chill, ready, comfortable, focused, accomplished
- Remembering Ken Schumaker
- Continued discussion on **Paratransit TARTA Move** service from last meeting with **VIA staff present:** TARTA and VIA meet on a weekly basis to discuss issues and some solutions are already discussed and in the works:
 1. Safety vests for drivers to they are identifiable
 2. Training improvements on safety with a focus on consistency of training
 3. Ramps and stools to help people embark and disembark the VIA vehicles (stools already ordered and in place on all VIA vehicles)
 4. Stickers on VIA vehicles to identify as TARTA - will all get wrapped with the new TARTA MOVE branding
 5. Data informed approach - rider feedback

Asks from December's meeting:

1. Can MOVE have an app like FLEX
2. Disability training for VIA drivers - include topic in the basic training of VIA drivers (Elias and Jesse confirmed it is now in the training)
3. VIA training should mirror TARTA's training
4. Etiquette training on dealing with people in wheelchairs

VIA theme for February driver training - "Be A Pro"

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Sara mentioned that it is difficult with her service dog in VIA vans because of the well dip in the middle - hard to place her dog near her

Other training in the works -

- Jessica and Sylvester (TARTA) meeting monthly with Board of Developmental Disabilities to understand terms
- TARTA is working with The Ability Center on training for us that we can share with our partners to work on consistency of training and message. Also, TARTA will attend a training day for our staff at The Ability Center in April.

There were a lot of issues in October 2024 that spiked the number of complaints and VIA was quick to jump on a call and go through the issues

On-time pick-ups with VIA are increasing each month

Previous to this contract with VIA, we had no set pattern of meetings to provide feedback with our third party supplier (B&W)

Future Projects:

- Adding TARTA Card readers to M&M and TLC by April - also VIA

Sara mentioned that she gets uncomfortable by having different drivers (B&W) and feels better and safer when she knows the drivers and they know her. There is professionalism with the VIA drivers and it is nice to get to know them.

Some new VIA vehicles have dash cams that can track driver behavior like harsh breaking. VIA does Federal standard alcohol testing on 3 or 4 drivers a month.

Elias sometimes rides along to monitor drivers. He is also doing a lot of the hiring locally for the VIA drivers.

We talked about a sense of empathy - can test for it and coach to improve.

Rick Bailey stated that TARTA's intent is to move away from using M&M and TLC on a daily basis and only to use them in dire situations. We should have more MOVE vehicles in April which will allow us to hire more paratransit operators. We currently have 38 drivers - need 45. But without more vehicles, we can't hire more drivers.

VIA has a pool of 32-35 drivers and use 27-28 on a weekly basis.

Sara asked what the Customer Advisory Committee can do to support VIA: by being transparent and sharing both positive and negative feedback.

The on-time pick up for VIA in the past few weeks has been around 95%

Rick spoke about the Paratransit Application/Recertification application. WE are rebranding it with the MOVE imagery as well as the Rider Guide. Draft versions of these will be available before the next CAC meeting in April.

Joyce mentioned an issue she had with FLEX with a pick-up time that kept getting moved later and she ended up missing a meeting. The issue was made worse because her pick-up time was 8 am which is before the Customer Service line opens at 9am. She wondered how she could reach a human to talk to before that CS phone line opens up. Rick took note of this issue and said we'd get back on that.

Katie from VIA mentioned that on the FLEX app, riders can rate our service on a 5-point scale. The group didn't know that and was happy to hear it is possible. Katie looked up the stats and for January, based on the riders that submitted a rating - TARTA FLEX received a 5.0! In December that rating was 4.9.

- **Other Business**
 - Per Jodie's request we will discuss the changes to Routes #12 and #14 at the April meeting. (This was supposed to happen in this February meeting but the appropriate person from our Planning team was not available to attend.)
 - Rebecca Blair has stepped off the Customer Advisory Committee due to family issues and responsibilities. She may return at a later date. With Ken's passing, that brings the committee to 10 members. **Susan will work with the TARTA Board of Trustees to open up applications to get additional members.** Sara also mentioned this would be a good time to **revisit our Chair/Co-Chair assignments.** Susan also mentioned that we will be **revisiting the three projects (and leaders)** that we had identified in 2024 so we can move forward in 2025. More on all that later!

- **Next Meeting Date - mark your calendars:**
 - **Wednesday, April 2, 2025 at 5:30 pm at Mott Library in Community Room B**

Remaining 2025 Meeting dates:

- June 4, 2025
- August 6, 2025
- October 1, 2025
- December 3, 2025