



**Hampton Roads Transit Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities
Meeting Minutes
Board Room
3400 Victoria Boulevard
Hampton, Virginia
October 19, 2011
1pm-3pm**

Call to order

Chairman Patricia Brown called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm and instructed the room on speaking etiquette to accommodate all disabilities.

Introductions were made by all attendees.

Chairman

Patricia Brown Mayor's Committee of Hampton and Consumer for City of Hampton

Co-Chairman

Ina Kreps Co-Chairman and Consumer for Portsmouth

Committee Member Attendees

Christine Cutchins Consumer for Virginia Beach

Todd Condron Virginia Beach Human Services

Lisa Baker Consumer for Portsmouth

Lawrence Williams Parent of Consumer for Hampton

Shirley Williams Consumer for Hampton

Sue Merryfield Eggleston Services and Mayors Committee of Hampton

Mac Kennedy Portco Services for Portsmouth

Cindy Creede Provider with Senior Services of SE Virginia

Commission Liaison

Commissioner Will Moffett Hampton Commission

Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

Joe Paulus Ex-Officio

MV Transportation

Andy Steed General Manager

CJ Loomis Operations Manager

HRT Staff

Al Mathieu Director of Operations

Keith Johnson Superintendent of Operations; Paratransit Manager and Liaison

Mary LaFontaine Administrative Coordinator for Paratransit

Guests

Frank Azzalina Hampton Roads Transportation Incorporated

Ken Horten Hampton Roads Transportation Incorporated

Shervonne Banks City of Newport News Senior Citizen Advocate

Alicia Griffin Consumer of Newport News and Prospective Member

Others in Attendance

Donald Fennell Insight Enterprises and Consumer for Newport News

Cheryl Ward *Endeppendence Center, Inc*

Allison Major *Employment Specialist for the ARC of the Virginia Peninsula*

Latrese Chaney *Employment Specialist for ARC of the Virginia Peninsula*

Tyrell Mullen *Handi-Ride client for Hampton*

Kay Hensley *Handi-ride client for Newport News*

Joseph Gurley *Handi-Ride client for Hampton*

Joan Farmer *Handi-Ride client for Newport News*

Linda Gurley *Handi-Ride client for Newport News*

James Robinson *Handi-Ride client for Hampton*

Sharon Beddingfield *Handi-Ride client for Newport News*

Brenda Barrett *Handi-Ride client for Newport News*

Uricka Harrison *Handi-Ride client for Newport News*

Woodrow Vereen *Newport News*

Rick Barry *President of the Peninsula Council for the Blind and Handi-Ride client for Newport News*

Approval of Previous Minutes

June 2011 minutes were approved with correction. The August 2011 minutes were read by Mary LaFontaine and Co-Chairman, Ina Kreps. The August 2011 minutes were approved with correction.

Before the next agenda item, Chairman Brown asked HRT of the initiatives that Mr. Law had presented in the August meeting and if anyone was in attendance in his place.

Mr. Mathieu stated that some of the items in the initiatives are being looked into and that no one was at the meeting to represent Mr. Law. He further stated that Mr. Law had resigned effective October 11, 2011 and there is a new Chief Operations Officer in effect, Jim Price. Mr. Mathieu stated that he will be giving Mr. Price a copy of the minutes for review.

Chairman Brown thanked Mr. Mathieu then advised the public in attendance of the next item on the agenda and to contact her if any questions go unanswered at the meeting.

HRT/MV Paratransit Service Changes Update

Mr. Johnson started the update by reading the service changes letter for those who did not receive the letter in an accessible format. The key changes are:

- 60 minute ride times may increase up to 90 minutes
- Vehicles may be provided by taxi cab services for those who are able to use such vehicles
- Taxi cab vehicles will be more prominent during evening and weekend hours

The service will remain the same in all other aspects:

- Service areas and hours are the same
- Scheduling/reservations/subscriptions are to be made in the same manner

Mr. Johnson clarified that, because of perhaps incorrect media coverage; service will not be stopping after 5pm. The service will operate the same hours and times as they do now. He also stated that HRTI provides wheelchair accessible vans so that may be a vehicle used in place of the Handi-Ride van if needed.

Chairman Brown asked what HRTI is.

Mr. Johnson explained that HRTI is Hampton Roads Transportation Incorporated. They are the taxi provider for local taxi cab services; they are who the cab companies work for.

Mr. Steed stated that there is no difference in service other than a different vehicle may be picking people up from time to time. MV is still responsible for rides; scheduling; all of the things they are responsible for now. In addition, MV will be overseeing the cab operations and all trip scheduling. Initially MV reservationists will let the client know what vehicle they will be picked up in. Going forward, clients will start to recognize that after 5pm Monday through Friday and on weekends all passengers will be transported by cab services.

MV has already made the necessary arrangements with HRTI to make sure they have enough lift equipment to provide trips during those hours. MV and HRTI both have an understanding of how many wheelchair clients generally need service during those hours. MV will be working with HRTI over the next month to work out the processes resulting in some clients being picked up by HRTI to test such processes. These tests are necessary to assure that all clients' needs are being met and that all processes are complete so that on December 3rd, which is a Saturday, all trips on that day will be fully serviced by HRTI.

Mr. Steed continued by saying that MV has every confidence in HRTI's ability in that the vehicles have the same equipment as MV; they all have NDTs; they have adjusted their employee training practices to adopt the same standards as MV; and their dispatch center is also in line with MV.

Mr. Steed emphasized that Handi-Ride is not going out of business; the service is not changing; and passengers will still be going to the same places as they were going to last week. The only difference you will see as a passenger on Handi-Ride is you will go in a cab or you will go in a Handi-Ride van. That is the only difference.

Chairman Brown explained that Handi-Ride vehicles have been recognized by visually impaired people by the way they sound; cabs will not sound that way. It was acknowledged that

passengers are still responsible for the cab arrivals; however, Chairman Brown asked if there is anything on the cab to differentiate the sound other than a horn.

Mr. Steed said that they do not currently have any identification, but MV will be working with HRTI on identification-especially for visually impaired people to make sure the drivers get out of the vehicle to notify the passenger.

Chairman Brown asked of the taxi vehicle count on the Peninsula.

Mr. Azzalina stated that there are a total of 86 vehicles being used on the Peninsula, 10 of which will be wheelchair accessible.

Chairman Brown asked if that count was just for the Peninsula.

Mr. Azzalina confirmed that count as solely for Hampton and Newport News.

Chairman Brown asked of the Southside count.

Mr. Azzalina stated that Norfolk will have 154 vehicles total, 5 of which will be wheelchair accessible. Virginia Beach will have 36 vehicles total, 6 of which will be wheelchair accessible.

Chairman Brown thanked everyone and ended the discussion.

Chairman Brown called for the Co-Chairman, Ina Kreps, to read a letter submitted by an absent committee member, Christopher Heath. The letter contained questions pertaining to the current service changes. Some of the questions were already answered prior to the reading.

Chairman Brown stated that the questions will not be answered individually at that time and the meeting was moved to the next item on the agenda, Public Comment.

Public Comment

During the Public Comment period Chairman Brown called upon various attendees to address their questions by show of hand.

Linda Gurley asked to address the following:

- RFP for taxi services
- Taxi cabs and PCAs who are also wheelchair users
- 90 minute ride times and late pickups/arrivals

Mr. Johnson stated that there was no RFP placed because it was an adjustment on an already existing contract with MV. MV currently holds the contract and has hired a subcontractor.

He explained that trips are currently never scheduled beyond 60 minute ride times. The scheduled 60 minute ride times are going to 90 minute ride times. The pickup window times are not changing; in that they will remain at 30 minutes-15 minutes before and 15 minutes after.

Ms. Gurley explained that she, and others, has been repeatedly picked up late in those 30 minute window times resulting in late arrivals to appointments and places of employment. She stated that she has spoken with CJ on this issue and again is not the only passenger experiencing late pickups and arrivals.

Mr. Loomis assured Ms. Gurley that he is working with the scheduling department in Hampton on those issues.

Ms. Gurley asked of the fees that passengers are being charged for arriving late to their destinations.

After various comments in the room, Chairman Brown interjected to allow time for the public period. She suggested that Ms. Gurley contact directly whomever she thinks can get her that answer.

Concluded Linda Gurley.

Donald Fennell addressed the following during his Q and A with Mr. Johnson of HRT:

- Subcontracting and cost solutions

Mr. Johnson concurred with Mr. Fennell that HRT has contracted with MV who has now subcontracted with HRTI. He explained that HRT Paratransit is currently budgeted at about \$6.5 million per year but, because of the amount of service, HRT is currently spending about \$8.5 million per year. Paratransit costs are expected to now decrease because MV has subcontracted. While Mr. Fennell addressed the potential for complications in subcontracting, Mr. Johnson stated that this is the current solution to the spiraling costs at this time.

Concluded Donald Fennell.

Sharon Beddingfield asked to address the following:

- Purchasing of Handi-ride tickets
- On behalf of Wal-mart Employees: Employer requests for overtime

Mr. Steed emphasized once again that nothing has changed in terms of passenger procedure. Passengers will follow the same system for purchasing tickets and Handi-Ride hours and adjustments will remain the same. HRTI will be provided tickets for cab drivers just as they are provided for Handi-Ride van drivers. HRTI will respond to passengers as MV reservationists do on the necessary adjustment of pickup times due to an employer's request for overtime.

Concluded Sharon Beddingfield.

Tyrell Mullen explained a personal issue with no-shows.

Chairman Brown explained to Mr. Mullen that the current public comment period was to be based upon the current service changes. Due to the lack of time allowed, Chairman Brown identified herself as Mr. Mullen's committee representative for Hampton and offered to later provide him with her contact information to address any personal issues Mr. Mullen could not solve by calling MV directly. Chairman Brown apologized to Mr. Mullen and explained that she needed to allow time for those in attendance who wished to obtain clarification on the service changes at hand.

Mr. Mullen was asked if there was a specific question that could be addressed at that time.

Mr. Mullen answered no.

Concluded Tyrell Mullen.

Woodrow Vereen asked to address the following:

- Time changes

Mr. Steed explained that the times and hours for Handi-Ride are not changing. However, if your ride is scheduled after 5pm and/or during weekend hours you will be picked up by the taxi service.

Concluded Woodrow Vereen.

Urika Harrison asked to address the following:

- Missing five minute wait times vs. 90 minute ride times
- Late pickup trip fees
- HRTI sensitivity training

Mr. Steed stated that the five minute wait time is still in effect and that a 60 or 90 minute ride time is not a pickup time. The wait time is still 5 minutes while a total maximum amount of time to ride is 90 minutes. The 60-90 minutes ride time is not a pickup time. Handi-Ride will still operate with consideration of the 5 minute wait time. Mr. Steed explained that they will still work with a passenger who seems to have missed their 5 minute time because they were inside checking on their ride.

Mr. Steed addressed the late pickups by stating that there is generally no policy for trip fees if MV is late, however they do work with clients on a case by case basis. Mr. Steed said that MV will not generally charge for that trip if they are grossly late.

Mr. Johnson addressed the Chair to interject on the discussion.

Chairman Brown acknowledged.

Mr. Johnson explained that with Handi-Ride you are paying a \$3.00 fare. Handi-Ride is as the fixed route fares are. If a fixed route bus is late, you still required to pay the fare. Handi-Ride is slightly different only because it is a scheduled system of pickups, however he asked everyone to recognize that late fixed route buses still require payment upon boarding.

Mr. Azzalina stated that HRTI will be receiving information on the scheduled trips the day before so they will know where all of the pickups are going to be. He emphasized that HRTI will not be haphazardly sending taxis out for pickups, but rather trips being routed in advance. HRTI will be implementing a well thought out scheduling system that will result in great service for Hampton Roads.

Chairman Brown asked if HRTI will also be recognizing the 7 days in advance trip scheduling policy.

Mr. Steed clarified that MV will still be receiving all reservations so the 7 day advance option will be recognized as always.

Mr. Azzalina stated that HRTI drivers will be adhering to MV's sensitivity training policy along with HRTI's own in-house sensitivity training that has already been a part of HRTI driver training.

Concluded Urika Harrison.

Kay Hensley asked that the following be addressed:

- Cab company identification for Newport News
- On behalf of the Denbigh House: On time pickups for late night events
- Evening drop off courtesy
- Seating necessity

Mr. Azzalina announced that Yellow cab of either Hampton or Newport News will be servicing both cities on the Peninsula.

Mr. Azzalina repeated the scheduling system of advance trip orders from MV. He assured Hampton Roads residents that HRTI will produce high performance records.

In regards to any drop off courtesy for late night trips, Mr. Azzalina stated that MV policies and courtesy for safety will stand as they have always been.

Mr. Horten explained that if a passenger needed to ride in the front seat they may do so. He asked that the passenger make the driver aware of their needs.

Concluded Kay Hensley.

Brenda Barrett asked that the following be addressed:

- Accessibility accommodations of HRTI vans
- Riding with travel grocery carts

Mr. Azzalina explained that vans will be able to accommodate a wheelchair along with the driver and 4 or 5 other passengers.

Mr. Horten added that some of the vans will be able to accommodate 2 wheelchairs at one time. There will be room at times for a travel cart because of the capability to accommodate 2 wheelchairs.

Concluded Brenda Barrett.

Joseph Gurley asked to address the following:

- Non-wheel chair taxi cab accommodations
- Shared trips

Mr. Azzalina stated that the vehicle models are 2006 or newer Chevy Impala sedans, which can transport up to 5 passengers. There are also Chevy mini vans that can transport up to 6 passengers depending upon the model.

Mr. Horten explained that trips will be shared and scheduled according to the information received for each trip with consideration for PCAs as well.

Concluded Joseph Gurley.

Chairman Brown questioned how group employee trips, from Arc or Eggleston for example, will be handled if the employees are let out at or after 5pm and require 7 or 8 pickups there at one time.

Mr. Steed stated that MV will be handling pickups for those large group trips.\

Chairman Brown then called on Linda Gurley once again.

Ms. Gurley asked how it is known if her PCA is a wheelchair user or not.

Mr. Steed stated that it is noted in the client files; however, if someone has two or three PCAs then it is best to let the reservationist know the PCA accommodations needed for that particular trip.

Concluded Linda Gurley.

Chairman Brown called upon Donald Fennell once again.

Mr. Fennell asked that because HRTI has accessible wheelchair vans, is it a possibility for anyone to call and request a cab outside of Handi-Ride. He emphasized the vocalized need from the community for such services. If they are ever available, the services need to be publicized.

Mr. Horten stated not at this time because of the contract; however next year they may be purchasing additional vans with the assistance of federal grants for that specific intention. Once the grant money is fully accessible they will move forward with those services.

Mr. Azzalina offered his contact information to Mr. Fennell for updates on those specific services.

Chairman Brown took a moment to state that the committee will not have time to recognize any further questions by those who have already commented. She asked if anyone else had a service question.

Cindy Creede asked for the floor.

Chairman Brown acknowledged.

Ms. Creede thanked the Chair and asked Mr. Johnson to elaborate on the earlier discussion regarding cost savings. She expressed that the specifics were not given as to what is to be the exact reason(s) for the savings.

Mr. Johnson agreed and elaborated that the contributing factors for cost savings are smaller vehicles, multi-use vehicles, and larger fleet.

Mr. Azzalina added that HRTI and MV have been working on such service implementation for over a year. Sophisticated optimization and routing software has been used to analyze a fleet's vehicle size; pickup and drop off points; odometer readings, for example, in order to obtain reports that reflect inefficiencies. This effort is not a new concept being it is practiced all over the country. There were actual savings that were shown through the optimization software.

Chairman Brown thanked everyone and announced that the Public Comment period has been concluded. She informed everyone who had any further questions to please let her know so she could direct them to their specific committee member representative. The provided information

here is specifically for questions. All personal complaints need to primarily be handled through HRT and/or MV. The following are the city representative contact information:

Newport News: Donald Fennell (Insight Enterprises) 827-0275

Hampton: Patricia Brown (Chairman) 826-7185

Virginia Beach: Christine Cutchins cacutchins@cox.net

Portsmouth: Lisa Baker lisabaker1387@verizon.net

Chesapeake: Christopher Heath 523-4806 or mstrblind@verizon.net

Norfolk: Everlene Brewer holyopolio@yahoo.com

Suffolk: Lawrence Fagan lawrence.fagan@drs.virginia.gov

Chairman Brown asked if there were any further questions.

Mr. Williams asked for the floor.

Chairman Brown acknowledged.

Mr. Williams re-addressed the topic of service changes vs service vs cost and asked that everyone take time to evaluate these changes.

Mr. Azzalina stated that MV will be decreasing their fleet by 54 vehicles which results in a decrease on maintenance; insurance-things of that nature. That alone will significantly increase savings.

Mr. Williams asked if MV and the taxi services will be making money.

Mr. Azzalina and Mr. Johnson stated yes, MV and the taxi services will be making money but HRT will be spending less money because of these implementations.

Mr. Fennell stated that all parties need to be concerned about the quality of service to the consumer amidst all of the cost savings implementations.

Chairman Brown called on a hand shown in the room.

Cheryl Ward asked if the taxi cabs are able to go onto the bases.

Mr. Azzalina stated that yes, a great percentage of the drivers do possess base passes.

Chairman Brown clarified with Mr. Azzalina that those who do possess a base pass will be the driver assigned to such trip.

It was also clarified that the taxi cab vehicles contracted serve as priority and are dedicated to Handi-Ride trips only.

Chairman Brown stated that the meeting was continuing as scheduled and everyone was welcome to stay for the conclusion. She reminded everyone of the contact information and stated HRT's main number as (757) 222-6000 for assistance.

Mr. Johnson added that complaints are to be submitted in the same manner as well and do not go through any taxi services.

Chairman Brown further clarified with Mr. Steed that anyone wishing to call for taxi services after Handi-Ride hours and/or if the trip is not a Handi-Ride scheduled trip, that passenger will be responsible for the full taxi cab fares. It will not be a \$3.00 Handi-Ride trip fare.

Chairman Brown thanked everyone for coming and reminded everyone that the Commissioner's Meeting is held every other month which is also open to the public. The meeting was announced as being on Thursday October 27, 2011 at 1pm in Hampton.

Chairman Brown moved the meeting to the next agenda item.

Chairman Report-Patricia Brown

Chairman Brown began her report.

- Acknowledgement and thanks to MV for sponsoring drivers who participated in Insight Enterprises' Bowl-a-Thon

Chairman's Report concluded.

Service Quality Report –Christine Cutchins

Ms. Cutchins began her report.

- A follow up on the visually impaired applicant who applied online asked of the time frame to be scheduled for an interview.
- Clients would like to know if the Appeals application would be located on the website in the future.
- Unclean vans have been in recent client complaints.

Mr. Johnson stated that the Appeals form is sent to the person who deemed ineligible or restricted. It would be mailed to them with their eligibility letter.

Ms. Cutchins stated that an online form for those who are visually impaired and have online access would be ideal.

Regarding interviews, Mr. Johnson suggest the applicant call into the office.

Mr. Steed addressed the vans complaint and stated that MV has just hired a new contractor due to issues with the current cleaning crew. The new company will be thoroughly cleaning the vans inside and out this upcoming weekend.

Service Quality Report concluded.

Rick Barry was acknowledged.

Mr. Barry asked of information in accessible format, such as the service changes letter or anything within HRT.

Ms. LaFontaine stated that the letter on the service changes was generated as a mass mailing and that all HRT information can be provided in accessible format per request as stated on the website. No requests have been received on anything other than Tide information.

Mr. Barry explained on his Handi-Ride application, he requested all information in Braille.

Mr. Fennell added clarification that the request would be made on the original application form for Paratransit services.

Ms. LaFontaine stated that she can provide alternative materials and would look into the format requested by Mr. Barry.

Mr. Johnson stated that HRT will improve on future mass mailings.

Chairman Brown moved to the next item on the agenda.

Policy Report-Everlene Brewer

Lisa Baker reported in Ms. Brewer's absence.

- A follow-up with HRT on the money denominations and credit card information for light rail ticket vending machines as well as the 3 inch platform to vehicle gap.

Mr. Johnson stated that he has not heard of updated information from finance on TVM concerns or the platform gap.

Chairman Brown and Mr. Johnson did concur that the information was to be followed up with Mr. Law, however, Mr. Johnson stated that light rail stations are ADA compliant.

Membership Committee-Ina Kreps

Mrs. Kreps began her report.

- Mary Mathena was not in attendance, but is still pending approval from the Virginia Beach City Council.
- Alicia Griffin, in attendance, is working with the committee and council to represent Newport News.
- Donald Fennell will also be working to re-enlist as a member for 2012.

Membership Report concluded.

Commissioner's Report-Will Moffett

Commissioner Moffett began his report.

- Thanked everyone for the opportunity to attend and stated there has been challenges in schedule due to council work sessions that take place on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays
- Announced Hampton Green Day
- Announced the petition to President Obama to make Fort Monroe a national park
- The President and First Lady did an excellent job in speaking to the veterans and military families that morning
- Grace Routten has submitted her resignation due to illness. She will be recognized in Hampton with a proclamation for her many years of service.
- Light rail has been reported to exceed expectations due to the hard work of the employees and leadership of Mr. Shucet.
- A search for a new CEO is underway as Mr. Shucet was never intended to be a permanent employee.

Commissioner's Report concluded.

Ms. Cutchins confirmed that Commissioner Moffett is the liaison to the Advisory Committee on behalf of the Commissioners. She addressed Commissioner Moffett on the responsibility of obtaining new committee members through various city Commissioners. She explained that some of the Commissioners are not very responsive in their understanding of the process-example Ms. Mathena's attempts in Virginia Beach.

Mr. Moffett explained he could not speak to those in Virginia Beach; however he suggested that the Advisory Committee's advocacy and encouragement would assist those who may not fully understand the process. Commissioner Moffett stated that he has learned from such advocacy.

Both Chairman Brown and Ms. Cutchins asked that Mr. Moffett carry and present the conversation to his colleagues so the committee can move forward with membership.

Commissioner Moffett agreed.

Mr. Fennell confirmed with Commissioner Moffett that the new Chairperson of the HRT Commission would be Dr. Pat Woodbury of Newport News.

Chairman Brown concluded the conversation and moved to the next agenda item.

MV Paratransit Operations Report-Andy Steed

Mr. Steed began his report and stated that the average trip distance would be corrected from the report in hand.

- Mr. Steed stated the total statistics for the months of August 2011 and September 2011

Report Concluded.

Chairman Brown confirmed with Mr. Steed that the future reports containing taxi service statistics will be separated accordingly.

Chairman Brown asked if there were any questions.

Donald Fennell clarified with Mr. Steed the passenger individual trips vs overall passenger trip statistics. The total passenger trips listed consist of all passengers including PCAs and companions which include a duplication in trips listed for one individual passenger.

Chairman Brown asked if there were any other questions and moved to the next agenda item.

Certification Update-Mary LaFontaine

Ms. LaFontaine began her report.

- Ms. LaFontaine reported for the combined months of August 2011 and September 2011.

Certification report concluded.

Chairman Brown stated that she received an eligibility training material from Mr. Johnson and thanked HRT for conducting Appeals on the northside which presented the opportunity to gain an understanding of the new HRT counsel.

Mr. Johnson announced that the material given is available on the Easter Seals Project Action website.

Chairman Brown moved to the next item on the agenda.

Old Business

Mr. Johnson announced the attendance of guest Shervonne Banks, the Senior Citizen Advocate for the City of Newport News and serves on the Mayor's Committee for Newport News. He stated that Ms. Banks has set up a program between Berkley Village and HRT.

Ms. Banks stated that through the Community Ambassador Program, three complexes on the Peninsula were surveyed. Berkley Village and Berkley West were surveyed and already a part of an existing action plan on aging. The survey revealed the following information:

- Numerous bus stops within the complex
- Very few utilizing the transit system
- Fear and safety concerns to utilize transit

With HRT assistance and Easter Seals website resources, travel training has now been implemented. The first successful in-house class and outing took place on October 12th and 13, 2011.

The training at Berkley was consisted of:

- 18 participants
 - 12 were Handi-Ride clients
 - 14 were seniors age 60 years of age or over
 - 4 were persons with disability under 60 years of age

The training was structured as:

- Two day class
- First class October 12, 2011
 - 2 hours
 - Classroom discussion on all "how-to" travel information
- Second class October 13, 2011
 - Physical outing on the 111 fixed route in its entirety
 - Sightseeing and notations of major landmarks
 - View and tour of the Newport News transfer station with bus transfer discussion

Ms. Banks noted that 60% of the residents are Handi-Ride clients. She confirmed with Chairman Brown that there was one visually impaired passenger. That passenger was trained through the Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired. She announced that a session is being planned for Great Oaks with intent to expand Travel Training to other centers within Newport News.

In addition, Ms. Banks announced the planning of 6 sessions for seniors in Newport News on taxi cab safety with regards to the Handi-Ride service transition.

Mr. Johnson re-visited the fact that the training and implementation was all conducted through volunteer service and community outreach.

Ms. Banks stated that they have started out with the Independent Living communities and will eventually branch out to residential.

Ms. Creede clarified with Ms. Banks that the goal is not to transition Handi-Ride clients, but to generally explore other means of alternative transportation. The particular goal was to establish a village model which highlights individual's talents and skill sets in that particular community.

Ms. Banks then clarified with Mr. Fennell that the Easter Seals website was the most useful resource because of the specific curriculum provided that was customized to their particular needs.

Ms. Banks announced that photos and information can be found at the Newport News Task Force on Aging website www.newportnewstaskforceonaging.webs.com .

Chairman Brown thanked everyone and moved to the next agenda item.

New Business

Ms. LaFontaine stated that the minutes do need to be approved in order to be accepted and posted to the HRT website. In addition, because the meetings are recorded, Ms. LaFontaine stated that any corrections will be reviewed and the committee will be informed of their standings post review.

Mr. Johnson stated that HRT has revised the Paratransit policies and have asked the committee to review the revisions by next meeting for Commission approval. The Unified Service Plan needs to have Commission approval.

Copies were distributed and members with email access will be emailed a copy.

Mr. Fennell asked for the floor.

Chairman Brown acknowledged.

Mr. Fennell stated that he is employed by Insight Enterprises and have received a number of calls regarding the time frame for applications and interviews for Handi-Ride. He has addressed a concern of time allowed between applications received and interviews scheduled. Some clients have been in limbo for months waiting for a call by the eligibility specialist to set up an interview. He stressed that some people do not have advocates working for them or the initiative to call the office themselves.

Mr. Johnson stated that there is a backlog of applications. Even though a temp has been hired to assist in the process, the department is looking to hire another eligibility specialist because of the overwhelming amount of applications received per month. The department currently has two eligibility specialists and the hired temp help assists in the processing of paperwork and scheduling. Mr. Johnson stated that the best suggestion would be to call the office.

Chairman Brown agreed with Mr. Fennel's concern for the community and stated that she represents the disabled community and holds that representation as priority above all other business.

Chairman Brown moved to establish the next Advisory Meeting.

Established Upcoming Meeting

The next meeting of the Hampton Roads Transit Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities will be held **December 14, 2011 at 1:00 P.M.** in the 2nd floor Board Room at **3400 Victoria Boulevard, Hampton, VA**. The Policy and Service Quality subcommittees will meet one hour prior to discuss business.

Ms. Cutchins asked if the meetings will be alternated. Mr. Johnson stated that they are waiting for the 18th street facility to be complete due to the 15th street facility not be completely suitable at this time.

Meeting adjourned at 3:11pm.

Mary LaFontaine
Hampton Roads Transit
Paratransit Department
Administrative Coordinator