

WMATA RIDERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes September 6, 2006

Introduction

Dennis Jaffe, Chairman of the Riders' Advisory Council (RAC), called the meeting to order.

Chairman Jaffe welcomed everyone to the meeting and proceeded to address items listed on the agenda.

Review of Minutes

Motion to approve minutes Aug 2, 2006. Steve Cerny motioned to approve the minutes, Michael Snyder seconded the motion. At the last meeting, Susan Holland requested to add items to the agenda. The first one is the new configuration on the metro rail regarding height of the bar and metro is accessible presentation included in the upcoming meeting. These were not reflected in the new business section. Mary Blyther stated she abstained from approval of the minutes at the last meeting, but the current minutes state she seconded motion to approve the minutes. Lilian White moved for appointment of Sharon Conn as Chair and Michael Snyder seconded that motion.

RAC Member Resignation

Vote: Accepting Francisco's resignation, Sharon voted to accept the resignation.

All in favor of accepting minutes.

Public Comment

Chairman Jaffe opened the floor for public comment. There was no response.

Dialogue with WMATA Staff: Lisa Morgan, Customer Service

Presentation by new staff member, Lisa Morgan, Director of Customer Service
In meetings with RAC subgroup, categorized concerns as follows:

- Authority not as responsive as it needs to be
- Lack of customer service mentality
 - o Accuracy of PA announcements,
 - o Attitudes of some bus drivers
 - o Tone of voice when answering phone
 - o Platform personnel within rail—helpfulness
- Quality info needs to be provided to all customers
 - o Timeliness
 - o Accuracy
 - o Ability to make informed decisions

- Advance notice
 - Request for dynamic interactions (chat sessions)
- Concern for what Customer Service will do to address problems
 - How can one department penetrate the entire Authority
 - No operational pipeline for Customer Service
 - No system of information, Bus doesn't get the attention it needs
 - Customer Service doesn't have the authority to actually make changes

What Lisa has observed:

- WMATA is poised to improve as an organization, is mature, infrastructure to build what customers want is here, don't have to start from scratch
- Sound use of technology – ie, ability to track calls is present
- Many skilled professionals
- Culture is not resistant to change, but rather needs new infusion of leadership and ideas and hands on attention
- Mission in Customer Service: Designed to create a Customer Service mentality that focuses on the total customer experience, which is from the first point of contact to the end of the trip or interaction with Metro.

How do we accomplish this?

- Stabilize Customer Service operations
 - Numerous vacancies and vacancies in supervisor positions
 - Reducing processing times
- Standardizing and measuring Customer Service performance, through Quality Assurance program
- Create a system of analysis and distribution of customer information and hold divisions accountable
- Overhaul front line operations
- One number benefits:
 - High volume questions will now be automated
 - Trip planner will be automated as well
- Showed a draft IVR
- Mimic success of Rail and have staff closer to operations
- Seamless information to customers
- Training requirements for front line staff
- Indoctrinate Metro with Customer Service mentality
- Create workplans for managers outside of Customer Service who are responsible for front line employees,
- Electric signage outside fare gates
- Direct station manager communication, input on evaluations, real time information they can give to customer
- Relocate some of the units to Carmen Turner, OCC, Metro Access and CS will be co-located to provide for shared communication
- Location of Lost and Found
- Direction information and exploring POD cast information

What Customer Service needs from RAC:

- Information about the public, their thoughts and feelings
- Be involved in secret shopper program

Questions in response to Customer Service Presentation

Customer said website and phone number should be promoted, and recommended we use a system similar to FEMA. They use AT&T to have operators speaking different languages to enable visitors who speak languages other than English and Spanish.

Since Bus Stop survey is on going, how will you incorporate that in the ride guide and then how do you propose to continue to upgrade and know that the bus stop is accessible? Metro is Accessible encourages customers to use the Metro instead of Metro Access. One-on-one training is used to show customers how they will be able to make their routes. The ride guide can be programmed as needed, simply a matter of updating the system and materials. This survey should be complete by the end of year.

Another RAC member requested that they participate in the pre-testing of the IVR. Speed dial cell phone number to get to the one number, events calendar and meetings would be helpful on the IVR and police and popular web hits. He also recommended performing QA checks by recording what buses and operators are actually saying.

Patrick stated he has seen staff on platform assisting customers, and that is great but recommends automating the stops because they are difficult to hear on the trains. He also recommended thinking about IVR for hearing impaired and websites also needs to be accessible. Is there a way to get information to personal cell phones or metro pager or to anyone who cannot view the PIDS system?

Pat stated the driver needs to let customers know the priority seating is just for seniors. She normally rides the 70 or 71 and it's atrocious. Additionally, Seniors do not know how to use technology, cell phones, ipods etc, so there always needs to be another way to get information.

Another member stated a failure of Customer Service by a bus driver or operator can be dealt with by serious personnel action, you won't get a response and we won't see an improvement. Lisa said we are governed by the union and there are specific steps we are required to use. Gathering and using data appropriately is our responsibility. She also hopes to have screening criteria before people obtain the position, this way expectations are set forth upfront.

Chairman Jaffe asked for motion to appoint Pat Daniels to Metro bus subcommittee. Madam Chair made the motion and it was seconded by Pedro Erviti. There was no discussion. 13 approved, and Pat Daniels abstained.

Rules and Administration Subcommittee

This information was distributed on Friday and Michael was asked to review the high points. The goal is to ensure all agendas are circulated two weeks prior to meetings for additional items and a draft agenda submitted to the group one week prior to meeting with the previous minutes and voting items attached. They would like to have the RAC chair and committee chairs decide on agenda items to make sure we are not covering anything too controversial and are appropriate to the committee. Sharon noticed there is no requirement by the chair to respond to the new items recommended by another member. Rodney requested we have explicitly named the people who have made and seconded the motions. Another member asked if there was a provision if there is disagreement between subcommittee chairperson and the RAC chair. If this occurs, the Rules subcommittee will meet. Motion to refer this back to Rules and Admin committee to continue to work on, eleven in favor and Michael and Chairman Jaffe abstaining.

New Business

Kevin Moore brought up idea that the RAC create a resolution in support of the passage of the Davis Bill. Motion made by Kevin and Lillian seconded. Rodney stated he is not ready to vote for resolution without more information. It was then decided that this topic would be tabled until the October meeting and more information would be distributed between now and then.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Present

Mary Blyther
Denise Brown
Steve Cerny
Sharon Conn
Pat Daniels
Rodney Elin
Susan Holland
Nancy Iacomini
Dennis Jaffe
Kevin Moore
Pat Sheehan
Michael Snyder
Lillian White

Not Present

Katy Chang
Charles Metcalf
Don Padou
Mary Williams (Health issue)