

**Handilift Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
September 15, 2010**

Attending this meeting were Ms. Traci Brent from the City's Transit Division, Mr. Bennie Hopkins from the Planning Department, Mr. Sam Tensley (General Manager) and Karen Ingram from JATRAM, Rev. Sam Gleese (ADA Coordinator), Mr. Napoleon Campbell, Mr. Jason Bunch, Ms. Lee Cole, Ms. Jeri Walton, Mr. Namon Hulitt, Mr. Eddie Turner, and Dr. Scott M. Crawford (Chair). Guests included Dr. Christy Dunaway (LIFE) and Attorney Kay Hardage (Disability Rights Mississippi).

The meeting opened at 1pm. The first topic was the TranSystems monitoring report and the City Legal Department's decision not to allow its discussion at the Handilift meeting. Mr. Turner expressed frustration over this decision, stating, "What's the point of this meeting if we can't talk about the report?" There was a formal motion that passed unanimously to request someone from the City's Legal Department to attend the upcoming ADA Advisory Council meeting (October 6<sup>th</sup>) to explain this decision. Dr. Dunaway also felt it important to discuss the findings of the independent monitor in this meeting as it pertains directly to the functioning of paratransit (indeed, the very subject of these committee meetings).

Mr. Campbell suggested that the council elect a new co-chair as Ms. Kirkwood (former chairperson) is likely to be out for some time to come. Mr. Turner was nominated, but declined. Mr. Turner nominated Napoleon Campbell who was unanimously elected to the co-chair position.

September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline for completing most of the Consent Decree's provisions was raised for discussion. Among the items was to have a revised Handilift Policies and Procedure Manual sent out to all paratransit users with a cover letter describing the resolution of the Scott M. Crawford et. al v. City of Jackson and JATRAM lawsuit and an overview of the capacity constraints (i.e., next day service) requirements. Ms. Cole asked if there were specific sanctions for missing this deadline. Attorney Hardage of DRMS said that the plaintiffs would have to file a motion with the Court if they wished to object. In response, Mr. Hopkins pointed out that the City recently passed its budget for the fiscal year starting in October, and that there had been active discussion (in the City Administration) about whether or not the City of Jackson could continue to fund JATRAM at all. The chairperson stated that he understood that some of the deadlines may not be met, but that the most important thing was that the consent decree be implemented as soon as humanly possible.

The next item was the use of sedans and other smaller vehicles (mini-vans with ramps) to augment the use of larger paratransit vehicles in the fleet. Mr. Tensley said this is being actively considered, but that JATRAM must consider finding the space to park so many vehicles, as they currently do not have the room at their current location. The second problem lies in acquiring new operators for these vehicles, which will be difficult within the current budget and with the

hiring freeze. The committee was in favor of using sedans when possible for ambulatory riders (such as those who are blind but otherwise able to walk).

Mr. Tensley had a positive report on the process to acquire new paratransit scheduling software. He recently had a meeting with people in the City's Information Technology Department who agreed to look over the proposed software "with a fine toothed comb" for any potential problems. This was strongly encouraged by the committee, who understand the importance of getting this decision "right".

Ongoing training for bus operators at Living Independence for Everyone was discussed. Dr. Dunaway noted that her organization has not been paid. Mr. Tensley clarified that JATRAN will pay for this service and all she needs to do is submit an invoice. She agreed. Dr. Dunaway asked the chairperson if he'd be willing to assist in the training and he responded in the affirmative.

The appointment of a City employee to the position of JATRAN "ADA Coordinator" per the consent decree is still pending. Mr. Hopkins pointed out that the wording requires that the employee be within the Department of Planning and Development. The City at this point feels that Reverend Gleese is the most qualified person, but because he technically works in the Department of Human and Cultural Services, he is ineligible. There is also the issue of whether he has the time to commit to this additional job. Changing the wording of the Consent Decree was also discussed, but that involves a complicated three-way agreement between the Department of Justice, the City of Jackson's Legal Department, and herself (as Attorney for the Plaintiffs). This will need to be discussed again with City Attorneys and DOJ.

Finally, in new business, Mr. Tensley reported that a Handilift "Appeals Board" is being formed as per the consent decree to review any cases of people being denied paratransit service who wish to appeal that decision. The board will also review complaints and/or incidents using City of Jackson's paratransit system (Handilift).

The floor was opened for general comments or complaints. There being none and no further business, the meeting adjourned at about 2:15pm.

These Minutes were prepared by Scott M. Crawford, Ph.D., Chairperson and approved at the November 17, 2010 meeting.