



## County of Lackawanna Transit System

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### **Citizens' Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, February 14, 2024

In Attendance: Katie McAndrew, Keri Savage, Bill Kuehner, Greg Czyzyk, Zain Rabbani, Frank Soto, Kelly Matone, Mary Ann Iezzi, Thom Welby, Bill Schoen

Prior to the meeting, via email, minutes from the meeting held on November 8, 2023 and the agenda for this meeting were distributed to all.

Keri Savage called the meeting to order at 11:30am.

Mrs. Savage asked for a motion to approve minutes from the previous meeting. Bill Schoen made the motion. Thom Welby seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Keri Savage introduced herself. She spoke about Governor Shapiro's proposal for a \$282.8 million investment over the next 5 years.

Mrs. Savage announced Kelly Matone's appointment to Director of Shared Ride. She also noted COLTS' Shared Ride Department is scheduled for a PennDOT review since COLTS requested a technical assistance grant. We are welcoming their suggestions. This will kick off on Thursday, February 15<sup>th</sup>.

Mrs. Savage gave an update of the new facility project. We hope to be in the new building by Fall 2024 but that may be pushed back to due delays in material.

Ride Appreciation Days are scheduled for May. We are meeting with PPTA and will announce exact dates soon.

Driver Appreciation Days are scheduled for March.

Mrs. Savage spoke about the new Shared Ride calendar and presented to the committee. It is a good way to get all of our information to our clients, including our 8,300 Lottery passengers. We have started doing outreach with the calendars and delivering to high rises, etc.

Bill Schoen asked if we can add a PDF of the calendar to the Shared Ride portion of COLTS website.

Mrs. Savage noted that she is working on that.

Zain Rabbani said COLTS has received 4 new buses. He noted that for the first time ever, Administration, the Union, Maintenance, Finance, and drivers all sat together to decide what was needed as far as the new buses.

Mr. Rabbani noted that in January, we ordered 4 more buses with new technology like blind spot monitoring and crash mitigation. We are looking forward to those buses, he stated.

He noted that ridership is up approximately 80% from pre-pandemic.

Mr. Rabbani discussed how he is going to bigger companies and factories to help provide services to the working class.

He noted that Transit Center now has monitors with all necessary information posted on them for passengers, to replace all the paper that was hanging up.

He stated since October, COLTS has had monthly meetings with Northeastern Transit. Complaints have gone down significantly. Department heads are in each of these meetings and we now have oversight on training as well.

Greg Czyzyk stated during the PennDOT meeting, it was indicated that we are now at 98% ridership from pre-pandemic.

Mr. Rabbani noted that we have gone out to Scranton High School for outreach and our number of students has doubled.

Kelly Matone announced that COLTS has received 9 new buses. At this time, 5 are already out on the road and the other 4 are waiting to go out. These replaced 6 vans from 2016.

Mrs. Matone noted at the last meeting, Mary Claire Boylan brought up parking at the Steamtown Marketplace. We have had meetings with the owners and the Scranton Police Department to discuss. We had a Zoom meeting with City officials who are going back to their engineers to see how to fix this issue. We are not the only ones with this problem.

Mary Ann Iezzi stated she had a meeting with the mayor's office regarding a walkability study. She said she appreciates us looking into this and trying to solve such a major problem.

Kelly Matone stated COLTS has been asked to be involved in a fundraiser for Officer Gilmartin in April. While we do not have a lot of information on this yet, we will be working on it.

Mrs. Matone stated we got new tablets for the Shared Ride drivers. The tables have Waze on them and are more accurate. Currently, 2 drivers are already using them and are happy with the results thus far.

Greg Czyzyk stated that drivers have told him the tablet holders are not durable enough so he will be procuring something sturdier.

Keri Savage also spoke about the meeting with the City officials and we were under the impression the Blind Association was the other entity who reached out to them. She assured the Committee we would find a way to solve this issue.

Frank Soto spoke about a safety concern on the Shared Ride vehicles. On some of the F-550s, the landing is a slip and fall hazard. We have installed high visibility grip tape and stenciling on the steps to mitigate this.

Mary Ann Iezzi asked if the tape was something visually impaired persons can see.

Frank Soto replied "Yes, it is and it has grit so they can feel it."

Mr. Soto spoke about operator trainings coming in March., ADA Sensitivity and Hands on.

He discussed the security at the Transit Center. This is now 5 days a week.

Mr. Soto mentioned there will be a bus stop on Route #28 at Birney Avenue Shop Rite installed by the end of the week.

Mrs. Savage noted the much-needed stop is a common issue coming from the drivers.

Mr. Soto spoke about a bus shelter coming soon to Colfax Avenue and Mulberry Street. We have an engineer to make sure it is ADA compliant.

Mrs. Savage said monitors for drivers will be a welcome addition to driver rooms. They can all information needed instead of looking at so many papers. This will leave us with more informed drivers.

Greg Czyzyk said there are 5 monitors at the Transit Center that will display different information.

Keri Savage spoke about staffing, always looking for drivers in the Fixed Route Department. We are still looking for mechanics – must have their CDL. We are looking for part time Shared ride drivers as well.

Mrs. Savage noted Fixed Route will soon be negotiating their CBA, hoping for new enhancements for easy work flow.

In addition to the security officer at the Transit Center, we are also working with Human Services for mental health help. We are looking to work with different organizations to help with assistance, per Mrs. Savage.

Bill Schoen asked if COLTS has an employee Assistance Program.

Keri Savage replied “Yes, we do.”

Mary Ann Iezzi asked if COLTS provides training for drivers. She said we should reach out to NAMI for in person trainings.

Mrs. Savage noted that COLTS has worked with Penn State University for diversity and inclusion. “It is time to do a new company training, especially for mental health awareness”, said Mrs. Savage.

Thom Welby asked if the Shared Ride grant has been awarded yet and if it was Federal or State.

Mrs. Savage noted it was already awarded through PennDOT.

Mr. Welby said if there are any grants in process, the State Representatives will put in a push for them.

Mr. Welby noted the improvements COLTS has done over the past 8 years with the Chamber regarding transportation services in areas that did not have service and the progress that has been made to help employees has been awesome to see.

Mrs. Savage said thank you. We are always under review and looking to serve as many people as we can.

Zain Rabbani stated more companies are reaching out to us to provide ridership. We will try to link them to make routes more efficient.

Mr. Welby noted that previously they have worked with some organizations about bus shelters but there have been issues that cause them to not go up. He stated they are hoping to get funding to finish the shelter on Lackawanna Avenue at the Radisson soon. He also asked “What is by Hill Top because kids are scattered?”

Bill Kuehner stated we need a new one, not the one where it is and closer down to the dentist’s office. There are many hurdles to get a shelter up. We can try to get one at Hill Top next. He noted there will be solar lighting in new shelters.

Mary Ann Iezzi said she received a call about a client that is in a wheelchair and was dropped off yesterday at his dentist's office. It turned out that the office was closed when he arrived. He states he called COLTS 7 times and got no response. Fortunately, another bus came by and got him.

Kelly Matone and Keri Savage both stated they will look into this.

MAI stated it may be an east fix like the driver waiting for the person to get in the building.

Keri Savage stated we will reach out to the client and look into the phone number, driver, etc.

The next CAC meeting will be held Wednesday, May 8, 2024 at 11:30am.

Mary Ann Iezzi motioned to adjourn. Greg Czyzyk seconded the motion.