



## Customer Advisory Committee Minutes December 4, 2024: 5:30 pm to 6:45 pm Mott Branch Library ~ 1010 Dorr Street, Toledo

Committee Members Present: Angie Goodnight, Brandon Brown, Jennifer Seibel, Jodie Summers, Joyce Allen, Ken Schumaker, Sara Soper

Committee Members Absent: Becky Opperman, Cindy Kerr, Katie Wilson, Loren Sengstock, Rebecca Blair

TARTA Staff and Board Members Present: Laura Koprowski - *CEO*, Susan Gettum - *Chief of Staff*, Sylvester Jones - *Operations Manager/Paratransit*, Richard Russell - *Transit Outreach & Education Coordinator*, Mary Morrison - *Board of Trustees President*, Joel Beren - *Board of Trustee member*

- **Welcome / Introduction of TARTA Staff and Board Members present**
- **One-Word Check-In (ice breaker)** - Some of the words shared included spicey, happy, frustrated, thankful, wicked, contemplative, rushed, bushy-tailed, stressed, cheer, good, cold, meh
- **Focus on Paratransit (Move) Services** - Sara Soper led the conversation and mentioned that this was a sensitive topic as many rely on the service to get places. Both Move and Flex have been game changers and allowed her (living in the suburbs) to be able to work outside the home. Move is important for independence. She asked the group to stay factual but stay kind in our discussion. Sara mentioned the difference between Move (paratransit, door-to-door) and Flex (microtransit, curb to curb).

People do not want to be afraid to get to work - this is hard to understand if you are able to drive yourself and have always been in control and not at the mercy of other transportation sources.

Sylvester Jones helped to clarify Flex and paratransit zones (3/4 mile outside fixed route boundaries.)

TARTA paratransit drivers and vehicles are good but the issues have come up with the third-party overflow rides whole vehicles and staff are NOT TARTA.

VIA as a third-party supplier has been a nightmare for Sara. It was explained by TARTA staff that when we did a RFP for third party providers, the deciding committee included TARTA staff and Board of Trustees members who all recommended VIA. VIA also sub-contracts to M&M and TLC. When posting the RFP, the only other companies submitting proposals were not acceptable (i.e. Black and White.)

1127 West Central Avenue, P.O. Box 792  
Toledo, Ohio 43697-0792  
P: 419.243.7433 | F: 419.243.8588

**TARTA.COM**

Communication with VIA is terrible - they have told Sara they didn't want to come to Waterville and didn't tell the TARTA Move dispatch team; this has happened to Sara twice.

People are not upset with Move and Flex but with the third party (VIA).

Sylvester did confirm that he meets with the VIA manager (Elias) on a weekly basis and VIA now has the list of MOVE riders grandfathered in outside of the paratransit boundaries (like Sara).

It was asked that TARTA try and get away from third party providers and instead increase MOVE vehicles and drivers to handle to demand. This did not seem to be an issue pre-pandemic.

It is important to note that TARTA is not a taxi or limo company - we are public transit and therefore doing our best with what we have. The alternative to not using third party sources may result in declining ride requests, which we do not want to do.

**Take Aways:**

- Invite Elias from VIA to the next CAC meeting in February to continue this discussion and perhaps a VIA driver as well.
- The paratransit complaint log is forwarded to Sally Fish at The Ability Center every month. From this point forward, TARTA will also include Angie Goodnight and Sara Soper when we send that document so they have more efficient access to it.

• **Other Business**

- No other business was introduced due to time restraints but Jodie requested we discuss the changes to Routes #12 and #14 at the February meeting.
- Also, Loren (who was not able to attend this meeting) wanted to bring up the Paratransit application process. This can also be moved to the February agenda.

• **2025 Meeting Dates - mark your calendars:**

- February 5, 2025 - Mott Library, Community Room B
- April 2, 2025
- June 4, 2025
- August 6, 2025
- October 1, 2025
- December 3, 2025