



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

METROPOLITAN ATLANTA RAPID TRANSIT AUTHORITY

EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2021

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

via WebEx

MEETING MINUTES

Committee Chair Robert Ashe III called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Board Members Present	Staff Members Present
Robert Ashe III, Chair	Jeffrey Parker
Rita Scott, Vice Chair	Collie Greenwood
Roberta Abdul-Salaam	Rhonda Allen
Stacy Blakley	Luz Borrero
Jim Durrett	Melissa Mullinax
William Floyd	Elizabeth O’Neill
Roderick Frierson	Raj Srinath
Freda Hardage	

Also, in attendance: Board General Counsel Justice Leah Ward Sears of Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP; other staff members: Kevin Hurley, Tyrene Huff, and Kristina Garcia-Buñuel.

Approval of the November 19, 2020 External Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee Chair Ashe called for a motion to approve the November 19, 2020 minutes. Ms. Hardage made a motion to approve. Mr. Durrett seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously by a vote of 8 to 0.

Briefing – Riders’ Advisory Council – Rhonda Allen, Chief Customer Service Officer

Chief Customer Service Officer Rhonda Allen provided the Board with an update on MARTA’s Riders’ Advisory Council (RAC), including a member overview and Council actions to date and those planned for 2021.

- The RAC is an advisory group and does not have governance authority.

- The RAC began meeting in June 2020 and meets for 1.5 hours on the first Wednesday of every month.
- All RAC members have perfect meeting attendance.
- MARTA Board of Directors and C-Team members regularly attend RAC meetings.
- The RAC is supported by MARTA staff members Lyle Harris and Leeshu Kennedy.
- RAC member terms were initially staggered such that 17 members would serve for two years and eight members would serve for one year. After the second year, all members would then serve two-year terms. This has since been modified so that all members will serve a two-year term with the same start and end dates.
- Current RAC members will all serve two-year terms that began in June 2020 and run through May 2022.
- Since August 2020, RAC members have led discussions on a variety of topics that have included: contactless payment solutions, improving real-time bus information, library hubs at rail stations and arterial rapid transit in Clayton County, among others.
- MARTA staff also present and lead discussions on topics ranging from the Authority's history, governance, and fiscal year budget to automated fare collection and MARTA's work with HOPE Atlanta.
- In August 2020, the RAC began using the Qmarkets (QM) crowdsourcing platform. A problem statement or solution is presented via QM and RAC members can comment and or vote on them. MARTA staff vet the RAC's QM suggestions and provides a response detailing what MARTA is currently doing – or plans to do – to address the issue.
- Some of the most popular ideas generated by RAC included:
 - Install a bus shelter in front of a food processing facility in Clayton County. Employees of the company were waiting for the bus in the hot sun or pouring rain while sitting on utility boxes. MARTA eventually installed a bus shelter at the location.
 - Install a midway crosswalk at the Civic Center station for safe and faster accessibility to the station. MARTA is currently working with the City of Atlanta and Georgia Department of Transportation to install the crosswalk.
 - Consolidate the “On the Go” and “See Something Say Something” apps for more consistent customer usage and experience. MARTA departments are currently reviewing the suggestion.

- RAC members, MARTA Board members, and MARTA staff alike have expressed positive experiences regarding the Council, its meetings, and work.
- In 2021, RAC plans to increase its visibility, conduct small group ideation sessions and design labs, tour MARTA facilities, and provide input on the new rail car fleet.

After Ms. Allen's presentation, Committee members asked several questions.

Ms. Abdul-Salaam asked if any members of the RAC utilize MARTA's mobility services. Ms. Allen stated that one member is a certified mobility services customer.

Ms. Abdul-Salaam asked how RAC members were selected as appointees. Ms. Allen stated that 24 members were chosen from applicants ranked on various criteria, including the strength of the application and demographic, jurisdictional, and rider-type diversity.

Mr. Frierson asked for contact information about the process whereby companies and/or real estate developers can partner with MARTA to install bus shelters. Ms. Allen will reach out to the Department of Planning and the Office of Marketing & Sales for these guidelines. The process will also be presented at the next External Affairs Committee meeting.

Ms. Hardage stated that Gwinnett Technical College had partnered with MARTA to install bus shelters in front of and near its campus.

Committee Vice Chair Scott expressed her support for the RAC's work and noted that she had attended all meetings since June 2020.

Other Matters

General Manager Jeffrey Parker welcomed Raj Srinath, MARTA's new Chief Financial Officer.

Adjournment

The Committee meeting adjourned at 10:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Tyrene L. Huff
Assistant Secretary to the Board