



## **Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes**

**May 8, 2024**

**Location: via Zoom**

### **Attendance:**

**New Jersey:** Reggie Haynes, Alan Becker, Judy Boldurian, Straso Jovanovski

**Pennsylvania:** Scott Cohen, Tyrone Wesley, Robert Melikian

**Emeritus Member(s):** Jeff Kessler, John Boyle, Daniel McArdle, Larry Davis

**DRPA/PATCO:** John Rink, GM; Robert Finnegan, CSSO; Jerry Sahi, CFO; Ed Cobbs, Chief; Shawn Dougherty, Captain; Cheryl Ansert, Administrative Coordinator

### **Call to Order**

A motion was made to approve the April 10, 2024 minutes. The Minutes were approved.

### **Finance Update**

#### **CFO Sahi**

- February YTD Audited traffic revenue figures are \$48.2M, which was 5% better than budget and marginally better than last year's numbers and 1.3% less than 2019.
- March YTD PATCO revenue was \$3.2M, which was 6,000 better than the budget, about 12,000 better than 2023 & 51.8% less than 2019.

### **Public Safety Discussion**

#### **Chief Cobbs**

- Captain Shawn Dougherty is assigned to oversee Transit and bridge operations on the patrol side.
- Purpose is to provide a safe environment for our patrons and anyone that travels on or in our facilities.
- Aware there is a problem regarding the homeless and unsheltered. It is an increasing issue nationwide, not just in our jurisdiction.
- Established different initiatives that we believe have helped control the issue. We believe it is a safe environment and crime is not an issue on PATCO.
- Homelessness is a social services and quality of life issue that we attempt to address on multiple levels; including working with our internal and external partners on both sides of the river (Faces of Change, Volunteers of America, Office of Homeless Services, or City of Philadelphia) in order to provide the services that are needed.
- Homelessness is a frequent problem within our system, but we also have other priorities outside of this issue.
- Updated YTD numbers for calls for service for homeless and unsheltered removals is 2,753. Other issues dealing with the homeless and unsheltered removals is 6,834. Remove means providing them with social service assistance, arrest or having them exit the system. Most of the time these individuals are removed they return a short time later.



- We cannot violate anyone's constitutional rights and we will not profile people based on their race or gender.
- We instituted new measures this last year that we believe will reduce the presence of homelessness and unsheltered in our system. We now have command staff and officers riding the trains more frequently.
- We haven't received many complaints on the weekends, but we do have officers on the trains during the designated hours of 2AM to 5AM on Fridays.
- There are multiple factors that come into play when dealing with an individual that's suffering from mental illness. Part of that is talking to them and deescalating the behavior that they may display.
- Homeless and Unsheltered are told by social services to go to public transportation centers b/c they operate 24 hours a day and they can provide them with some warmth and comfort. That is no excuse if they are conducting illegal activity.
- Train sweeps are performed on 6 car trains at Broadway station. You may not always see an officer on the train, but sweeps are being conducted.

#### **CSSO Finnegan**

- There needs to be some shift in the judicial system to change the ways we can deal with these people, they need help and we can't force them to take the help that is offered.

#### **Response to chat question about Class I or Class III and security guards.**

##### **CSSO Finnegan**

- Security guards give a false perception and tends to create more issues than it solves.

##### **Chief Cobbs**

- Any types of complaints that we receive are addressed immediately and we also look at what we can do as far as our deployment is concerned.

##### **GM Rink**

- Any email complaints we receive the Captain takes the time to call and speak with the individual directly about their concern.

#### **Jeff Kessler: Does DRPA arrest people caught smoking in the system and of those charged do these charges stick or get dropped later?**

##### **Chief Cobbs**

- As far as smoking is concerned we do enforce it.
- Believe we need to add more signs/better signage in the stations and on the platforms to address issues like loitering & smoking. Working with our corporate communications to make sure quality of life issues are clearly posted in the stations/platforms.
- In some cases a summons may be issued.



### **GM Rink**

- If Center Tower staff observes a fare evader they may use the intercom to instruct them to exit the system and purchase a ticket, but that doesn't always work. They may call into police dispatch and provide them with a description to have an officer locate them at another station. The officers will look for that individual on the train or in the station if they can.

### **Chief Cobbs**

- The best thing to do is be the best witness you can be and get information to us, whether through a phone call, the look up speak up app or speaking with an employee face to face and then that employee can contact public safety.
- If we get a good description we can hopefully locate the individual and take appropriate action against them.

**Larry Davis: Now that it's getting warmer, do you plan on increasing your visibility in stations and on trains?**

### **Chief Cobbs**

- The Freedom Mortgage Pavilion Personnel give us a calendar of events that will take place at the pavilion.
- Based on the events that we believe will bring increased ridership to PATCO, we will increase our staff presence at our stations.
- Any other events where there will be an increase in ridership we will also increase our staff.

**Scott Cohen: 2026 will be a busy time for Philadelphia with all the events they are hosting, Will we have adequate security and Officer's allocated?**

### **Chief Cobbs**

- Absolutely, we are already looking at 2026 b/c we are aware that it will be a huge atmosphere that we need to plan for.
- We have partnerships on both sides of the river and b/c we're a gateway to both sides, we know that we are going to be an integral part of the planning for 2026.
- There will be challenges we face, but we will be prepared.

**Ben Saracco: I would like to advocate for different levels of police officers. I think it could be helpful if there is a surge in activity because of an event.**

### **Chief Cobbs**

- We have partnerships with Camden Metro, NJ Transit and other departments within Camden and the Center City District.
- We have done collaborative details together. We do all work together.



## **Were there any finds or corrective measures taken as a result of Chairman Schultz inspection of PATCO's paid areas a month or so ago?**

### **GM Rink**

- They found our areas to be in excellent condition and complimented us on the employees that clean our stations, the condition they were in and everything that we do.
- Their issues were with what was outside our fare gates.

### **Chief Cobbs**

- We're facing challenges in our Philadelphia sectors concourse areas. We consistently work with the City of Philadelphia and the Office of Homeless Services to address these issues.
- We work with Septa and Philadelphia PD, but it is a challenge and those areas in the concourse (with the exception of 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>) are the responsibility of Philadelphia PD.
- Our purpose and intent is to make sure that everyone that utilizes our trains or bridges has a safe passage. We know what our responsibilities and accountabilities are.

## **Call box in all station update**

### **CSSO Finnegan**

- We have been testing the call boxes and they have been successful in the testing program.
- The replacement was presented to the Board as a Capital Project.
- We will be replacing our call boxes as discussed last month once it goes through the procurement process.

## **Cell service in underground station update**

### **GM Rink**

- T-Mobile has been out actively installing their equipment.
- Approximately 17% complete with an anticipated completion date of October 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Has DRPA considered selling naming rights on PATCO stations?**

### **GM Rink**

- Refer to January CAC meeting minutes, no change.
- No interest from any vendors to look at naming rights for PATCO stations.

## **Does DRPA have adequate insurance on all bridges?**

### **GM Rink**

- John mentioned previously we have close to \$950M worth of insurance for our facilities.

## **Update on large hazardous tankers crossing under the bridges**

### **GM Rink**

- Mike Venuto updated that they are advancing studies as discussed last week with having the outer bridges analyzed for bigger ships.



**Upcoming Advance Notice on Public Events – (events for mid-May to mid-June)**

**GM Rink**

- No upcoming public events

**Larry Davis: Feasibility study for extending PATCO to go to University City.**

**GM Rink**

- Nothing in our 5-year budget to perform that study

**Members transitioning to Emeritus:**

Alan Becker & Pamela Mack-Brooks – Emeritus in September

Active members (8) New Jersey (5) and Pennsylvania (3)

Daniel McArdle and Grace have applications and are going through process

**OPEN Forum**

**Next CAC Meeting:** June 19, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m.

**Next DRPA Meeting:** DRPA Board Meeting on May 15, 2024 @ 9:00 a.m.