NASSAU COUNTY
TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

JUNE 18, 2013
4:00 p.m.

BEFORE: SHELDON SHRENSKEL, CHAIRMAN
APPEARANCES:

CHAIRMAN SHELDON SHRENKEL

VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE BLESSINGER

BOARD MEMBER KATHY ANN COMERFORD

BOARD MEMBER JEAN DUROSEAU

SAMUEL LITTMAN- EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COUNTY ATTORNEY
AND COUNSEL FOR TRANSIT COMMITTEE

MICHAEL SETZER- CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, VEOLIA
TRANSPORTATION

JOHN MICHNO

DAVID SAMOWITZ

PATRICIA HEFFERNAN

YUKI ENDO

ANA H. GIRALDO

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CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Good afternoon, will the meeting please come to order.

First, I'd like to call our members and have a rollcall.

Okay. Now, member Jean Duroseau?

BOARD MEMBER DUROSEAU: Present.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Vice Chairman Larry Blessinger?

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Present.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I am the chairman of the committee, Sheldon Shrenkel. And, I'd like to let you know that Mrs. Kathy Comerford who is a member of the committee is in transit; talk about transportation delays. The Long Island Railroad as you know, had a derailment and it has caused serious problems. Therefore she is in a private car in route to us now, and I understand the Long Island Expressway is pretty jammed up, so we expect her to still attend the meeting at some point.

Mr. Tony Rosario, who is also a member, is unfortunately ill today. He has just called and he will not be joining us this evening, thank you.

Okay. Now, with a vote we'd like to
acknowledge receipt of the transcript and the
minutes of the meeting held on March 27, 2013,
so just raise your hand if you read and recorded
the minutes.

(At this time all of the Transit Committee
Board Members raised their hands.)

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: We have recorded
that the three members present have read it,
thank you. We do have a quorum to still of
course, conduct our meeting.

I'd like to give a formal presentation by
having the CEO of NICE Transportation, Mr.
Michael Setzer, okay. Thank you Mr. Setzer.

MR. SETZER: Thank you Mr. Chairman,
committee members. There are two items that I'd
like to cover today. The first is on the desk
in front of you, it's the first quarter
performance report card and I'd like to get to
few of the highlights and then spend the
remainder of my time on the service changes, the
service improvements that are taking place now
and in September.

So if you take this report an turn to about
the forth page, it looks like this, it says,
"Key Performance Indicators NICE Bus Fixed Route
Service". I'd be happy to discuss any of it, but there are a couple that I think particularly deserve your attention.

If you take a look at what we've done here which is provided the scores for the first quarter of 2013 and put them next to the first quarter of 2012, January, February, March, look at the scheduled revenue hours, the very first line. If you recall in April of 2012, we put in a completely new set of schedules that reduced service hours and we discussed this many times since then. So you see it there, it's an 11.6 percent reduction in the total number of revenue hours, that's hours that a bus is a available for service for the public. Basically from out of the gate to back into the gate; that doesn't include dead-time, training time and things like that. So keep that number in mind, the 11.6 percent of fewer hours the first quarter of this year compared to the first quarter of last year.

Now, if you go down the page about two-thirds of the way there is a section called "Revenue Per Mile", and the first line in there is called "Fare Revenue", you see there that the revenue went up 3.6 percent. Now, there is
virtually no fare increase in effect here. The fares increased at the beginning of March, so it's essentially the same fare structure. And, even when we do this on a month by month we see significant increases in fare revenue from twelve to thirteen while we were decreasing the number of service hours, which I think if you take away from all that, the service redesign that went in April was very effective in revenue service from places where it was very thinly utilized to places where there was greater demand; so that's good news.

Then if you go all the way down to the bottom of the page, its the last statistic, "Fare Box Recovery" or the percentage of costs that's offset by the fare box, forty-four percent this year verses forty-one percent than last year same, same period of time. Meaning, the tax payers are covering a little bit less and the riders are covering a little bit more in a measure of sufficiency and generally that would be regarded as a good thing, especially if your a taxpayer.

On the second page there is some -- there is one more bit of a couple things that I think are
negative, but I want to finish up with the good news first. Again, about two-thirds all the way down the page in the "Quality" section, there is a line called "Average Number of Mechanical Failures Per Day", 5.84 breakdowns per day due to mechanical reasons, last year 3.7, this year again, we've talked extensively about the conditions before when we took it over, this is very much a reflection of the condition when we got it and what we've been able to accomplish with it in the meantime.

To be fair, that also reflects the conclusion of forty-five new buses that we got during the fall of last year, and we were able to park a similar number of very old buses. So that's definitely moving in the right direction.

Going up above that you'll see "Customer Satisfaction Score", there's a box there of four different statistics. And, you'll see significant follow-ups in reported customer satisfaction, and that probably concerns you as it did me when I saw that. This is, I'm certain, an accurate reflection of peoples perception, but it is not necessarily an accurate reflection of the performance and the
quality of the service being delivered. So what
is going on here... that's a perfectly
reasonable question, and the answer is that
we're not entirely sure, but we know it's not a
fundamental change in the quality of what we do.

There are actually a lot more statistics
than this, when we look at the detailed basis,
for example, one statistic is "Satisfaction with
the website", it fell off significantly from
last year to this year, but the website is the
same. There is also one on the satisfaction
with the printed timetables, just like the set
you have in front of you, which also dropped
significantly, but the timetables are the same
as they were a year ago. So we're fairly sure
that this is a reflection of a lot of things,
not that we suddenly collapsed in the quality of
service.

Another reason to draw that conclusion is we
also get data about customer satisfaction a
couple of other ways. We have what we call
"Mystery shoppers", who are plainclothes riders
who go out and score a number of these same
kinds of things. These are trained observers,
that's what they do for their job.
The scores that we get from them are on things like cleanliness and on-time and driver courtesy and those things are creeping up slowly. So if there had been a complete collapse in the quality of service it would have shown up there.

Third place we get it's data is from our call center, we get customers calling with complaints and comments to the call center. And, that's slowly creeping up also, it doesn't reflect a sudden decline in the amount of service.

So we can speculate about what the cause is, but we don't have good data about what causes this, although I think we can imagine that the fare increase -- this data was taken in the first quarter in mostly February and there was a fare increase by the MTA going into place in March which we shared in, as you remember. So I suspect that is at least one of the factors here that people are annoyed by increasing fares and reflected that in a way they responded to the surveyors on all kind of areas, there was no specific question about fares, there hasn't been since we started. So they didn't have a place
to say, "I'm mad about the fare", so they may
have expressed their unhappiness on some of
these other characteristics.

It's a blip in an otherwise generally upper
trend, a significant blip. Customers are
unhappy and we're going to continue to monitor
that by continuing to report to you what
customers tell us. I don't know what the next
report look like, we haven't done enough
research yet, but I think that will be very
telling if it goes back to the trendline, then
we can say that this an apparition. If it
doesn't go back to the trendline then we have
some deeper questions to ask.

The other negative on this page is, if you
look down at "Accidents Per Hundred Thousand
Miles", we are very aware that this has become
an issue, 1.25 less the first quarter of last
year, 1.86 accidents per hundred thousand mile;
that's obviously a bad trend in a wrong
direction. With keeping in mind that the
chargeable accidents for NICE Bus includes
striking a tree branch with a mirror, so these
are not all crashes, these are not all
necessarily involving injuries or even damage to
the vehicles, but anything that's chargeable
that reflects a negligence or inadequate
attention to clearance on the bus driver's part,
is a chargeable act of a preventable accident.

Most of them are what most people would
call minor, we don't have such a term as, "Minor
accident", they're either preventable or they're
not preventable, and all preventable ones are
serious. So this will be an area of focus for
the rest of this year and we'll be talking to
you about this on a regular basis.

Regards to the next page which is
"Able-Ride", similar next to two other pages --
-- three -- four more -- three more pages down,
you'll see "Able-Ride" -- I know, I wanted to
just draw your attention to one last thing
before I go on to the fixed route.

The very last statistic that we collected at
the bottom of the first page is, "Miles At a
Hundred Percent Recovery", there are none, and
I'm going to show you a little more detail on
that in just a minute. This is in our contract,
this is one of the statistics that is to be
collected and reported.

Let me cover Able-Ride quickly, there is not
as much to talk about here, it's generally all
in the right direction. On the first page
you'll see there has been a reduction in the
number of hours of service provided from twelve
to thirteen, that is not a service reduction of
our number in "Able-Ride", this is "Demand
Responsive Service", we provide a service that
eligible customers ask for and their service
needs are determined by how many hours we
operate. That's not a policy change, that's a
fluctuation demand from last year to this year,
there is no particular explanation for that, but
it is what it is.

On the second page, this one I think we're
particularly clear on, this one "Calls
Answered", we're up to in our call center for
Able-Ride about ninety-three percent now.
Ninety-three percent of calls that are placed
get answered, the remaining seven percent are
ones that the caller either abandoned because
they didn't want to wait, that's a significant
increase from the seventy-five percent from last
year. Again, I think it's an area that still
needs some improvement but it's not bad.

Okay. Now, "On-Time Percentage" is that
next box, slight improvement over the last year,
we're now heading in the eighties as far as
on-time performance, this has been an area of
emphasis for us at Able-Ride. When we put in
the new schedules earlier this year it dropped
significantly, and we've been struggling to get
on-time an Able-Ride up to a higher level.
We're doing better than that right now actually,
eighties is mediocre performance, not terrible
but certainly not satisfactory. Customer
satisfaction scores here are all up, so I think
that's a reflection of the additional service
that we put on into Able-Ride.

I think those are what I consider the ones
that are important, that I wanted you to take
note of. I'd like to say one last thing, but
why don't I stop here for questions on these --
you may have some questions, by all means?

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I have a few
questions.

MR. SETZER: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: First let me say,
I'm sorry, but in the haste of starting this
meeting because of the absentees I have
neglected to introduce our counsel Mr. Samuel
Littman. Thank you Sam, I apologize.

COUNSELOR LITTMAN: It's okay. Don't worry.

CHAIRMAN SHRENFEL: Mr. Setzer, my first question is about the quarters, is this a calendar quarter or is this a fiscal quarter since March?

MR. SETZER: This is a calendar quarter.

CHAIRMAN SHRENFEL: Okay. This is a calendar quarter, so we're talking about the results ending March 31st?

MR. SETZER: Correct.

CHAIRMAN SHRENFEL: Okay. Obviously a congratulations is in order if the statistics were correct on Able-Ride, there are many areas of satisfaction. And, of course in reading this with some of the incongruent statistics, particularly the service satisfaction and on the other hand, we had five hundred and thirty-one breakdowns and then you have three hundred and thirty-four or a thirty-seven percent decrement in breakdowns. Therefore having more buses running without a breakdown, one would tend to think that or should think that the service be
improved and the only aspect I see here is the overall satisfaction of twenty-nine percent, whether it's coincidence or otherwise it might be on-time perception of when the buses are coming, and I did hear what you're saying, that some of the people who are interviewed are possibly saying that because there was a fare increase that they're going to say the buses are no good, they don't come on time, the buses aren't clean; so that's a possibility and I do look forward to the other report. It's more a comment than a recommendation, but hopefully it's an aberration.

Now, when you were testing these surveys, for example, whether it's a truly random study or could the aberration or the distortion possibly be related to a cluster type survey as opposed to a random survey?

MR. SETZER: Well, that was the first question that we asked, we spent a lot of time on it, because I wish that were the answer, but --

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Well, it makes sense.

MR. SETZER: We use a firm called
IPSOS, which is a internationally known market
research firm and they design the sample to make
sure that it's reflective. So the sample is
weighted by gender and ethnic and income
classifications and also by route and by time of
day. They talked to about eight hundred people
in the sample, the statistics go way beyond me,
but they assure us that it's a random sample.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: And they take them
from all the areas?

MR. SETZER: Yes, they do. They use
our ridership and our geographic distribution
and they design a sample. And, then they send
professional surveyors out to -- this is not
where a pencil and paper are handed to these
people, they actually approach people on buses
and transit centers and ask them questions based
on the samples; so I think it's not a design in
their survey.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: So I can definitely
presume that there is possibly some inaccuracy
hear, and I hope that's the case.

MR. SETZER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: My last question is
not related to this, but the GPS system which of
course would include your viewing of all the buses from a station, knowing exactly what is going on within the entire system, and also the signal to alert the passengers as to what stop we have, is that next on target and are we going to make it by next June?

MR. SETZER: We are very close to making an award. Within the next few weeks, if all goes well, we will have selected the company. We had a very good range of proposals from people, so that means a lot of analytical work, but we're down to a few and we will be making an award in the next three weeks I think, unless something happens.

There are different timetables, and one of the things we considered on each one's proposal is how long it takes them to install and test and calibrate everything but, yes, we are on schedule to begin to use that in 2014 and I expect by midyear we'll begin to get some benefit out of it. The realtime ability to see the operation will be there when they turn it on.

One of the other benefits that we get is a full set of sample data about on-time
performance. We could get one hundred percent
sample every time the bus gets a time, it gets
recorded. So as we do schedule design after
that, we'll be getting much better information
than we get now, but obviously that benefit is
the way that we have to get a lot of data.

CHAIRMAN SHREKEL: Not operating your
company, but just a question, is there a company
who your close to selecting, do you know for
example, if they have done this in any other
municipalities so that you can actually test the
system?

MR. SETZER: Actually I don't know the
answer to that because I've been kept out of the
analysis project. So when there's a
recommendation ready I get to get the
recommendation without having any preconceived
notion. So I don't know which company it is and
I don't know of their actual experience, but
certainly experienced in doing this is one of
the things that we would consider.

A company that has never delivered a system
like this -- actually most of the proposals are
from groups of companies, there are hardware
people and software people and analytic people,
so that the consortium or partnership or
whatever it turns out to be that's selected will
have experience.

CHAIRMAN SHRENSKEL: Okay. Any other
questions from the committee members for Mr.
Setzer?

Okay. Mr. Blessinger, go ahead.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: So you'll be
the decision maker on this, not the county, of
picking a vendor.

MR. SETZER: I think the county will be
involved because they're the actual grantee.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Okay.

MR. SETZER: So I think we'll make a
recommendation to the county -- Chairman you're
shaking your head -- they'll consider our
recommendation. There is a lot of analytical
work that gone into this already, we have
proposals already.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: My other
question is just on the Able-Ride, this might be
a tough question to answer but why do you think
there is such an increase in no-shows, it goes
from seventeen hundred to twenty-five hundred.

MR. SETZER: Actually I think we are
doing a better job of "No-showing" people, as you will. Early on, which was about in the first quarter of last year, the Able-Ride operation was not as tight as I would have liked, we had just taken over and so we were teaching people new skills. I think it was more a matter of capturing the information than accurate performance changes.

CHAIRMAN SHRENDKEL: Any other questions from the committee for Mr. Setzer?

(At this time there was no response.)

MR. SETZER: Okay. Now, I'd like to take a few minutes on looking ahead to updating a little bit on the service or what has already happened to service this year once we got to it. There's a couple pages here from the budget that you approved in March, this is the revenue page that was part of the budget presentation and you could see the larger number of one hundred and seventeen million available to us. And, if you look at the first two lines it's mostly state assistance and higher fare box, partly because of the MTA fare increases offset by some other reductions elsewhere, but that larger amount of revenue combined with the
reduction in our rates, this is also a page from
our presentation in March where we proposed to
keep our para-transit rates the same, but to
reduce our fixed hour-rate and a combination of
those two factors allows more service.

Just for a quick reference, the contract
allows the rates to rise by as much as a CPI for
this region. So the blue line on these charts
represents what our rates would have been had we
tracked the CPI. For example, the top box is a
fixed route rate where it would of gone from
eighty-seven-twelve which is what we charged
last year, to eighty-nine-zero-four, but instead
it followed the red line on the chart down to
eighty-five-twenty-five.

The para-transit rate is in the lower box,
and if followed CPI it would have gone up to
fifty-five-eighty-one to fifty-seven-zero-four,
instead it stayed at fifty-five-eighty-one, it's
a combination of more revenue and lower rates
which allowed us to do a couple things. So one
is to adjust the Able-Ride service levels, this
also is a page from the budget recommendation,
where we planned to increase our weekly hours,
our daily hours, weekly hours went from
forty-four-seventy-five per week to five thousand and five hours a week, and this is the graphic representation of that and that was in the budget.

So here's what actually happened, what we had proposed in the budget was to go to eight hundred and ninety hours, schedule eight hundred and ninety hours for Able-Ride on weekday, on an average weekday, so instead it's gone all the way to nine hundred and fifty-four. Now, what's going on here is not an increase in demand but a change in scheduling philosophy. We talked before about the importance of being on-time with Able-Ride and one of those ways that we try to approach that is to provide a little more leeway in the schedules.

The way Able-Ride works is you pick up and drop off one at a time, and so if we get behind schedule early in the day we just get more behind as the day goes on, so putting some additional leeway into the schedule allows us to stay on time. Now, these are the schedules that went into effect on Sunday, so I can't report yet on how effective they've been and including on-time performance.
The point was to first of all, give the drivers an opportunity to get back on schedule when there off and to give us a better chance to staying on time. And secondly, to eliminate split-shifts for Able-Ride drivers, the quality of the total Able-Ride experience depends so much on the driver, this is a very much a person to person transaction. Able-Ride customers have special needs, Able-Ride customers often need a great deal of attention, and so by giving the driver a better workday we think ultimately it works for the passenger's benefit too.

It's not quite as sufficient, but there's a big peak in the morning and big peak in the afternoon and a trough in the middle, if the split-shifts were more efficient, but people had a ten, eleven to twelve hour day sometimes, and by eliminating splits we think we'll get better service from the drivers.

Weekends we were able to find a few efficiencies, so you see Saturday which is the lower left-hand box and Sunday is on the right.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Quick question, I know you're saying some of the Able-Ride customers have needs --
MR. SETZER: Right.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: If they request a driver do you try to accommodate them?

MR. SETZER: Officially, no.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Okay.

MR. SETZER: What we do is -- it's a much more personalized service and the reservationist know the customers very well. So it's not so much as if they request a driver as if there is a history of conflict with a particular driver, then we'll try to avoid that.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Of course.

MR. SETZER: But officially, no. But the fixed route, this again is from the budget, when we made the budget presentation we proposed to raise a weekday fixed route schedule to two thousand nine hundred and eight-one hours per weekday and we propose to do that in a couple of phases; remember that number two thousand nine hundred and eighty-one.

Also in the budget as we were explaining, we said that we were going to do three different things during the year. In April we would do some basic repairs to schedules, adding some more time where it was necessary, putting in
some more service where we have regular
overloads and basically trying to get those
schedules better, rather than increasing
service.

I think I may have said it at the time,
customers may not even notice the difference,
unless they start keeping track of how often
they get a seat, how often they get passengers
into the bus, people usually keep track of that.

We had to repair those things first in April and
so that was the focus then. Remember we had
only known for a fact that we had this
additional revenue literally on April 1st, I
guess it was late March when the legislator
passed the budget. So that was the April
approach to fix the things we were already aware of.

In June we decided we would restore some
seasonal services. The N88 from Hempstead to
Jones Beach is a route that the MTA had
eliminated in about 2010, so we had put that
back last year and that was quite successful and
quite poplar. And one of the things we did last
year that we'll do again this year, is to serve
all the concerts at Jones Beach.
VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Meaning what?

MR. SETZER: We'll keep it out there late until the concert is over and until the crowd has dispersed we'll keep buses there and we'll keep cycling through till we clear the crowd. That's an important service for customers and I especially like that because it probably serves some people who don't use buses for any other time, the people who pay taxes, so it's a valuable service to them.

This year we're reinstating the N87, which is Hicksville to Jones Beach. It won't do the concerts because that never did workout very well in the past, but both of those are restorations of service that had been operating until a few years ago. And, you may remember in some of the public hearings that a lot of the comments was referring to now that we have more money we should put back everything the way it used to be and we said, no. I don't think everything ought to be back the way it used to be, but some of the things should be and so that's what we're doing with both these routes.

You have now, you have a whole set of the
new schedules and particularly this is the new N87 and N88, so you can pass them around or use them to service yourself if you'd like.

We also said that in September that we would start some new services that would help to build ridership, we'd go back to the budget —
here's what we show you in March, there's an April increase and then the September increase, we don't have June on this particular chart, that was a step in between.

So here's what's actually happening now, so in April we went up to twenty-seven-ninety-four which was a little less then we intended for those repairs. Then in June we had the service which you see in the middle column, and in September we forecast two thousand nine hundred and eighty-four average weekday hours, two thousand nine hundred and eight-one is what we estimated in the budget. And again, that's still a forecast until we're actually done creating all the schedules and printing the divers assignment.

We don't have an exact number but you know, essentially to take away from all this is we're doing the things that we proposed to do when we
presented the budget to you.

The types of service that we'll add in September will fall in these six categories, "Additional Frequency on the Highest Volume Routes", there are several routes in the system which are whatever we put out, it's still full, so we'll continue to enhance the service on those. That's been a theme all a long since we started, of taking the service to the places where the demand is the greatest. Using that theme and also restoring some midday service on weekdays where we still see heavy ridership, even outside the peak hours. And, in at least one routes case, we have to occasionally pass people up outside the peak hours because the buses are so full, so we'll correct those.

We are also going to restore some Saturday service on a few routes. We're continuing to add service on some of our routes where we have running-time problems; it's hard to stay on-time. The example I showed you in March was the N25, which goes from Great Neck to Lynbrook railroad station, very busy, very heavy traffic on New Hyde Park Road, we're going to add more time to that again. We added time in April, we
added more in June and we're going to add some
more time in September.

We're doing it a couple months at a time, we
are trying to get just the right balance, but
that one continues to need the support to be
on-time.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: It's a tough
balance.

MR. SETZER: Yes, it is. That line
crosses four at-grade railroads, so you can
start out perfectly and be twenty minutes late
within no time at all.

We're also going to add some new express
service. These are all still in development by
the way, and we're going to look for a way to
extend express service to Hofstra and Nassau
Community College where it's fairly high in
demand, and a chance to attract new riders such
as college kids who are on a tight budget and
trying to figure out how to make their dollars
go further. And, also to those who are open to
changing their ways on how they move around and
their amenable to more environmentally friendly
means of transportation.

None of these changes lies to the point of
the trigger of the public participation process
that you approved earlier, so we don't have to
have a public hearing, you don't have to have a
public hearing. None the less, we're going to
do some public information sessions, we're going
to do three of them, and here are the locations
and the dates.

These will be like the sessions we did in
April of last year. They're not public hearings
where people come to the podium, there instead
meetings where there will be a large room with
many stations around the room and the stations
will be labeled, so if you want to talk about
the N4, you go to the table where there's a
staff member and we can explain what we're
planning for the N4. We can also hear your
comments on what we're planning or whatever else
you want to say about the N4, it will be a
chance to interact one-on-one with a staff
member rather than making a speech into a
microphone. It will be a chance to inquire
about, "Well what about this trip" or "What
about this stop", those kinds of things and a
chance to make comments that will be recorded
either by filling out a card or just by telling
a staff person.

There is some other ways to do it too, through the website, e-mail or those kind of things, like traditional mail.

The idea here is to make sure that we talk to customers about our plans prior to finalizing them. That we adjust those plans if customers have some desires or ideas that make sense and also to make sure that we are transparent with the public. So I hope that you all will be able to make it to one of these, but this is a good opportunity, beyond what's required.

And the other thing we did with this is that we listened to comments earlier about this location and the Garden City location where we are right now, it works for some people but not for everyone else. The two new locations that you see here are well served by multiple bus routes and by the Long Island Railroad, so they're as accessible to transit meetings as possible in Nassau County, and that was the reason for the selection of those three.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Are those going to be multiple sessions?

MR. SETZER: Yes.
CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: In other words, you have 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. --

MR. SETZER: Right.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Is there a break in those three sessions up to that point?

MR. SETZER: There won't be a presentation, there will simply be a room that will be open from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and there will be staff people there to talk to a customer. So we may be standing there talking to ourselves for some part of the time.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Strictly an open session, come and go?

MR. SETZER: Right.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: You ask a question and leave?

MR. SETZER: Right, Exactly. And by doing it from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. we accommodate pretty much everybody's work schedule and that was another comment we heard in the past. By doing something at four o'clock doesn't necessarily work for everybody, so it's a lot of time and a lot of access to the public.

And, that's all I have to say on that, I'd be happy at this time to answer any questions.
CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Are there any further questions for Mr. Setzer?

Thank you Mr. Setzer, for a detailed presentation.

MR. SETZER: You're very welcome, thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Okay. At this time I would like to call on the public for comments. Several people have been here before, and what we try and do here is try to focus on your main thought because you have three minutes to talk about it. When you come up to the podium please state your name and the town you live in.

Just raise your hand if you would like to speak -- okay. Sir, thank you.

JOHN MICHNO: All right. My opinion has improved greatly since the last time I was here --

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: State your name, please?

JOHN MICHNO: I'm sorry, my name is John Michno, I'm from Westbury. I just want to say that the service has improved a great deal since the last time I was here. It's more reliable and I found that I'm having less
problems. However, I do just want to bring up a
small thing, that the N27 particularly on
Saturday is a problem because it dumps on the
N23 and it gets very crowded and they need to
maybe add another N23 or another N27 to
Roosevelt Field on Saturdays; something needs to
be done with that.

The other comment I want to make is that a
lot of these delays people are experiencing
aren't the fault of the bus system, they're the
fault of the traffic light. I know you're not
from the Nassau County Department of
Transportation or the New York State Department
of Transportation, but there needs to be a
system where the buses have a green-light. A
lot of buses -- I actually did this, I timed how
much time we sat in traffic lights just between
Hicksville and Greenvale and it was over ten
minutes. So much time could be saved if the bus
didn't have to stop at the lights. So then they
wouldn't be delayed, it would save fuel and it
would save money, it would be a much more
efficient operation. So that's pretty much all
I have to say, I'm pretty pleased with how NICE
has been doing things so far, I think they
improved quite a bit and hopefully keep it up
you know, thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you very much
and thank you for keeping it brief. I'm afraid
to say that the buses will probably have to
still stop at the light, there still will be
traffic.

Okay. We welcome Ms. Comerford now, so
NICE Transportation is not a company in and of
itself to have problems, but the Long Island
Railroad does too, unfortunately again it was a
derailment.

JOHN MICHNO: I got to go now.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Michno, thank
you.

MR. MICHNO: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Anyone else --
David, please state your full name for the
record and where you live and three minutes
please.

DAVID SAMOWITZ: My name is David
Samowitz and I'm from Massapequa Park. Before
you start the timer there's one thing you need
to be aware of. The members of the bus riders
union, we were given the wrong time which is why
most of us are not here. We were told it would
start at of six o'clock, not four; I got here a
little late myself.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Okay. Go ahead
David, tell us what you want. I think we gave
notice to Newsday that it was four o'clock, but
I can't speak for what happened.

DAVID SAMOWITZ: Okay. The following
proposals I sent to the NICE bus web page as
well as an e-mail to certain individuals with
both, several times with no response. Which
forces me to wonder if it has been taken into
consideration and again, is everything we say or
proposed for that matter being taken seriously
or is it just being ignored.

My first proposal is that speakers are given
five minutes to speak instead of three. This
would help to deliver our message more
effectively. And second, except for the April
12, 2012 service changes, no scheduled meetings
were ever posted on the buses about service
changes or cuts, as well as changes in bus
destinations, but just when the changes occur.

Transit Advisory Community meetings and
public meetings are posted on the buses from
what I understand, only when there is a
twenty-five -- only when their impact would be
more than twenty-five percent within that
quarter. If you did have Transit Advisory
Committee meetings or public meetings, at the
time I didn't know of their existence till late
2012, nor did I have net service.

Why do the Transit Advisory Committee
meetings and public meetings need to reach
twenty-five percent to be posted. In my opinion
during the 2012 year, all problems regarding the
quality of service as well as any equipment
failure were ignored such as overhead verbal
display, announcement systems, wheelchair lifts,
the signal to stop, et cetera.

How we felt about the service cuts, schedule
changes as well as changes in bus destinations
were also ignored. When posters have been
posted on the buses they only announce schedule
changes, but not service cuts or changes in bus
destinations, nor did we have any public
hearing. Also ignored were if we had problems
with the drivers during the 2012 year, as you
know our first posted public hearing was in
January 2013.
Okay. Now, my proposal is if you don't reach twenty-five percent within that quarter, when the additional percentage from the following quarter or quarters equal a total of twenty-five percent or more and that's when we should have a public hearing. A public hearing should be held at least once a year and the reason shouldn't be just because the schedule changes, but the quality of service and problems and all problems with the drivers.

The Transit Advisory Committee meetings, the public hearings or the public meetings are not as well known and posted public hearings, because they're not posted on the buses. Every meeting that has been posted on the net has been within less than a weeks notice.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you, your time is up.

DAVID SAMOWITZ: Times up?

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: You went overtime, but we gave you a little extra time, it's not fair to other people.

Thank you David. And, I know you've said some of the these comments identically before and I do recall it. Let me just address one
thing and counsel can join if he chooses to.

    There's a contract, okay. It's between NICE
Transportation and the County of Nassau, and
that specifically defines when and if the public
hearings are required. At this point in time
until that contract changes otherwise, that's
the way it's going to be. As far as you getting
an opportunity to voice some of your complaints
face to face, I think you should try and take
advantage of what Mr. Setzer put on the board,
okay.

    Next month you have seven hour intervals in
three different locations that you could speak
at least with some of the representatives.

    Okay. Now, Mr. Setzer, would you like to
say anything --

    DAVID SAMOWITZ: Just one question,
just one quick question --

    CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: One second, just a
minute. Let's try and answer some of the things
you brought up, if I may.

    If you want Mr. Setzer, if you'd like a
minute or two to address this or you could take
three minutes when all the comments are through
and decide if you want to zero in on this?
MR. SETZER: Why don't I wait till all the comments are made.

CHAIRMAN SHRENSKEL: Okay.

DAVID SAMOWITZ: Can I just ask one quick question, please?

CHAIRMAN SHRENSKEL: Go ahead.

DAVID SAMOWITZ: Why do the -- why are the other meetings not posted on the buses, just the net. I'm talking about the Transit Advisory Community meetings and the public meetings. Why are they posted only on the net and not the buses?

MR. SETZER: I'll address that later.

CHAIRMAN SHRENSKEL: He'll address that later, if you're going to hang around --

DAVID SAMOWITZ: Fair enough.

CHAIRMAN SHRENSKEL: Okay. Mr. Blessinger, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Correct me if I'm wrong, your doing the public information session at your cost, this is at your cost, this is not something that's required?

MR. SETZER: That's correct, yes.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: This is just to inform the public, to make the residents of
Nassau County knowledgeable of the changes and
the improvements that occur, is that correct?

MR. SETZER: It's to give them a chance
to get information and to give us a chance to
get information from the riders.

COUNSELOR LITTMAN: And these are
service additions we're discussing, right.
We're not cutting service, we're not reducing
service?

MR. SETZER: Right.

COUNSELOR LITTMAN: This is all about
increasing service, and the contract with the
legislation that we have only requires those
types of public hearings when there is a
reduction in service.

DAVID SAMOWITZ: There has been
reductions in service.

CHAIRMAN SHRENNEL: Excuse me, Mr.
Setzer will address a few other things you may
have said at the end, after all the public
comments, so this way we can put it in
perspective.

Okay. Is there anyone else who would like
to speak -- thank you, Ma'am, please state your
name and the town you live in.
PATRICK HEFFERNAN: My name is Patricia Heffernan and I live in North Valley Stream. My request is simple, we have the N2 and the N8 bus that comes down Dutch Broadway going from East to West and West to East on the same route, and then it turns up and both of them turn up on Metchem Avenue. I represent two--I'm speaking for two senior housing developments that are there. One has a hundred and four units and the other one is going to ultimately have two hundred and eighty-nine.

So basically we need access to Franklin Square, to Franklin Avenue, so our request is that one of those two buses--instead of both of them going up Metchem Avenue and turning at Hempstead Turnpike and I don't know where they both go after that, but one is marked "Green Acres", so I assume that it turns around and comes back. So one of those goes the next two blocks and makes a left turn up and down Franklin Avenue to bring the elderly, the home-health aides and even school children that go to Hallow Road School that live further on into Franklin Square.

I have people in walkers walking to
Pathmark, our nearest supermarket which is two-and-a-half miles away, our little deli that was just around the corner on Metcham Avenue just closed down because of burglaries.

So that's my request, to take one of these buses and let it go two more blocks and then reach Hempstead Turnpike by Franklin Avenue, thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Excuse me, doesn't one of those buses go to the city, the one that turns on Metcham Avenue?

PATRICIA HEFFERNAN: I have no idea.

One has "Green Acres" on it, so I assume it goes back to Green Acres.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Okay. Mr. Setzer, if you could hold that question too, because I don't know the route.

MR. SETZER: No, problem.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Is there any other comments or any other public comments -- okay. Mr. Endo, thank you.

MR. ENDO, do you think you'll take three minutes?

YUKI ENDO: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Okay. Go ahead.
YUKI ENDO: My name is Yuki Endo, Jackson Heights, Queens. And, I am a member of Long Island Bus Riders Union and other transit advocates.

Couple of weekends I have been taking the N23 and N27 connections. On Saturday, May 17, 2013, I have taken 1:27 p.m. N27 Glen Cove that's supposed to arrive in Greenvale but didn't show up until 1:41 p.m., and was supposed to arrive in Downtown Glen Cove at 1:51 p.m., but we got there 2:09 p.m. On Roslyn trip he didn't leave until 2:11 p.m., which we missed our 2:00 p.m. N23 Hempstead connection at 2:31p.m. Also former N21 rider missed N20 Flushing connection as well.

Also a female driver on 4:20 p.m. N4 Jamaica, #1722, on that day had a very nasty attitude to me when I try to ask if the wheelchair ramp was working as my duty as a member of the Bus Riders Union, at the red-light, when you are allowed to ask the bus driver a question or directions. She was so nasty and at the last stop I asked for her run-number and she completely ignored me. I tired to ask the dispatcher at MTA booth and
asked for her run-number even though it was
different company, but he refused; isn't bus
driver supposed to give run-number when
passenger requests?

On Sunday, May 25th, a female driver on
4:30 p.m. N23 Manorhaven missed a 5:25 p.m. N27
Glen Cove connection, and female driver told us
a lie, 5:25 p.m. N27 didn't leave yet, but it
did leave already and we were forced to wait an
extra hour for 6:25 p.m. N27 Glen Cove.

Because of your mistake on busy N27, I
didn't have enough time to shop at Whole Foods
in Manhasset. After taking the 6:27 N20
Flushing because Sundays are less service from
Hicksville, which is outrageous.

Also, Monday, May 27th, my friend and I had
to help nice, young black lady driving on
5:27p.m. N20 Flushing, we boarded at Hicksville
Station. My friend helped all the way to
Greenvale where I have to help bus driver rest
of way because she wasn't familiar with the
route between Hicksville and Great Neck Station.

She showed us her NICE operation booklet
about her route. I also suggest NICE operation
booklet should be more organized and if
possible, a picture of building where driver
could turn.

Once we got to Downtown Flushing from Bowne
Street there was fire department activity, so I
helped direct her to next left turn at 37th
Avenue and Union Street to back to her route;
she was very happy her friend and I were on her
bus.

NICE Bus, Long Island villages, towns, MTA
and NYC DOT, NYS DOT officials are not doing a
very good job informing NICE Bus about posting
detour for Memorial Day parade, which lots of
bus routes were effected in various areas.

I also like to suggest N87 and N88 to make
additional stop at Jones Beach's Theodore
Roosevelt Nature Center in West End at one
parking lot by Cottage Cove Road, because there
is no access by walking according to Jones Beach
Officials, before bus stop at bathhouses and
central mall. And, It will encourage wildlife
lovers to go there if bus was able to make an
additional stop.

I also suggest NICE to work closely with
LIRR to expand Jones Beach package deal to N87
bus to and from Hicksville and Wantagh stations.
I also suggest NICE to work closely with MTA to install more MetroCard vending machines at Roosevelt Field Mall, Sunrise Mall, Walt Whitman Mall, Green Acres Mall, Mineola Intermodal Transit Center, as well as Jones Beach bathhouse, Central Mall by First Aid building and the park information building.

Also I did a petition on several bus routes that NICE Bus needs to extend weekend N27 service to and from Roosevelt Field Mall and full N21 bus service because there are no bus shelters in Greenvale Pathmark, Wells Fargo or Roslyn Station and many businesses there wouldn't let you wait for bus in an hour especially in rain or storm. Thank you for your cooperation.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Endo, thank you very much.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: I have one question for Mr. Setzer.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Go ahead.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Does the DOT notify you when they're doing roadwork on your routes, do they let you know when they're going
to be tearing Hempstead Turnpike, shall we say?

MR. SETZER: I'm going to get some help here.

SPEAKER IN AUDIENCE: The short answer is, "No". Our communication with DOT has suffered. I think it's a larger issue that the pedestrian median that they're working on, on Hempstead Turnpike that really delayed our buses, on the No 6 especially. We reached out to them to get a calendar of construction and work it that way. I had asked for major projects to be shot our way, and it sometimes happens but it's still a work in progress in communication.

VICE CHAIRMAN VLESSINGER: Well, I had a situation in Franklin Square today and I was eight blocks away from my office, they started setting up the cones getting ready to do roadwork, it took me twenty minutes to go eight blocks on Hempstead Turnpike, it's ridiculous.

SPEAKER IN AUDIENCE: It is problematical.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Is there anyone else that would like to speak, anymore public comments, does any member have any questions for Mr. Setzer?
Okay. Mr. Setzer, if you may, in the three
speakers that we've had, perhaps you can
enlighten some of them.

MR. SETZER: Okay. Let's begin with
the publication of community meetings that's on
buses. There scheduled on a regular basis and
we're talking about four hundred vehicles,
putting those signs up and taking them down
every month or every quarter even, is probably
-- it's a problem to do that, actually that's
one of the points I want to make. I think the
message for publicizing meetings are pretty well
established and obviously some people are able
to always know when the meetings occur. So I
don't know that publicizing these meetings on
buses or at transit centers is practical or
would help at all in providing people the
information.

Most people are interested in knowing on
what is occurring on their route, and so that's
what we focus on, on getting information when a
route is going to change or a schedule is going
to change, which is usually the case.

If you were a bus rider you generally don't
want to know what's happening to the whole
network, you want to know when the schedule that
you have in your pocket is going to become
obsolete so that you can get a new one, and
there are a number of ways to do that, you can
do that online or you can pick them up at a
number of places or you can get them here.

I'm not sure that what we do now is not
adequate, but it seems to me that it is and I
don't want to take you on a more complex system
because it wouldn't make sense for us. His
comments were that he's not sure that we take
everything that's said seriously... well, I sure
do and I know that you do and I'm sure that
management does too, but that doesn't mean that
we do everything that's requested and that will
always be the case, but every request that's
been made has been considered and taken
seriously; I'm not sure what else there is to do
about that.

You do have the opportunity to communicate
with us by e-mail or in person. Yuki
communicates very regularly by e-mail and we get
useful information from him. So I would dispute
the idea that we're not listening very well, I
don't think that's true.
I also wanted to respond to the ladies that requested bus service to the Green Acres Mall. We've been making changes regularly, trying to provided that access and trying to be good neighbors with the residential streets around there, and frankly it's been changed several times. Each time we make a change we please one person and make two more mad, so we're trying to go --

PATRICIA HEFFERNAN: Not to Green Acres, It's already going to Green Acres. We want it on Franklin Avenue.

MR. SETZER: Okay. I understand.

BOARD MEMBER DUROSEAU: Franklin to Hempstead?

PATRICIA HEFFERNAN: I'm sorry?

BOARD MEMBER DUROSEAU: Franklin going to Hempstead Turnpike instead.

PATRICIA HEFFERNAN: Go from Dutch Broadway, Franklin Avenue to Hempstead Turnpike instead of Metcalf.

MR. SETZER: I appreciate having the recommendation in writing here so that we can review it. And we will give it serious thought, but at this point I'm not going to promise
anything because the challenging part is the
community in which to work.

Now, Mr. Endo raised so many questions
here on so many issues. Some of these we are
aware of and some of these are new. I do
appreciate his specific information about the
behavior of a driver and if we have the kind of
information he's provided like the date, the
time, the place and the bus number, we can
easily identify that driver. The concern about
the driver being unwilling to give the
run-number... well, I'm not sure what the
policy is on that, but hardly anybody who
doesn't know as much as Yuki would even think to
ask for a run-number. The information that we
have is quite sufficient to identify that
operator.

Whenever we get a complaint about an
operator's behavior, if we have enough
information to be sure that we're talking to the
right operator, they get called in, they get
counseled, they get coached, records are made of
that operator.

And, if there is continual customer service
problems there will be consequences. We take
that very seriously, because we do want to give
good service and our operator is the face of the
organization to the customers. So if they're
not performing properly we want to know about it
and we appreciate this kind of information.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Can I just say
something?

CHAIRMAN SHRENGEL: Sure.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: I do want to
publicly thank Mr. Setzer and NICE Bus for... I
volunteered at the games for the physically
challenged on several days and the drivers that
were there were accommodating, pleasant,
helpful, and the children and the young adults
were thrilled.

I just want to say thank you very much
because I volunteered on track and field and I
was all over the place and the way they staged
the buses, the courtesy they gave the people was
quite wonderful.

MR. SETZER: Thank you, I am very happy
to hear that. And, just in case, if it's not
clear, everybody who was driving a bus that day
or working there was doing it on their own time.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Yes, all
MR. SETZER: So we provide the bus and the fuel and the maintenance, but the operators were volunteers.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: So I think maybe if you have any problems that some of those men and women who volunteered there could give some training to Able-Ride and those type of vehicles because they handled themselves beautifully.

MR. SETZER: Thank you, I appreciate hearing that.

BOARD MEMBER DUROSEAU: Also, Mr. Setzer, I would like to say something.

MR. SETZER: Yes, sir.

BOARD MEMBER DUROSEAU: Mostly what I like to do is to listen. I don't know about that twenty-nine percent, that overall satisfaction, but I'm going to stay with that, but I think your doing better than that. I've been out there, this is what I do for a living, I drive for a living, a yellow cab, bus, school bus; that's what I do for a living, I drive. And, most of the time I do drive those buses. I think twenty-nine percent at this time is pretty
much too low, I think your doing better than that.

MR. SETZER: Thank you very much, I especially appreciate hearing that from you.

BOARD MEMBER DUROSEAU: Keep on trying.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: And the ninety-three percent rating for satisfaction on the Able-Ride makes someone like me and this committee very happy to see something like that, particularly people with challenging needs.

MR. SETZER: Thank you.

ANA H. GIRALDO: Just a quick question, please?

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Go ahead.

ANA H. GIRALDO: Quick question for Mr. Setzer, have you heard or received any answers from the MTA regarding the MetroCard machines or the fare boxes?

MR. SETZER: We have regular communication with the MTA about fare collection, do you mean about adding some additional machines?

ANA H. GIRALDO: No, because we received some complaints regarding riders buying the MetroCard, but when they get to the fare box
it says that it's not valid, and before they
even go to the fare box they pay for their
MetroCards, but then they don't get a MetroCard
out --

MR. SETZER: Are you talking about the
machines that --

ANA H. Giraldo: The machines, yes, at
the terminal. I raised that issue last time, so
I just wanted to see.

MR. SETZER: I know that we've
communicated that to the MTA -- have we heard
anything back from the MTA -- Roger or Jack --

SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Bret is the one
that would have contacted them. He hasn't
communicated anything with me yet, but I do know
that the MTA is out there on a regular basis
repairing those services that need to be
prepared.

CHAIRMAN SHRENGEL: If I could just add
something, if those complaints could be more
specific, if you hear about something like that
always attempt to get the precise location of
those machines and this way if that machine for
example, has to be changed or reprogrammed then
it would be a lot easier than talking about it
in general.

ANA H. GIRALDO: So that was my
question before, we usually send it to the MTA
because that's their fare box and their machines
too, we kept sending it to them but I know they
said that NICE has to come, and that was
basically my question the last time. NICE has
to tell them the serial number and send it to
them and they will come and fix, so I just
wanted to know.

MR. SETZER: The fare boxes themselves,
yes. They do a lot of maintenance on fare boxes
for us. We do the first level maintenance, the
simple stuff, but all the system stuff is
retained by the MTA; so we do, that's a regular
process.

The machines themselves have been
problematic. There are two vending machines in
Nassau County, they are both at Hempstead
Transit Center and they have created problems
for people frequently. In the recent past we've
communicated to MTA about that on a regular
basis, they come out and they serve us
regularly, so, yes, they are very unsatisfactory
to us and to you.
One of the concerns that we had, just to comment on that is that, the MTA was on track to start to acquire a completely new fare collection system, totally different, replacing the MetroCard system. They've now suspended those plans and have gone back to the drawing board and told us that it may be many years before this fare collection system is replaced. So I don't know how many years it will take.

It's a problem but we haven't figured out a way to precede independently from the MTA because so many people transfer. We have to maintain that interline transfer capability and the MetroCard today is the only way to do that; so we're a little bit stuck with that.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you Mr. Setzer.

The last item of our agenda is to hold an election for chairman and vice chairman from now till after the next fiscal year. Due to the fact that Mr. Rosario is under-the-weather today, I mean, the chair would prefer to have one hundred percent attendance with the committee before a role like that is taken.

So the chair makes a motion to postpone the
"Item 9", for election for chairman and vice chairman.

Would anyone want to second that motion?

BOARD MEMBER DUROSEAU: I second that.

CHAIRMAN SHRENSKEL: Thank you. That vote will be postponed until the next meeting.

So would you note that counselor when we have the opportunity to do the agenda.

COUNSELOR LITTMAN: I think that we shall do that first, the next chairperson that we select will be the chairperson for that meeting or second meeting.

CHAIRMAN SHRENSKEL: We can do that.

Okay. With that I'd like to adjourn the meeting and thank everyone for coming.

A. (Whereupon, the Nassau County Bus Transit Committee was concluded. Time noted: 5:30 p.m.)
CERTIFICATE BY COURT REPORTER

I, DONNA T. JOHANSMeyer a Professional Court Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of New York, do hereby certify that the foregoing testimony taken in the matter of the June 18, 2013 Nassau County Bus Transit Committee consisting of pages 1 through 60 inclusive is an accurate transcription of my cryptic notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I SET MY HAND THIS DAY.

DONNA T. JOHANSMeyer
CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER
NORTH SHORE COURT REPORTERS
NOTARY PUBLIC STATE OF NEW YORK.