

CHT Transit
Employee Forum
Annual Report
October, 2005

The Chapel Hill Transit Employee Forum was formed in 2004 to provide a means of communications between management and employees of the various divisions regarding issues that would affect all or most of the employees. The first meeting of the Forum came in late July of that year and after electing officers work began. The members selected by employees were as follows:

Jaja Amani - Dispatcher Representative
Charles Bynum - Part-Time Bus Driver Representative & Chairman
Jim Harler - Part-Time Bus Driver Representative & Vice Chairman
Lee Harris - Maintenance Representative
Louis Jones - EZ Rider/Share Ride Representative
John Kiely - Maintenance Representative
Felicia Martin - Full-Time Bus Driver Representative
LaTanya Moore - Full-Time Bus Driver Representative
Harold Rogers - Full-Time Bus Driver Representative
Lee Wilson - Full-Time Bus Driver Representative

Over the past year the Forum has addressed a number of issues brought to the members by fellow employees. Key issues were addressed and were resolved or are in the process of resolution. This report will summarize these issues and their resolution. Please feel free to contact any member of the Forum regarding these or other issues you would like addressed.

Operation Bulletins - Forum put forth numerous areas of concern regarding Operation Bulletins.. We reviewed all bulletins and changes incorporated during the year providing input based on feedback from employees. Operations Manager Henry DePietro carried out a full review of the operation bulletins with the Forum's assistance. Revisions were provided all employees. - ***This item is closed.***

Required Bus Shutdown - Addressed concerns with required shutdowns during layovers. Investigated temperature concerns during hot/cold weather and recommended new policy on bus shutdown during layovers in extreme temperatures. New Op Bulletin allowing exceptions created and will be distributed during October, 2005. - ***This item is closed.***

Downtown Rest Stops - Addressed lack of rest room facilities in the downtown areas accessible during short stops. Supervisory and forum members visited all downtown businesses and gained rest room access for drivers at all businesses. List of available stops were provided to all drivers. - ***This item is closed.***

Maintenance Cross-Training and Professional Training – Addressed problems regarding a lack of cross-training and continued professional training in maintenance. A program of systematic training was initiated and incorporated into the maintenance schedule. - ***This item is closed.***

Lack of Job Descriptions in Maintenance – Maintenance employees were concerned about the lack of job descriptions within the division. New job descriptions were created based on input from maintenance employees and were provided to the employees. - ***This item is closed.***

Share Ride/EZ Rider Pay Discrepancy – Employees raised the fact that bus drivers are sometimes used for Share Ride/EZ Rider operations during certain periods. This use had become routine for some drivers but the drivers were not being paid at the higher rate of SR/EZR. Chapel Hill Town Human Resources addressed the issue and all subject drivers' pay was corrected during those periods. A new pay policy has been instituted to cover the situation. - ***This item is closed.***

Maintenance Seniority Policy – It was discovered that there was no Transit-wide Seniority Policy in force. The Maintenance Department had one policy, Operations another. A common policy regarding seniority was recommended and approved that required all divisions to adhere to a common policy. - ***This item is closed.***

Inclusion of Tasks in Job Description – Job description in Maintenance did not include a breakdown of tasks expected to be performed within that job. A consultant was hired to work with maintenance and Chapel Hill Human Resources to develop a breakdown to insure employees are aware of the tasks expected of them within their job description. - ***This item is closed***

911 Headsign Code Procedure – Drivers brought forth safety concerns regarding the lack of a published procedure for actions to be taken in the event a bus displays the "Emergency – Call 911" headsign. The forum worked with Operations to develop a procedure that would safeguard the drivers and provide assistance to them without alerting anyone onboard. Procedures and training will be provided to drivers at the next Quarterly Meeting. - ***This Item is still open until publication and training.***

Use of Radio 10 Codes – The use of radio 10 codes was requested to improve communications and reduce channel clutter. The Forum developed a reduced list of 10 codes based on driver input. Following the installation of new antennas and transmitters with the attendant improvement in radio communication the Forum recommended not requiring the use of 10 codes and the item was closed without further action. - ***This item is closed***

Headsign codes – A common list of headsign codes was requested along with addition of certain new codes and PRs such as "Bus Full". The new code list using common codes for all buses was developed, reviewed by the Forum and implemented by Maintenance. - - ***This item is closed with changes still being made.***

Wheel Maintenance in Inclement Weather – Maintenance personnel expressed concerns regarding the cleaning and painting of bus wheels outside during inclement weather and low temperatures. A new procedure minimizing exposure and improving results was developed and implemented. – ***This item is closed***

New Service Vehicles Needed – The condition of current maintenance service vehicles results in numerous breakdowns and availability problems for road calls. New vehicles were specified and recommended. A new light service truck has been approved and ordered. A larger service truck has been specified and is in processing. – ***This item is still open.***

Cable TV for Maintenance Lunch Room – Though the Operations Break Room has had Cable TV for several months the Maintenance room remained without. Cable was ordered and installed with Maintenance assistance. – ***This item is closed***

More DMV Inspectors Needed – A lack of trained DMV inspectors within Maintenance created a work overload for the few inspectors remaining. After the Forum raised the issue training was scheduled and Employees sent resulting in the qualifying of all required inspectors. – ***This item is closed.***

Excessive Number of Buses Out of Inspection – The lack of trained DMV inspectors resulted in a large number of buses coming out of inspection. This issue was pressed and all buses were inspected within a few days. – ***This item is closed.***

Holiday Pay Computation Incorrectly Calculated for Some Drivers – Some P/T and those drivers who are scheduled for 10 hour work days could have their holiday pay incorrectly calculated depending on which day of the week the holiday occurred. This error was brought to the attention of Chapel Hill Town Human Resources and corrected. All future calculations will be done correctly and employees will receive a flyer outlining the proper calculation technique. – ***This item is closed.***

Radio Readiness/Training – Deficiencies in these areas was addressed and additional emphasis was applied. Radio readiness has increased and greater than 95% of the employees have received additional training. – ***This item is closed.***

Employee of the Year Selection – There was no standard EOY selection process for Chapel Hill Transit. Instead, the operations and maintenance divisions used an informal process that differed from one another and would change without notice. The Forum is working on developing a standardized process that would be used by the entire department. – ***This item is still open.***

Bus Heating and Air Conditioning Status Report – Dispatchers were hindered in assigning buses on extreme temperature days by not knowing what the status of these systems was on each vehicle. The Forum recommended a procedure that would implement a report, updated daily, that would provide dispatchers with the needed information. – ***This item is still open and being fine tuned.***

Radio/Music Policy in Maintenance – Conflicts were arising in Maintenance regarding loud music. The forum recommended that a standard policy regarding this problem be created by maintenance supervisors with input from the employees. The policy was written and implemented. – **This item is closed.**

Spanish Language Assistance – With the growing Latino community in Chapel Hill, drivers and other employees find themselves unable to answer questions or communicate directions to Spanish speaking patrons. The Forum is working with the Chapel Hill Town Training Department investigating the most effective solution to the problem ranging from Conversational Spanish Classes to point-and-translate cards. – **This item is still open.**

Early Startups on PM Buses – Ramp temperatures exceeding 100 degrees and interior temperatures even higher are common during summer months in Chapel Hill. The Forum recommended that a policy of early starts on the buses be instituted when certain temperature limits are exceeded. This early start would allow the interiors of the buses to begin cooling prior to the vehicle entering service. Details of the solution are still being finalized. – **This item is still open.**

Route Maps for Maintenance – Maintenance employees sometimes have difficulty locating buses requiring assistance because the employees are not familiar with all routes or location. The Forum recommended route and system maps be provided to aid the drivers in their road calls. – **This item is still open.**

Minimum Equipment Lists Required – Defect cards contain "deadline" items which, by their definition, require that the bus be taken out of service if that item is non-functional. However, this is not always the case and the driver is left with the responsibility of determining what is safe or not safe to drive without. While some are obvious, others leave a large grey area which needs addressed. The Forum recommended the establishment of Minimum Equipment Lists which would clearly state what equipment is or is not required to put a bus in service. – **This item is still open.**

Gillig 911 Procedures Needed – Since Gillig headsign controllers do not provide for a single switch activation of an emergency message, a procedure separate from the one described earlier is required for these buses. The Forum recommended and is working on creating this new procedure. – **This item is still open.**

Drivers Involvement in the Creation/Modifications of Run Cuts and Routes – Currently drivers are not included, to the extent possible, in the creation and modifications of run cuts and routes. The Forum has recommended that a means of driver involvement become standardized for these processes. – **This item is still open.**