



The COMET Board Meeting minutes are prepared and presented in **summary form**, audio recordings of the meetings are on file at The COMET and are part of the approved minutes. If you would like to hear the recording from the meeting, please contact Paige Jernigan at [cometadmin@catchthecomet.org](mailto:cometadmin@catchthecomet.org).

Per SC Code of Laws, Title 30, Chapter 4, Section 30-4-80 - All public bodies shall notify persons or organizations, local news media, or such other news media as may request notification of the times, dates, places, and agenda of all public meetings, whether scheduled, rescheduled, or called, and the efforts made to comply with this requirement must be noted in the minutes of the meetings. **The COMET complied with the notification of this meeting on Friday, May 17, 2019 at 3:15 p.m.**

**The Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority  
Board of Director's Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, May 22, 2019 at 12:00 P.M.  
3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC 29201 – Conference Room A**

**Members Present:**

Ron Anderson, Chair  
Jacqueline Boulware\*  
Joyce Dickerson  
John V. Furgess, Sr.  
Carolyn Gleaton  
Bobby Horton  
Representative Leon Howard  
Derrick Huggins  
Skip Jenkins\*  
Col. (R) Roger Leaks, Jr.  
Lill Mood  
Dr. Robert Morris  
Debbie Summers  
Geraldine Robinson  
Andy Smith  
William (B.J.) Unthank

**Guests Present:**

Jackie Bowers, Operations Manager, Transdev  
Roderick Cockerham, Operations Manager, Transport Care  
Marshall Gamill, Union Rep., Transport Care  
Tanisha Gibbons, Human Resources, Transdev  
Ivory Haltiwanger, Union Rep., Transdev  
Frannie Heizer, Burr, Foreman, McNair Law Firm\*  
Adelee LaGrand, Vice President, Transdev  
Rachelle Moody, City of Cayce  
Catherine Ramirez, Public Relations, Chernoff Newman

**Absent Board Members:**

Kevin Reeley

*\*Indicates participation by phone.*



The COMET Staff Present

John Andoh, Executive Director/CEO

LeRoy DesChamps, Director of Administration & Operations/COO

Paige Jernigan, Interim Administrative & Customer Service Specialist

Crystal Willis, Financial Accountant

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

Mr. Anderson called the meeting to order at 12:00 P.M.

A quorum was determined at the beginning of the meeting.

**2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**Motion:**

A motion was made by Ms. Mood and seconded by Ms. Dickerson to adopt the agenda.

**Approved:** Anderson, Dickerson, Furgess, Gleaton, Leaks, Mood, Morris

**Absent:** Boulware, Howard, Huggins, Smith

**Motion passed.**

*Mr. Huggins and Mr. Smith arrived at 12:03 P.M.*

**3. MIDLANDS TRANSIT RIDERS ASSOCIATION UPDATE (CHARLES GOSSETT)**

No one from the Midlands Transit Riders Association was present. Based on concerns at last meeting, Mr. Andoh did post on the MRTA social media page an invite to the meeting.

*Jacqueline Boulware joined meeting via phone at 12:04 P.M.*

**4. CALL TO THE PUBLIC COMMENTS MUST PERTAIN TO ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.**

- THE BOARD CANNOT COMMENT.
- INDIVIDUALS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD MUST SIGN UP PRIOR TO THE CALL TO ORDER
- COMMENT TIME LIMIT – TWO (2) MINUTES PER PERSON

Ms. Adelee LeGrand, Vice President / Chief Strategies Officer with Transdev introduced herself. She thanked The COMET for the opportunity for Transdev to serve as the subcontractor. She added that they are committed and working diligently to improve services, so they can continue



partnering with The COMET in the future.

## 5. PRESENTATIONS

### A. EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH FOR TRANSDEV AND TRANSPORT CARE SERVICES (TANISHA GIBBONS AND RODERICK COCKERHAM)

Ms. Tanisha Gibbons, Transdev Human Resources Manager, presented the Employee of the Month to Ms. Turquoise Diamond, a junior driver who has been with Transdev for two (2) years. Ms. Gibbons commented on Ms. Diamonds work ethic and her attitude. She added that she never complains and enjoys coming to work.

*Ms. Robinson arrived at 12:06 P.M.*

Mr. Roderick Cockerham, Transport Care Services Operations Manager, presented the Employee of the Month to Ms. Marcella Murray. She began 2017 and works at the Transit Center. Mr. Cockerham commented on Mr. Robinson's work performance and her role as a key employee at the Transit Center.

*Rep. Howard and Mr. Unthank arrived at 12:07 P.M.*

*Ms. Summers arrived at 12:08 P.M.*

### B. BOARD DISCUSSION WITH THE UNION (5 MINUTES) (TANISHA GIBBONS)

Ms. Gibbons introduced the representatives from the Union, Ms. Gloria Copley with ParaTransit Service Union, Mr. Marshall Gamill with the Service Line, Ivory Haltiwanger with Maintenance and absent is Mr. Gary Hopper with Fixed Route Union.

Mr. Anderson asked for explanation of each union. Ms. Copley stated that she represents twenty-eight (28) of the drivers in any disputes. Mr. Gamill represents the Service Line in negotiating contracts and added that he and Mr. Haltiwanger work closely together.

Mr. Andoh added that twice a year per Board policy number six (6) that the Union is invited to participate in a Board meeting. He asked if the Unions had any concerns or issues. Mr. Gamill mentioned the importance of the shelter being built as a concern. Mr. Andoh confirmed this is on the priority list in capital budget plan.

Ms. Copley requested more vehicles due to the time wasted while doing the pre-trip inspection



due to lack of buses. Mr. Andoh mentioned that two (2) cut away buses have been grant funded and as result, this will increase the number from twenty-three (23) to twenty-five (25) vehicles.

Col. Leaks asked the length of time it takes for the pre-trip inspection. Ms. Copley said it's usually fifteen (15) minutes plus. Ms. Summers thanked the Union and all the drivers for their hard work and maintaining the safety of the vehicles.

**6. CONSENT CALENDAR: THE FOLLOWING ITEMS LISTED UNDER THE CONSENT CALENDAR WILL BE CONSIDERED AS A GROUP AND ACTED UPON BY ONE MOTION WITH NO SEPARATE DISCUSSION, UNLESS A BOARD MEMBER SO REQUESTS. IN THAT EVENT, THE ITEM WILL BE REMOVED FOR SEPARATE DISCUSSION AND ACTION.**

- A. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 27, 2019 MEETING MINUTES (PAIGE JERNIGAN)
- B. APPROVAL OF THE INVOICE PAYMENT SELECTION LISTING ENDING APRIL 30, 2019 (ROSALYN ANDREWS)
- C. FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE & ACTION ITEMS (DR. ROBERT MORRIS)
  - I. APPROVE THE PASS DONATION POLICY
  - II. APPROVE RELEASE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR BANKING SERVICES
  - III. APPROVE EXPENSE DETAILS LISTING FROM MARCH 2019 BOARD MEETING
- D. SERVICE COMMITTEE UPDATE & ACTION ITEMS (COL. (R)ROGER LEAKS JR.)
  - I. APPROVAL OF SODA CAP CONNECTOR MARKETING PLAN AND TROLLEY SCHEME (JOHN ANDOH)
  - II. AUTHORIZE IMPLEMENTATION OF SHUTTLE TO CONGAREE NATIONAL PARK (JOHN ANDOH)
- E. INTERMODAL COMMITTEE UPDATES & ACTION ITEMS (DERRICK HUGGINS)
- F. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATES & ACTION ITEMS (NO UPDATES).
- G. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AD-HOC EVALUATION COMMITTEE UPDATES & ACTION ITEMS (DR. ROBERT MORRIS)

Mr. Anderson asked for a motion to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Dr. Morris asked that item: 6B - Approval of the April 24, 2019 BOD meeting minutes be pulled.

Col. Leaks requested to pull out two (2) additional items: 6C - Approval of the invoice payment selection listing ending May 31, 2019 and 6D – Finance Committee Update and Action Items.

Mr. Anderson asked for a motion for items A, E, F, G and H to be approved from the Consent Calendar.



**Motion:**

A motion was made by Mr. Huggins and seconded by Ms. Gleaton to approve items A, E, F, G and H and to pull items B, C and D-I from the Consent Calendar.

**Approved:** Anderson, Boulware, Dickerson, Furgess, Gleaton, Howard, Huggins, Leaks, Mood, Morris, Smith

**Absent:** None

**Motion passed.**

**Item B: Approval of the April 24, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

Dr. Morris wanted to look at the minutes from April 24, 2019 on Page 22. He questioned Ms. Jernigan on the reason that Item 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA was passed when no quorum was present. Mr. Andoh referred the question to Ms. Frannie Heizer with Burr, Foreman, McNair Law Firm to comment on the concern.

Ms. Heizer said that this had no impact on the meeting. Per the memorandum in the packet, she explained that while the vote to approve the agenda is not valid because the absence of a quorum is apparent from the minutes, the fact does not invalidate actions taken by the Board during the meeting when a quorum was present. She added this is based on review of Roberts's Rules of Order, the CMRTA Bylaws and South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. Roberts Rules of Order indicate that an agenda is a useful guide but there is no language suggesting an approval by most of the Board in a meeting in which a quorum is present is mandatory. She added that similarly, the CMRTA Bylaws explain how the agenda is created but do not require that the agenda be approved by a vote of the Board during the meeting.

Dr. Morris disagreed and requested Ms. Heizer do more research based on his experience. He added that we never went back to approve the agenda once a quorum was present making the meeting illegal. Ms. Heizer stated that she has done the research based on conversations with Mr. Andoh, and these were her findings. She added that there was never a valid vote to approve the agenda.

Dr. Morris questioned that anytime we have a meeting, we do not have to have a quorum to make the meeting valid. Ms. Heizer said the only item, approving the agenda, was the only item not approved by the quorum. She reiterated this has no impact on the balance of the decisions because a quorum was present for the other remaining items. Dr. Morris respectfully requested further research. Mr. Horton added that in his experience in a situation like this the easiest thing



to do is to simply ratify the actions taken and approve the agenda. Ms. Dickerson agreed.

Ms. Dickerson made a motion to ratify the actions needed to approve the agenda.

It was recommended by Mr. Anderson to defer the minutes to Mr. Andoh for review until the next Board meeting.

**Motion:**

A motion was made by Ms. Dickerson and seconded by Mr. Leaks to ratify the actions taken in the April 24, 2019 meeting.

Dr. Morris requested a voice vote.

**Ayes-** Mood, Dickerson, Leaks, Smith, Anderson, Huggins

**Noes -** Gleaton, Furgess, Morris, Howard, Boulware

**Motion passed.**

Dr. Morris added that according to Roberts Rules there are three (3) actions that can be taken, Yay, Nay, and Abstain. He added that the format of our minutes use the word Absent in the motion sections. Mr. Anderson asked for clarification and Dr. Morris stated that it should not be there.

Mr. Anderson added that he, Ms. Heizer and Mr. Andoh would discuss it and get back to the Board on the proper modifications.

Mr. Furgess added that the attendance is already on the front page, in the packet so therefore it is not necessary to be added in the motion sections. Mr. Andoh interjected that he sent the agenda format to Ms. Heizer for the Parliamentarian to review and make changes if necessary. Mr. Furgess commented that the Board should see what goes to legal first. Mr. Andoh and Mr. Anderson stated that they will get back to the Board with the proper format of the meeting minutes once confirmed by the Parliamentarian.

Ms. Boulware changed her "no" to "abstain" on last vote.

**Motion:**

A motion was made by Ms. Mood and seconded by Ms. Dickerson to approve the April 24, 2019 meeting minutes.

**Approved:** Anderson, Boulware, Dickerson, Furgess, Gleaton, Howard, Huggins, Leaks, Mood,



Morris, Smith

**Absent:** None

**Motion passed.**

**Item C: Approval of the invoice payment selection listing ending May 31, 2019**

Col. Leaks requested more discussion regarding leasing of the buses and if this payment was for one (1) month only. Mr. Andoh mentioned he is holding the invoice to speak to Proterra due to the amount of time it was in operation as it was not the full month. Col. Leaks asked if it was worth the money. Mr. Andoh confirmed it was good for The COMET.

Col. Leaks asked about the video production line item. Mr. Andoh stated that it was grant funded and the videos intended to teach and aid in how to ride the buses. Dr. Morris mentioned that we need to be cognizant of our way of marketing to our riders.

Mr. Smith asked about the Transdev invoice and the length of time it has been withheld. Mr. Andoh mentioned he is meeting with the Comptroller of Transdev next week to make sure we have a plan for delay, so this will not occur again in the future.

**Motion:**

A motion was made by Dr. Morris and seconded by Ms. Gleaton to approve the invoice payment selection listing ending in May 31, 2019.

**Approved:** Anderson, Boulware, Dickerson, Furgess, Gleaton, Howard, Huggins, Leaks, Mood, Morris, Smith

**Absent:**

None

**Motion passed.**

**Item D: Finance Committee Update & Action Items I. Discussion & Action Budget and Free Fare Proposal**

Ms. Willis referred to Page 41 and Page 52 in the board packet. Mr. Andoh and Ms. Willis presented a power point detailing The COMET vision, budget and the 2020 funding sources.



Discussion of budget and fare free proposal occurred.

Of note, Ms. Willis stated that the marketing budget will increase to \$250k. Mr. Andoh added that there will be a presentation by the marketing firm at the July Board meeting detailing the plan.

Ms. Willis also mentioned the items that were not budgeted in 2019 that will be added in 2020. Items include Vanpool Operations, the Bike Program, buses, passenger amenities, etc. Mr. Andoh added that we received a grant from the FTA for \$249K to improve access to medical care.

Mr. Andoh added that we have resubmitted a low emissions grant for electric buses. Mr. Anderson added that we would need the infrastructure to add this service. Mr. Andoh agreed and stated that if we meet a certain threshold, CNG will build the infrastructure needed at no cost to The COMET. Mr. Andoh will continue researching clean fuels, hybrid, electric, etc. for future funding opportunities.

Mr. Horton added that West Columbia has approved the funding for The COMET for the 2020 year.

Mr. Andoh mentioned that there are two (2) budget components, the one just presented and one adding in the fare free component. The budget presented does take into consideration the implementation of the free transit program. Mr. Andoh clarified the dates of the fare free proposal would begin January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021.

Dr. Morris asked about the implication to the penny tax and the risk. Mr. Andoh mentioned the amount of money currently being spent for free riders is about \$800K of the penny tax. He referred to Page 71 of the packet, comparing The COMET ridership demographics to the North Charleston location which is operating fare free.

Ms. Mood reiterated that we need to get used to the term "fare free." She added how excited she is to see this program happen.

Mr. Huggins urged that we need to have a very strong communication plan in place before this happens.

*CD change occurred at 1:13 P.M.*

Mr. Smith asked about the reinstatement of the fare and the ramifications and risk if we reinstate once the free fare implementation period ends. Mr. Andoh referred to his experience in Hawaii





regarding the reinstatement of the free fare program. He added the ridership doubled and when fares were reinstated, dropped to half. He also commented that this would be considered a fare suspension, sale.

Mr. Andoh stated the fare free component is not embedded in the budget yet, this would take place as an amendment to the current budget in November or December.

**Motion:**

A motion was made by Col. Leaks and seconded by Ms. Dickerson to approve DI. Discussion & Action Budget and Fare Free Proposal to the Board for consideration.

**Approved:** Anderson, Boulware, Dickerson, Furgess, Gleaton, Howard, Huggins, Leaks, Mood,

Morris, Smith

**Absent:** None

**Motion passed.**

**7. OTHER DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS**

**A. NEW: Bus transfer from Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada and Capital Area Transportation Authority**

Mr. Andoh referred to Page 94 in the Board packet. He recommends that the Board of Directors adopt Resolution 19-01 to accept the transfer of transit buses from Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada to Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority pending implementation of new services for a large employer and adopt Resolution 19-02 to accept the transfer of two trolley replica buses from Capital Area Transportation Authority for use on Soda Cap Connector.

Mr. Andoh added the RTC vehicles have no cost associated with them. The CATA vehicles would cost \$25,607.41. There will be costs associated with the transportation of the vehicles from Las Vegas, Nevada and Lansing, Michigan to Columbia, South Carolina, as well as preparing the vehicle for service through adding fareboxes (older Odyssey units, radios, TransLoc, Wi-Fi) These costs for the RTC buses would be borne by the large employer and for the CATA buses by The COMET. The preparation costs would be funded through existing FTA Section 5307 funding.

**Motion:**

A motion was made by Ms. Mood and seconded by Ms. Dickerson to approve the adoption of



Resolution 19-01 and Resolution 19-02.

**Approved:** Anderson, Boulware, Dickerson, Furgess, Gleaton, Howard, Huggins, Leaks, Mood, Morris, Smith

**Absent:** None

**Motion passed.**

**B. NEW: Transfer of Federal Interest from City of Columbia Transit Facilities**

Mr. Andoh summarized that in 1985, the Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) obtained an Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) Section 16 grant to fund the construction of a bus transfer center in the City of Columbia for the SCE&G bus system. In

December 1996, the City of Columbia opened Sumter Street Transit Center and Assembly Street Bus Shelter. In July 2015, the City of Columbia blocked access to the Assembly Street Bus Shelter due to public safety concerns. Restrooms were closed in October 2006 and the customer service office was closed in 2002 when The COMET assumed operations of the transit system.

Mr. Andoh recommended that the Board of Directors adopt Resolution 19-03 to accept the transfer of Federal interest from the City of Columbia Transit Facilities to be reallocated to the Passenger Amenities Project.

It has been determined that Assembly Street Bus Shelter no longer has a public transit benefit and therefore, the City has requested CMCOG to start the process to dispose of the facility.

It has been determined through a straight-line depreciation that there is \$60,815.60 of value remaining in the Laurel Street facility and \$56,851.92 of value remaining in the Assembly Street facility. Laurel Street has \$6,795.47 in change orders that may possibly be funded by FTA funds, since a total of \$682,090 between real estate and project administration appears to have been reported in the grant. Another \$603,055 was available for final design and engineering of the project that could be considered as part of the project as well.

Under the rules of the circular, since The COMET, as the regional transportation authority provider in Richland and Lexington Counties, which includes the City of Columbia, with the disposal of these facilities, FTA could approve the transfer the remaining value to The COMET, to which The COMET would utilize the remaining value to purchase additional passenger bus shelters to expand throughout the service area.



**Motion:**

A motion was made by Ms. Dickerson and seconded by Dr. Morris to transfer the interest from the Assembly and Laurel Street location from the COG contingent upon finishing the processes with FTA.

**Approved:** Anderson, Boulware, Dickerson, Furgess, Gleaton, Howard, Huggins, Leaks, Mood, Morris, Smith

**Absent:** None

**Motion passed.**

C. OLD: Community Leader Outreach Program

*Ms. Summers left the meeting at 1:24 P.M.*

*Mr. Anderson left the meeting at 1:25 P.M.*

*Mr. Horton and Mr. Unthank left the meeting at 1:26 P.M.*

Presentation by Catherine Ramirez, Public Relations Specialist.

Mr. Andoh explained that in July of 2017, the Board of Directors made the following motion: "Motion to have the Executive Director develop a program to invite community leaders to have a behind the scenes tour, lunch and bus ride". Working with our public relations consultant, Chernoff Newman, a program has been developed which will be implemented at least once a year and upon

request, a program that would invite community leaders such as elected officials, neighborhood leaders, business executives, non-profit organizations leaders and other social service agencies leaders to visit The COMET for 1.5 hours. Lunch will be provided, a simple presentation about The COMET would be made and a mock route would be ridden to visit the Route 6 neighborhood, Transit Center and downtown Columbia core.

Community leaders will be given a document with fast facts and information about The COMET to take home. Public Transportation is becoming more important all the time, especially with congestion, environmental issues and a generation of young people who don't want to drive. This is an opportunity to extend the community leaders an invitation to understand what The COMET does and its value. Especially as we need to start educating the community about future funding.



- Connecting with Community Leaders
- In-person invitation drop off to start communication with the community leader
- Include a stylized and branded invitation to build excitement about the tour
- Take advantage of the opportunity to explore Columbia's public transit system
- Set up tours for a specific day for a month – allow people to sign up for their own time
- Begin scheduling tours after Labor Day

Col. Leaks stated that after looking at the list of Community Leaders, Richland County Coalition of Neighborhoods should be added.

**Motion:**

A motion was made by Ms. Mood and seconded by Mr. Smith to implement the Community Leaders Program with Chernoff Newman.

**Approved:** Boulware, Dickerson, Furgess, Gleaton, Howard, Huggins, Leaks, Mood, Morris, Smith

**Absent:** Anderson

**Motion passed.**

**8. MOTION PERIODS (NO ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN ON THE MOTIONS REQUESTED) (MR. FURGESS)**

- A. FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
- B. FROM THE SERVICE COMMITTEE
- C. FROM THE INTERMODAL COMMITTEE

No motions to report from committees.

**9. PROGRESS REPORTS – INFORMATIONAL ONLY**

- A. CHAIR REPORT
- B. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / CEO REPORT
- C. REVIEW OF BOARD MOTIONS FROM JANUARY 2017 TO PRESENT
- D. TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT
- E. FINANCE REPORT
- F. DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE REPORT



G. RIDERSHIP REPORT

No progress reports.

10. LEGAL/CONTRACTUAL/PERSONNEL (MAY REQUIRE EXECUTIVE SESSION)

None.

11. ADJOURN

**Motion:**

A motion was made by Ms. Dickerson and seconded by Ms. Gleaton to adjourn.

**Approved:** Boulware, Dickerson, Furgess, Gleaton, Howard, Huggins, Leaks, Mood, Morris, Smith

**Absent:** Anderson

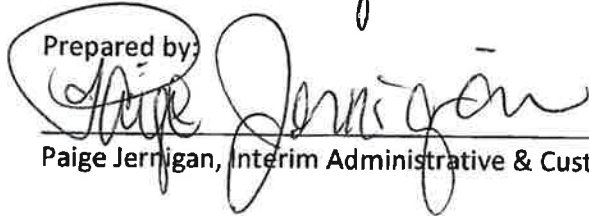
**Motion passed.**

Meeting adjourned at 1:34 P.M.

**CENTRAL MIDLANDS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

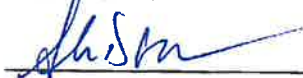
Adopted this May, 2019, Agenda Item \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by:



Paige Jernigan, Interim Administrative & Customer Service Specialist

Approved by:



Andy Smith, Board Secretary

