



The COMET Finance Committee 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 @ 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 3, 2019 at 3:30 p.m.

**Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority Finance Committee
Wednesday, May 8, 2019-10:00 A.M.
3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC 29201 – Conference Room A**

Members Present:

Jacqueline Boulware*
Joyce Dickerson
Skip Jenkins*
Dr. Robert E. Morris, Chair
Andy Smith*

Guests Present:

None

Absent Committee Members:

Representative Leon Howard

*Indicates participation by phone.

The COMET Staff Present

John Andoh, Executive Director/CEO
Rosalyn Andrews, Finance Director/CFO
Paige Jernigan, Interim Administrative & Customer Service Specialist
Michelle Ransom, Grants & Regional Coordination Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Dr. Morris called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.



A quorum was present at the opening of the meeting.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion:

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

Approve: Boulware, Dickerson, Morris and Smith

Absent: Howard

Motion passed unanimously.

3. ADOPT MINUTES FROM MARCH 13, 2019 MEETING

Motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Dickerson and seconded by Dr. Morris to adopt the minutes from April 10, 2019 with no corrections.

Approve: Boulware, Dickerson, Morris and Smith

Absent: Howard

Motion passed unanimously.

4. MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. Andoh discussed the items remaining that were referred by the Board of Directors. Review of the previous motions and status update from 2017 to present are up to date as reflected on Page 11 of the packet.

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

Ms. Andrews reviewed the current finances ending in March 2019 starting on Page 12 of the packet. She stated a loss for the month at \$398K. YTD we are at \$17.45M and currently The COMET is 9/12th of the way through the budget, with 75% of the fiscal year completed.

Ms. Andrews reviewed the expenses and explained that YTD The COMET has paid our Contract Operator \$47,331,418. She noted that January, February and March Transdev



invoices are still being reviewed, as result this number will increase significantly. Total collections of the Penny Revenue are \$94M.

Mr. Jenkins joined the call at 10:05 a.m.

6. DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (DBE) UPDATE

Mr. Andoh stated that Dr. Prince is attending an ADA Conference and that he would present the report on her behalf.

Mr. Andoh informed the Board that the numbers have not changed since last meeting due to the hold on the Transdev payment. The total paid to Transdev is reflective of the last payment for the January reporting period, as result the percentage towards contract goal is 27.1%. Mr. Andoh noted that this number will be around 25.6% once Transdev is paid.

Mr. Andoh mentioned that Transport Care: DART/Paratransit and Bus Detailing are currently under an Action Plan with DART/Paratransit currently meeting the objectives of the plan. Ms. Dickerson asked about the detailing of the bus and added the importance of maintaining a clean bus. Ms. Boulware asked how we follow up and track cleaning procedures. Mr. Andoh stated that he receives a monthly report detailing the procedures. Mr. Andoh commented that since the last deficiency meeting, New Age Protection have improved, and we have had no issues.

In contrast, Julietta Landscape Management has been issued a deficiency that they are not complying with the requirements of the contract. They have ten (10) days to respond or Transdev will be seeking another landscape company. Ms. Dickerson asked if we have had any issues with them in the past. Mr. Andoh agreed and added they aren't very responsive and often unreachable. Mr. Andoh stated that Transdev would be asked to research and provide comparable services for consideration.

7. OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Operations and Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020



Ms. Andrews began by summarizing the budget on Page 20 and 21. She added that the following pages break down each line item in detail as reflected on Pages 31-34.

She summarized the following projects that the proposed budget will fund:

Capital Projects

- Two diesel powered trolleys
- Two low-floor gasoline powered cutaways
- Continued renovation of Laurel & Sumter Street Transit Center
- New Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)
- Bikeshare stations in Downtown Columbia, Cayce and West Columbia
- Passenger amenities, including bus shelters, benches and bike racks
- Website redesign
- Mobility management
- Training and development of staff
- Computer hardware and software

Operations projects

- Transit operations, marketing and administration in Richland and Lexington Counties
- Security on buses, Transit Center and bus stops
- Vanpool program
- Preventative maintenance of transit buses and facilities
- Lyft/Uber subsidy, Blue Bike, Volunteer transportation and subsidized taxi scrip program.

Ms. Andrews stated that The COMET is currently discussing the implementation of a Free Transit Program. She explained that this budget recommends the implementation of a one-year pilot of free transit service to the entire community (excluding the Express routes) to replicate the successes of transit agencies that offer free transit service to their citizens. Ms. Andrews and Mr. Andoh explained that this pilot would operate on a calendar year from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. This will allow The COMET to generate approximately \$1,360,289 in revenue. The expense would be \$1,360,289 (as a revenue loss), however, that revenue will be offset by funding partnerships and an increase in FTA Operations Assistance by \$450,000. The true expense with fare collection is \$372,058. When you add the revenue loss from not collecting fares, that increases by \$1,285,730 for a total \$1,657,788.

Ms. Dickerson expressed concern regarding service to the "unincorporated areas." Mr. Andoh explained that the route changes coming up at the end of May are going to address this issue. She is frustrated with the Penny funding being used primarily in the downtown area, the City of Columbia. She mentioned a route to Denny Terrace. Mr. Andoh confirmed



that we already serve that area. Ms. Dickerson has a person in mind that could benefit from this service and she will send Mr. Andoh his name.

On Page 45, Route Allocation FY 19-20 shows Columbia is at 55.48% and Richland County is 29.73% of the allocation. Ms. Dickerson remarked that this percentage gives merit to her frustration with the Penny Tax and the allocation of service to the Richland County area.

Dr. Morris asked how we plan to get the \$3.42M increase. Ms. Andrews explained that revenue will be obtained because of FTA funding and the increase of (anticipated) passenger revenues. Mr. Andoh explained that we will have to keep a close eye on the revenue stream and if needed we can use our reserve fund. Mr. Andoh stated that the revenue streams that are presented are budget commitments that are already confirmed.

Mr. Smith asked for clarification and he and Mr. Andoh discussed the Revenues and Expenditures Summary on Page 31. Mr. Smith wanted to know what portions of the 13% increase goes to what area, ex. capital projects, etc. Discussion continued. Ms. Ransom added that we do have grants coming in for 2017/2018 years. Col. Leaks asked about our percentage of fare revenue in this year's fiscal year budget. Mr. Andoh added that 9% of our budget is based on fare revenue.

Ms. Dickerson expressed concern on fuel costs. Mr. Andoh addressed this issue by referring to Page 33.

Mr. Andoh asked for a recommendation to the Board the 2 (two) portions of the budget.

- 1) Operations and Capitol
- 2) Free Transit

Page 49, Mr. Andoh referenced the comparison between the current and the proposed budget. He explained that currently we are giving away many free rides. He added that currently there are so many inequities, Soda Cap - for business riders ride free versus the lower income population pays for The COMET and DART.

Mr. Smith asked what other areas are currently operating at free fare. Mr. Andoh stated that these communities include Breckenridge & Frisco, Colorado, Missoula, Montana, Emeryville, California and Corvallis, Oregon. Each of these transit systems has seen a 25% to 35% increase in passenger trips because of a free transit program as well as a correspondence increase in FTA funding.

Mr. Smith asked what the next steps would be. Mr. Andoh verified the two (2) options:



- 1) Recommend the Budget as presented.
- 2) Approval of the Budget with the component of trying the free fare pilot.

For clarification a presentation to the Board will be Option A and Option B Budget to be reviewed for discussion.

Motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Dickerson and seconded by Ms. Boulware to pass the budget as presented with the Free Transit pilot to be taken to the Board for consideration.

Approve: Boulware, Dickerson, Morris and Smith

Absent: Howard

Motion passed unanimously.

9. LEGAL/CONTRACTUAL/PERSONNEL (May require executive session)

No Legal/Contractual/Personnel matters to discuss.

10. ADJOURN

Motion:

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

Meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

CENTRAL MIDLANDS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Adopted this May 22, 2019, 2019, Agenda Item _____

Prepared by:

Paige Jernigan, Interim Administrative & Customer Service Specialist

Approved by:

Andy Smith, Secretary