



The COMET Service 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 at 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, June 7, 2019 at 3:30 p.m.***

**Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority Service Committee
Wednesday June 12, 2019 -12:00 P.M.
3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC 29201 – Conference Room A**

Members Present:

Ron Anderson (Arrived at 12:13 p.m.)
John V. Furgess, Sr
Derrick Huggins
Skip Jenkins*
Colonel (R) Roger Leaks, Jr., Chair
Lill Mood

Guests Present:

Jackie Bowers, Operations Manager
Katherine Cason, Lexington County
Sara Fleming, Lexington County
Tanisha Gibbons, HR Manager, Transdev
Tanita Gaither, Sr. Integrated Communications Manager, Flock & Rally
Larry Livingston, Interim, Transport Care Services
Rosalind Lorick, Quality Analyst, Transdev
Zane McGhee, Engineer, Davis & Floyd
Merritt McNeely, VP of Marketing, Flock & Rally
Todd Warren, Project Manager, Davis & Floyd

Absent Committee Members:

Carolyn Gleaton
Geraldine Robinson

**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

1. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Col. Leaks called the meeting to order at 12:00 P.M.
A quorum was present at the opening of the meeting.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion:

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

Approve: Furgess, Huggins, Leaks, Mood

Absent: Gleaton

Motion passed.

3. MIDLANDS TRANSIT RIDERS ASSOCIATION UPDATE (Verbal)

No representation.

A. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None

4. MINUTES FROM MAY 8, 2019 MEETING

Motion:

A motion was made by Mr. Furgess and seconded by Mr. Huggins to approve the minutes from May 8, 2019 meeting.

Approve: Furgess, Huggins, Leaks, Mood

Absent: Gleaton

Motion passed.

5. MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (John Andoh)

A. DISCUSS PREVIOUS MOTIONS FROM 2017 TO PRESENT.

Mr. Andoh explained that the items highlighted on the list are still "in progress."

Mr. Andoh added the information regarding the Park & Ride locations are detailed on



Page 11.

MOTION PERIOD

None

6. TRANSDEV OPERATIONS REPORT (Jackie Bowers, Tanisha Gibbons, Rosalind Lorick)

Ms. Bowers summarized April boarding's as follows:

222,081 boarding's system wide

6,216 DART

1,035 flex routes.

This total number has increased by 11,337 more boarding's compared to last year.

Ms. Bowers began her report by informing the Board of fifty-four (54) complaints and ten (10) accidents, with three (3) accidents being preventable last month. She explained that "preventable" accidents are considered the drivers fault. Ms. Mood and Col. Leaks asked about the termination on the report for improper vehicle positioning. Ms. Bowers explained that the termination was for a driver pulling out in front of a vehicle during her probationary period.

Mr. Anderson joined the meeting at 12:13 p.m.

Ms. Bowers discussed the mandatory Customer Service and Safety Training. She added these meetings will be held more frequently this next fiscal year as they are always needed. Ms. Mood asked why the percentage of employees that attended the "mandatory" staff meeting was only at 37%. Ms. Bowers explained that she tries to reschedule meeting for people who cannot attend but it's difficult to have 100% participation. She added that she will often do an individual training for those who can't attend. Ms. Mood added that the data should be clearer and perhaps the word "mandatory" should not be used. Ms. Bowers assured the committee that Transdev is working on ways to improve this percentage. Mr. Andoh suggested scheduling some meeting on weekends during low ridership peaks.

Ms. Mood asked for clarification of the codes and the ability to identify drivers who are excessively causing complaints. Ms. Bowers explained that the codes monitored, and excessive complaints are tracked. Ms. Mood then asked about the term "swap out" on the reports and the preventative maintenance procedures. Ms. Bowers verified that these swap outs are not always due to major issues. Mr. Andoh reminded Ms. Mood and the Board of the maintenance audit and that a report will be presented after the audit is complete.



Col. Leaks asked about Page 15 and the unplanned absences and what happens when this occurs. Ms. Bowers explained that the buses remain in operation. She discussed the attendance program. Mr. Furgess reminded the committee that this number is for the year and added an average of one absence per day. He also asked about the sign in process and if the Union representative attend these meetings. Ms. Bowers confirmed that there is a sign in process and the Union representatives do attend safety meetings.

Interim General Manager for Transport Care Services, Mr. Livingston added that he would be willing to help Ms. Bowers out if any of the questions needed more clarification. The committee agreed that Ms. Bowers sufficiently answered all the questions; therefore, no additional input was necessary.

Ms. Mood asked about the social media pulse information on Page 71 of the packet and requested more clarification. Mr. Andoh explained that per the Transdev contract, they are supposed to be tracking our social media traffic. He added that this report will now be shared with the committee.

Mr. Anderson asked about the spike during April according to the report on Page 71. Mr. Andoh stated that the Free Times article about transit in the midlands could explain the spike. Mr. Anderson suggested that Flock and Rally produce this report instead of Transdev as it would be more comprehensive. Mr. Andoh agreed.

7. RIDERSHIP REPORT (John Andoh)

Mr. Andoh reviewed Pages 74–76 of the packet. Our boarding's increased by 11,337 total, the fixed route increased by 8,602, the flex route by 1,035 and the DART route by 348 boarding's.

He added that the main corridors continue to perform. He added that we are now tracking Uber, Lyft, Vanpool and BikeShare. He added that with Uber, Lyft and Vanpool ridership, we can use those numbers towards our ridership goals of becoming like Charleston which will result in more FTA funding. This in turn will help us leverage the penny.



Ms. Mood asked why Lyft is used more often than Uber. Mr. Andoh explained that it could be that Uber is not marketing enough or possibly the public relations issues in the past. Mr. Huggins added that it could simply be the price comparison and the choice of transportation that costs the least.

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Passenger Amenities Program Update

Mr. Andoh introduced Mr. Warren from Davis & Floyd to give an update on the recent projects. Col. Leaks explained his understanding of the word “amenities” and believes we should rephrase our usage of the word. He added that the benches/shelters should be a necessary part of the rider’s experience.

Mr. Warren explained the summary of work for the bus stop/shelter permitting. He explained they are progressing quickly on completion of inventory of the entire The COMET bus stop system. They have successfully acquired available Right of Way plans and performed a google search review of 19 of the 30 identified bus routes.

Mr. Warren added that for the month of May, four (4) sites have been permitted, including one shelter, two (2) benches, and one (1) boarding and alighting area. In addition to these sites, eleven (11) are under review for permitting or easements and 13 are in design and will be moving to permitting soon.

Mr. Warren reminded the Board that Davis & Floyd will continue to work closely with the staff on the new SuperStop located on the Columbia Place Mall property and the other mentioned items. He added that the TOLAR shelters are currently in the review process with Richland County. The development of the final bid package for this project will be ready in the next few weeks with the anticipation of soliciting bids by the end of June.

Mr. Huggins urged that we need to continue working with our stakeholders. He added, that when we start talking numbers we need to be sure to take into consideration some historical areas and how that will lead to economic growth. He expressed his gratitude that the shelter plans are taking place.



9. **NEW BUSINESS (John Andoh)**

A. First Thursday on Main Shuttle Service Request

Mr. Andoh referred to Page 82. He stated that City Center Partnership has asked us to provide shuttle service connecting Laurel Street and Gervais Street on Main Street when the First Thursday on Main event is occurring. The shuttle would operate from 6:00 p.m. to 10 p.m., every twenty (20) minutes and stop at every Soda Cap Connector bus stop along Main Street. This service would be offered free of charge.

Mr. Huggins asked about our marketing strategy to make sure we are getting the support from the community to continue offering these services. Mr. Andoh stated that he was vocal about our visibility in the business' marketing efforts and materials produced by City Center Partnership.

Mr. Anderson suggested and asked if Flock & Rally could create a contract type/checklist form to present business' when asked so they are aware of our service expectations and standards from the beginning. Mr. Huggins and Mr. Andoh agreed.

CD change at 1:05 p.m.

Col. Leaks asked about the possibility of a tour route with a script. Mr. Andoh stated that he has spoken to Public Information Office of Richland County to do a tour script on the Soda Cap Connector.

Motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Mood and seconded by Mr. Huggins to recommend to the Board the shuttle service request for First Thursday on Main.

Approve: Furgess, Huggins, Leaks, Mood

Absent: Gleaton

Motion passed.

B. Marketing Plan Discussion/Questions

Mr. Andoh introduced Ms. McNeely with Flock & Rally and mentioned that the last marketing plan was done in 2004. Ms. McNeely assured the committee that she agrees with the concerns mentioned regarding marketing and they are developing a



marketing and a social media content calendar. She added that they will work to create partnership contracts/checklists.

She began by asking a few questions to help with the marketing plan. She said she would send the rest of the questions via email due to lack of time.

- 1) Since being involved with The COMET, what marketing efforts do you feel have been beneficial?

Ms. Mood responded that the appearance of the buses and the special events transportation has been very successful.

Mr. Huggins agreed and urged the need to reach and attract new riders with a system that can be tracked. He stressed how everyone needs the bus.

Mr. Anderson added that we need to improve the perception of our riders. Most people assume the bus is full of homeless people. Mr. Anderson said we do a poor job of describing our riders. He added that we need to simplify and present a more practical application and website for buying tickets, reading routes, etc.

Conference call ended at 1:27 p.m.

Mr. Huggins left the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Anderson addressed the fact that the app is not user friendly and how it needs to be developed for easier use. He added that fare free riding would make a difference but still we need to be more technologically advanced.

Ms. McNeely reviewed what the Service Committee's answers to the presented questions.

- Too complicated
- Perception of riders
- App capabilities

- 2) What marketing & promotions should The COMET do?



Mr. Anderson mentioned reaching out to the parking structures and the people who use them and encourage them to contact the city.

Mr. Furgess recommended we need to market more to children and the families.

Col. Leaks stated that the churches have not been contacted and should be. Mr. Anderson agreed and mentioned a few of the large churches in the area to target.

10. **LEGAL/CONTRACTUAL/PERSONNEL** (may require executive session)

A. **Transdev Management Defined in the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority Fixed Route and Paratransit Program Management Agreement**

Motion:

A motion was made by Mr. Furgess and seconded by Ms. Mood to move Item 10. Legal/Contractual/Personnel and A. Transdev Management Defined in the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority Fixed Route and Paratransit Program Management Agreement to the June 26, 2019 Board of Directors meeting.

Approve: Furgess, Leaks, Mood

Absent: Gleaton

Motion passed.

11. **ADJOURN**

Motion:

A motion was made by Mr. Furgess and seconded by Ms. Mood to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

CENTRAL MIDLANDS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Adopted this June, 2019, Agenda Item _____

Prepared by:



Paige Jernigan, Interim Administrative & Customer Service Specialist

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Andy Smith", written over a horizontal line.

Andy Smith, Secretary

