



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@thecometsc.gov.

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 October 18, 2019 at 3:15 P.M.

**The Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 23, 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.
Representative Leon Howard
Derrick Huggins
Skip Jenkins*
Roger (R) Leaks, Jr.
Lill Mood
Dr. Robert Morris
Andy Smith*
Debbie Summers

Guests Present:

Leo Auger, Auger Consulting
Jackie Bowers, Transdev, Operations Manager
Darrell Campbell, Lobbyist, The Campbell Consulting Group
Lawanda Chisolm, Transport Care Services
Larry Gabaldon, Interim General Manager, Transdev
Tanita Gaither, Flock & Rally
Ronnie Gibson, Transdev
Frannie Heizer, Burr, Foreman, McNair Law Firm
William Norris, Interim General Manager, Transport Care Services
Debi Schadel, Flock & Rally
Ron Scott, Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd
Shanel Shephard, The Campbell Consulting Group

Absent Board Members:

Carolyn Gleaton
Bobby Horton
Kevin Reeley
Geraldine Robinson
William (B.J.) Unthank

**Indicates participation by phone.*



The COMET Staff Present

John Andoh, Executive Director/CEO
Rosalyn Andrews, Director of Finance/CFD
Pamela A. Bynoe-Reed, Marketing & Public Information Manager
LeRoy DesChamps, Director of Administration & Operations/COO
Paige Jernigan, Administrative & Customer Service Specialist
Dr. Arlene Prince, Director of Regulatory Compliance & Civil Rights Officer
Amaris Ray-Pope, Office/Financial Assistant
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 Mr. Huggins and seconded by Dr. Morris to adopt the agenda.

Approved: Anderson, Boulware, Dickerson, Furgess, Huggins, Leaks, Mood, Morris

Absent: Howard, Gleaton, Smith

Motion passed.

3. MIDLANDS TRANSIT RIDERS ASSOCIATION UPDATE

No representation.

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

No representation.

5. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Mr. Andoh introduced the newest employees of The COMET.
Amaris Ray-Pope, Office/Financial Assistant
Paige Jernigan, Administrative & Customer Service Specialist
Pamela A. Bynoe-Reed, Marketing & Public Information Manager

B. EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH FOR TRANSDEV AND TRANSPORT CARE SERVICES

Mr. Gabaldon introduced Transdev Services Employee of the Month for October 2019, Mr. Ronnie Gibson. Mr. Gibson works generously everyday installing, cleaning, pressure washing, removing and



maintaining bus stops and shelters. He arrives every day with a "CAN DO" attitude. He is one of our Gold Star employees! No matter how big the challenge may be Mr. Gibson gets it done with a smile.

Mr. Norris introduced Transport Care Services employee of the month for October 2019, Ms. Lawanda Chisholm. Ms. Chisolm began her career as a paratransit operator for Transport Care/ DART services on July 1, 2015. She has provided exemplary service during this entire period and is lauded by our riders for her kindness and professionalism. She is also popular with our Dispatch team as she has time and time again demonstrated her commitment to not only being on time but going above and beyond when called upon. We are unanimous in our recognition of Ms. Chisolm as Employee of the Month.

C. FINANCE DEPARTMENT & FINANCE COMMITTEE ACHIEVEMENT

Mr. Andoh explained that for the first time in The COMET history, the Finance Department received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. He congratulated Ms. Andrews on The COMET's First comprehensive annual report.

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.*

Mr. Andoh requested that Item 6. H. Transit Operator RFP Ad-Hoc Committee Action Item and Item I. Direct Staff and Legal Counsel to draft a Request For Proposal to be pulled for a future meeting.

- A. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 25, 2019 MEETING MINUTES (PAIGE JERNIGAN) PAGES 9-22
- B. APPROVAL OF THE INVOICE PAYMENT SELECTION LISTING ENDING OCTOBER 31, 2019 (CRYSTAL WILLS) PAGES 23-37
- C. FINANCE COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS (DR. ROBERT MORRIS & ROSALYN ANDREWS)
- D. SERVICE COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS (COL. (R)ROGER LEAKS JR., & JOHN ANDOH)
- I. SPECIAL SERVICE REQUEST FOR GERVAIS STREET BRIDGE DINNER (JOHN ANDOH) PAGE 38
- E. INTERMODAL AD-HOC COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS (NONE)
- F. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS (NONE)
- G. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AD-HOC EVALUATION COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS (NONE)
- H. TRANSIT OPERATOR RFP AD-HOC COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS (DERRICK HUGGINS) Pulled for next meeting.
- I. DIRECT STAFF AND LEGAL COUNSEL TO DRAFT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (JOHN



ANDOH) PAGES 39-64
Pulled for next meeting.

Motion:

A motion was made by Mr. Huggins and seconded by Ms. Dickerson to adopt the Consent Calendar.

Approved: Anderson, Boulware, Dickerson, Furgess, Huggins, Leaks, Mood, Morris,

Absent: Gleaton, Howard, Smith

Motion passed.

7. OTHER DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

A. PUBLIC HEARING: CHANGES TO DART ADVANCED RESERVATION POLICY (ARLENE PRINCE) PAGE 65

Mr. Anderson opened the Public Hearing at 12:07 p.m. Dr. Prince explained the proposed Minority Business Enterprise Program Policy. Col. Leaks asked about the time frame for advanced reservations. Dr. Prince explained that riders can book up to seven (7) days in advance. The Public Hearing closed at 12:09 p.m.

B. ROUTE 93X OPERATIONS (JOHN ANDOH) PAGES 66-70

Mr. Andoh explained that the Route 93X started on May 28, 2019 after being approved by the Board of Directors in September 2018, based on a motion to explore reinstatement of the Newberry Express service that was discontinued by the Newberry County Council on Aging. Since July 2019, The COMET has been working with Newberry County to resolve an issue brought to the attention of The COMET regarding designation of a "public transportation operator" for the county.

Mr. Andoh further added that The COMET presently has this designation for Richland and Lexington Counties, however, does not for Fairfield and Newberry Counties. These four counties collectively could legally participate in The COMET service. In order to receive credit for Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 funding for services provided outside of The COMET's "operating" service area. The COMET must have such designation in order to count the benefit of the passenger trips and revenue miles from a area outside of the "operating" service.

Mr. Andoh continued stating that without the designation from Newberry County to South Carolina Department Of Transportation, The COMET will not be able to report the revenue miles and passenger trips between Piedmont Technical College and Little Mountain Town Center and receive credit towards the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 allocation. This however can be reported under the Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 allocation. The performance of public transit operators in the rural area would determine if The COMET will see an increase or decrease in its Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 funding.



Mr. Andoh continued by adding that at the minimum, The COMET could expect to see a \$2,500 increase in Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 based on its ability to meet five (5) of the six (6) measures. Population would not be credited to The COMET. Newberry County has offered a compromise to provide The COMET \$2,500 to mitigate any impacts by not designating The COMET as an operator in the Fiscal Year 2021 budget.

Staff is seeking direction on the following:

- Continue to operate Route 93X as it is and credit Route 93X to the urban formula
- Reduce Route 93X to Little Mountain – this will result in a reduction of miles and hours
- Reduce Route 93X to Chapin – this will result in a reduction of mile
- Send a request to the South Carolina Department Of Transportation Commission to review this matter

Dr. Morris expressed concern with us spending this amount of money and reminded the Board of the penny and added he is not in favor of continuing the route.

Representative Howard arrived at 12:25 p.m.

Ms. Mood reminded that this is a pilot program and urged the Board not to interrupt the service before the end of the pilot. She explained that Newberry County Council on Aging has actively been against The COMET's entry into Newberry County out of fear that The COMET will consume its funding and impact the services that they provide. Mr. Andoh informed the Board that Newberry County has questioned the value that providing commuter bus service for "choice" riders over providing bus service for the "transit dependent" and the value, before they contribute towards the route. Ms. Mood recommended continuing to operate Route 93X as it is and credit Route 93x to the urban formula to continue to serve those citizens.

Mr. Smith joined via conference call at 12:27 p.m.

Mr. Anderson reminded the Board that we are a regional system, not only operating in Richland and Lexington counties. He stressed that this route is not a one-way street as some riders are coming from downtown to get to Samsung, etc. He continued that to build relationships with the surrounding counties, we are going to have to spend some money and gain allies. He concluded at a minimum the Board wait until the end of the pilot for a decision.

Dr. Morris stated that we want to support surrounding areas, but at some point, we need to have some financial support from those areas seeking services. Mr. Andoh confirmed that Richland County is only paying for Ballentine. Col. Leaks commented that he has seen no evidence of our transit system being regional. Attorney Heizer stated that our service area for Central Midlands



Regional Transit Authority is Richland and Lexington counties where we are currently providing services. She continued, that the area for federal purposes is urbanized and is larger than the service area where the buses are currently running.

Urban Federal funds are available to spend in the Columbia Urbanized Area, which includes Richland and Lexington Counties and rural Federal funds are available to spend in areas outside the Columbia Urbanized Area. Newberry County is being paid for with federal dollars. Ms. Dickerson urged that The COMET is no longer a "city bus" and it is now bigger than the penny. Mr. Anderson summarized that the rural and urban flow goes through feds to state, state to the Council Of Governments, the Council Of Governments to The COMET.

Mr. Furgess asked how many riders are riding daily? Mr. Andoh stated it is close to meeting the service standards set by the Board. Ms. Mood added that the park and ride lot in Chapin is not costing The COMET anything as Mt. Horeb stepped up to support. She asked if we can continue the 93x through the pilot and do we need to send a request to the South Carolina Department Of Transportation Commission to review? Mr. Andoh stated yes, and he added that contacting South Carolina Department of Transportation will help us on our 5311 allocation.

Col. Leaks asked why do we need to send a request to South Carolina Department Of Transportation Commission? Mr. Andoh stated according to the rules, the policy does not allow for flexibility in situations like this. We would need to modify the rules to have multiple operators, as we are a commuter bus operator only. Mr. Andoh added that The Council Of Aging perceives this as a threat. Mr. Anderson clarified that by changing the rules, we can count their riders without their permission. Ms. Dickerson recommended not contacting the South Carolina Department Of Transportation Commission.

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Mood and seconded by Ms. Dickerson to instruct the Staff to continue with 93X through the pilot period and continue to credit the riders to the urban formula. Dr. Morris asked to amend the motion to state: that we encourage Newberry citizens to work to get the funds to subsidize this route.

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

Absent: Gleaton

Motion passed.

C. ADOPT MARKETING PLAN (JOHN ANDOH & DEBI SCHADEL) PAGES 71-110

Mr. Andoh stated that the Service Committee recommends to the Board of Directors to review the 2019-2020 Marketing Plan and determine acceptance of the plan. He mentioned that The COMET wants to create awareness of the transit system and its services, and this plan was designed to address that goal.



For 2019-2020, the marketing plan will include various foundational tools that are necessary for the plan to be executed successfully. In addition, an advertising campaign will consume most of the promotions for this year.

Mr. Andoh reminded the Board that The COMET has not had a formal marketing campaign, advertising campaign, social media policy or other planned marketing and communications plan over the last few years. He mentioned that The COMET is in the unique situation of having a clean slate when it comes to a marketing plan.

Mr. Andoh stated that with this clean slate comes several foundational tasks that need to be completed in order to establish content, apply current best practices to online channels, copywrite new messaging, develop content asset libraries and more.

Mr. Andoh explained that this marketing plan includes traditional advertising and digital strategies; photo and video shoots; recommendations to update website copy and content; consistent social media posting and advertising; email marketing; community involvement and collateral materials.

The Service Committee reviewed the plan at its September 2019 meeting and were not able to come to a consensus on its acceptance due to concerns regarding the tasks identified and wanted more strategies and deliverables. Since the Service Committee meeting, the Marketing Plan was revised to include the following:

- More Richland County print media ads to balance the Lexington County print media
- Strive to add more deliverable strategies that are like what was in the Soda Cap Connector Marketing Plan
- Explain more on the campaign to increase awareness and what steps that The COMET intends to do
- Ensure that the plan has a "regional" focus and emphasis the regional focus.
- Tie the plan to COMPASS Strategic Plan
- Rename the Plan to a Strategic Marketing Plan
- Add some MSA/Demographic information to the plan to help the Board of Directors and those reading understand how wide the reach is with the various advertising mediums

This plan is the first in thirteen (13) years and will set the framework for future Marketing Plans and provide a guide for our new Marketing and Public Information Manager to follow. The first year's focus to increase overall awareness of The COMET, which will translate to ridership growth.



Discussion continued regarding the perception of bus riders.

Mr. Anderson asked Mr. Andoh to explain the difference between the Ms. Bynoe-Reed, the Marketing and Public Information Manager and what Flock and Rally will be doing. Mr. Andoh explained that Flock and Rally will help set the framework and we will utilize them for areas where we lack expertise, for example, graphic design. He concluded that Ms. Bynoe-Reed will be the face of The COMET.

Ms. Schadel, representing Flock and Rally introduced herself and her company.

Col. Leaks asked how exactly are we going to increase ridership? Ms. Schadel described the framework, multichannel marketing and working with Ms. Bynoe-Reed to assess what The COMET needs.

Dr. Morris asked Ms. Schadel if they have ever worked with a bus company. Ms. Schadel stated that they have not, but they have partnered with The COMET on some events. Mr. Andoh referred to Page 90 describing the tactics and deliverables. Mr. Anderson discussed cross marketing and the ability to partner with the South Carolina State Fair again next year to increase exposure and ridership.

Ms. Boulware touched on the fact that community events, churches, schools, etc. are going to be huge in reaching our targeted audience. Ms. Mood agreed and reminded that the Staff will be attending these events and Flock and Rally will help identifying these opportunities. Col. Leaks asked exactly what will Flock and Rally do? Ms. Schadel talked about the hourly rate and working with the marketing person on areas where The COMET lacks expertise. She added that these hours can be adjusted or shifted as needed.

Mr. Andoh reminded that the Board approved the marketing budget for Flock and Rally and these hours will only be charged if the work is completed. Representative Howard added that this could be a game changer. Ms. Dickerson reminded that they are only going to receive the amount if the work is completed, so really it should say "spend up to and not to exceed \$249 thousand dollars."

Mr. Smith asked if this is a budgeted expense or must we amend the budget and what did the Service Committee recommend? Mr. Andoh reminded the Board that they approved the budget of \$240 thousand dollars for all the overall marketing activities, as result, no amendment required. Also, he stated that the Service Committee recommended we take the plan to the Board for further discussion. Col. Leaks agreed and added the Committee felt the plan had "holes in it."



Motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Mood and seconded by Mr. Huggins to accept the 2019/2020 Marketing Plan.

Approved: Anderson, Boulware, Dickerson, Howard, Huggins, Mood, Morris, Smith

Abstain: Furgess, Leaks

Absent: Gleaton

Motion passed.

D. LOCAL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE POLICY (DR. ARLENE PRINCE) PAGES 111-120

Will be pulled to be discussed at a later meeting. Mr. Andoh commented that the Committee is still working on the policy. He added that we will ask what will be included by the Request For Proposal and what items should be absorbed by The COMET. Ms. Mood added that by removing some of those items from the contractor, we can save The COMET from paying overhead and profit two times.

E. AUTHORIZATION TO HIRE A TEMPORARY TRANSIT TRAFFIC CHECKER (JOHN ANDOH)

Mr. Andoh stated that the Staff is recommending approval by the Board of Directors the addition of a Temporary Transit Traffic Checker position to assist with entry level surveying functions with the Planning and Development Department as this is an area, we need additional help in. Mr. Furgess asked if this was adding a position to our current staff. Mr. Furgess asked why Mr. Andoh requested authorization? Mr. Andoh stated that he just wants to be transparent.

Motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Mood and seconded by Ms. Dickerson to approve the hiring of a temporary Transit Traffic Checker.

Approved: Anderson, Boulware, Dickerson, Huggins, Howard, Leaks, Mood, Smith

Abstain: Furgess, Morris

Absent: Gleaton

Motion passed.

Dr. Morris stated that it is time for the midterm review for the Executive Director evaluation. He requested the rating be sheets sent out no later than this month, October 31, 2019. The Board then will send the evaluation ratings back to Mr. DesChamps by November 15, 2019 and then Mr. DesChamps will compile the results and return to the Board by November 30, 2019. These evaluations will be discussed in the December Board of Directors meeting in Executive Session.

Ms. Mood wanted clarification on the mid-year review versus a full-fledged evaluation process. Dr. Morris clarified that the comments are what is important.

Mr. Anderson stated the upcoming Board meetings will be on November 20, 2019 and on December



18, 2019.

8. MOTION PERIODS (NO ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN ON THE MOTIONS REQUESTED) (RON ANDERSON, VERBAL)

A. FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

None

B. FROM THE SERVICE COMMITTEE

None

C. FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

None

D. FROM BOARD MEMBERS

None

9. PROGRESS REPORTS – INFORMATIONAL ONLY

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS LISTED UNDER PROGRESS REPORTS WILL BE CONSIDERED AS A GROUP UNLESS A BOARD MEMBER REQUESTS FOR SEPARATE DISCUSSION.

A. CHAIR REPORT (RON ANDERSON, VERBAL)

B. COMMITTEE CHAIRS UPDATE

I. FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE (DR. ROBERT MORRIS) PAGES 123-128

II. SERVICE COMMITTEE UPDATE (COL. (R)ROGER LEAKS JR.) PAGES 129-137

III. INTERMODAL AD-HOC COMMITTEE UPDATES (DERRICK HUGGINS)

IV. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATES (RON ANDERSON)

V. CEO AD-HOC EVALUATION COMMITTEE UPDATE (DR. ROBERT MORRIS)

VI. TRANSIT OPERATOR REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AD-HOC COMMITTEE (DERRICK HUGGINS) PAGES 138-153

C. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO REPORT (JOHN ANDOH) PAGES 154-156

D. PERSONNEL UPDATE (LEROY DESCHAMPS) PAGE 157

E. REVIEW OF BOARD MOTIONS FROM JAN 2017 TO PRESENT (JOHN ANDOH) PAGES 158-162

F. TRANSIT OPERATIONS REPORT (LAWRENCE GABALDON) PAGES 163-179

G. DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE REPORT (DR. ARLENE PRINCE) PAGE 180

H. FINANCE REPORT (ROSALYN ANDREWS) PAGES 181-194

I. RIDERSHIP REPORT (JOHN ANDOH) AT MEETING

Motion:

A motion was made by Mr. Furgess and seconded by Dr. Morris to accept the Progress Reports.

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

Absent: Gleaton



Motion passed.

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

- A. SECTION 30-4-70 (A) (2) - THE RECEIPT OF LEGAL ADVICE WHERE THE LEGAL ADVICE RELATES TO A PENDING, THREATENED, OR POTENTIAL CLAIM OR OTHER MATTERS COVERED BY THE ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE, SETTLEMENT OF LEGAL CLAIMS, OR THE POSITION OF THE PUBLIC AGENCY IN OTHER ADVERSARY SITUATIONS INVOLVING THE ASSERTION AGAINST THE AGENCY OF A CLAIM – COMET CENTRAL/CITY OF COLUMBIA
- B. SECTION 30-4-70 (A) (2) - THE RECEIPT OF LEGAL ADVICE WHERE THE LEGAL ADVICE RELATES TO A PENDING, THREATENED, OR POTENTIAL CLAIM OR OTHER MATTERS COVERED BY THE ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE, SETTLEMENT OF LEGAL CLAIMS, OR THE POSITION OF THE PUBLIC AGENCY IN OTHER ADVERSARY SITUATIONS INVOLVING THE ASSERTION AGAINST THE AGENCY OF A CLAIM - TRANSDEV SERVICES, INC

Motion:

A motion was made by Representative Howard and seconded by Col. Leaks to enter Executive Session.

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

Absent: Gleaton

Motion passed

The Board entered Executive Session at 1:46 P.M.

Ms. Summers left at 2: 01 P.M.

Representative Howard left the meeting at 2:11 P.M.

Motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Dickerson and seconded by Dr. Morris to adjourn Executive Session with no action taken.

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

Absent: Gleaton, Howard

Motion passed

The Board adjourned Executive Session at 2:14 P.M.

10. ADJOURN

Motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Dickerson and seconded by Mr. Furgess to adjourn the Board of Directors



meeting.

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

Absent: Gleaton, Howard

Motion passed

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 P.M.

CENTRAL MIDLANDS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Adopted this November, 2019, Agenda Item _____

Prepared by:

Paige Jernigan

Paige Jernigan, Administrative & Customer Service Specialist

Approved by:

Andy Smith

Andy Smith, Board Secretary