



The COMET 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 [pjernigan@thecometsc.org](mailto:pjernigan@thecometsc.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 1, 2020 at 3:15 P.M.

Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority  
COVID-19 AD-HOC SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING  
Friday, May 8, 2020-12:00 P.M.  
3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC 29201 - Teleconference

**Members Present:**

Col. Roger (R) Leaks, Jr.\*  
Derrick Huggins\*  
Lill Mood\*

**Guests Present:**

Jackie Bowers, Operations Manager, Transdev\*  
Larry Gabaldon, Interim General Manager, Transdev\*  
Rosalind Lorick, Quality Control Manager, Transdev\*  
Betty Robinson, Safety Manager, Transdev\*  
Tanisha Woodson, Human Resources, Transdev\*

*\*Indicates participation by phone.*

**Absent:**

None

**The COMET Staff Present**

John Andoh, Executive Director/CEO  
Leroy DesChamps, Director of Administration & Operations/COO  
Alexis Feliciano, Transit Traffic Checker  
Eric Harris, Planning and Development Specialist  
Paige Jernigan, Administrative and Customer Service Specialist

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Col. Leaks called the meeting to order at 12:01 P.M.

**2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**Motion:**

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

Approved: Huggins, Leaks, Mood



Absent: None  
Motion passed.

### 3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM May 1, 2020

#### Motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Mood and seconded by Col. Leaks to approve the minutes from May 1, 2020.

Approved: Huggins, Leaks, Mood

Absent: None

Motion passed.

### 4. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

#### A. Update of the COMET Operations

Mr. Gabaldon gave an update of the current operating procedures. He explained the challenges and that the Dial A Ride Transit (DART) is adding more drivers to provide more service. Mr. Gabaldon updated the committee on the temporary barriers and the shower curtains on the cutaways. He added that they are continuing social distancing.

Ms. Feliciano referred to Page 7 in the packet and gave a comparison of ridership of March and April of 2020. She explained overall, ridership is down 49%. Col. Leaks asked where the information is coming from? Mr. Harris explained this data comes from GenFare.

Mr. Gabaldon explained that the bus cleanliness process changes. He mentioned that they have added a supervisor on the Service Line to focus on the cleanliness and stated that the random spot checks would continue. He added that they are continuing to deliver food to the senior citizens.

#### B. Service Enhancement Bonus for Customer-Facing Employees

Mr. Andoh explained that FTA has announced that the Columbia Urbanized Area will receive \$15,295,748 dollars from the CARES Act. This funding is available immediately, retroactive to January 20, 2020, to reimburse for operations related to the COVID-19 pandemic. He stressed that there is no local match for the use of this funding. As reported by the Federal Transit Administration, the CARES Act provides funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. Although the priority for the funding is operational expenses, FTA will generally consider all expenses under the Section 5307 and 5311 programs that are incurred on or after January 20, 2020 to be in response to economic or other conditions caused by COVID-19 and thus eligible under the CARES Act.

Mr. Andoh stated that in addition, CARES Act funds are available for operating expenses for all FTA Section 5307 and 5311 recipients, including those in large urban areas, and including administrative leave for transit workers. The COMET is still awaiting a split letter from CMCOG at this time, and it is anticipated that CMCOG as well Santee Wateree will be retaining some of this funding. Therefore,



The COMET is projecting that \$13,001,386 will be received of Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 funds.

Mr. Andoh summarized that The Ad-Hoc Committee requested that staff research payment to employees who are on furlough. Staff has talked with other transit agencies, researched best practices and researched what SCDEW is doing for those furloughed or unemployed. He stated that those on furlough can get the regular \$327 dollars per week, plus an additional \$600 dollars for a total of \$926 dollars. The lowest paid customer-facing contracted employee (Transport Care Service) at The COMET receives \$440 dollars a week, which is a deficit of \$486 dollars. The extra \$600 dollars is paid to those whom remain on unemployment for up to (39) thirty-nine weeks. He added that instead of paying for those whom are eligible for unemployment, staff believes that those full-time employees whose job duties could not be performed from home during the local and state public health executive orders, should be paid a \$100 per week bonus on top of their regular pay. This would be eligible to all The COMET, Transdev and Transport Care Services employees working from March 23, 2020 through May 29, 2020 for the first phase. This would be for a one-time payment paid during the next payroll period. Those that did not work the full period would have their bonus prorated. Those employees that worked at home would not be eligible for the bonus.

Mr. Andoh then reviewed the proposed budget on Page 11.

Discussion ensued regarding the deficit in pay for the working employees.

Mr. Huggins expressed concern regarding the disparity. Col. Leaks agreed. Mr. Andoh explained that most transit agencies are paying \$100 - \$200 dollars per week for ten (10) weeks. Ms. Mood questioned that the additional money could be extended if needed until things return to the new normal. Mr. Andoh stated that is what he is recommending.

Mr. Huggins suggested starting at the \$200 dollars per week and stated the drivers will talk and this could be seen in a negative light. Mr. Huggins suggested consulting some advisors to make sure this is handled properly. Discussion continued. Mr. Andoh stated that he would investigate providing a possible quarterly bonus check if the furlough is prolonged.

### C. COVID-19 Testing

Mr. DesChamps reviewed the document on Page 12 regarding the worksite COVID-19 Testing. Mr. DesChamps compared SC House Calls and Lovelace Family Medicine for the committee. He explained that Lovelace Family Medicine is the best choice.

Mr. DesChamps explained that Lovelace Family Medicine will work to schedule screening on Tuesday, Wednesday and/or Thursday from 8am-2pm. This allows the tests to be delivered to the lab the same day. The turnaround time for lab results can range from twenty-four (24) to forty-eight



(48) hours. He explained that the turnaround time usually average 24 hours. Lovelace Family Medicine staff will coordinate and deliver the tests to the contracted lab, PathGroup. The results will be sent to the employer with consent.

Discussion continued.

**Motion:**

A motion was made by Ms. Mood and seconded by Mr. Huggins to recommend a CARES Act plan budget to the Board of Directors for approval including funding for service recognition bonus for all employees not eligible to work from home at \$200 dollars per week and we contract with Lovelace Family Practice.

**Approved:** Huggins, Leaks, Mood

**Absent:** None

**Motion passed.**

**D. Reopening The COMET after COVID-19**

Mr. Andoh referred to the tier step plan. It was confirmed that as ridership increases, each phase would be implemented. Mr. Andoh explained that starting this week, businesses are starting to reopen, and transit ridership is slowly growing. As a result, staff is starting to prepare and implement plans to reopen in phases. The proposed phases are defined below:

- Phase 1 - All three-digit routes resume 30 minutes service as operated on weekdays and resume Saturday Service.
- Phase 2 - Add Express routes.
- Phase 3 - Revert to weekday service and add all remaining service. Suspend food delivery if it impacts operations.

Mr. Gabaldon explained the changes that are being made as ridership increases. He reminded the committee of the reintroduction of the furloughed staff and the retraining that is necessary before those employees are put back into service. Mr. Andoh stated that he and Transdev will monitor ridership and determine the best course of action.

Col. Leaks stated his appreciation to the committee for all their commitment. Mr. Huggins agreed.

Ms. Bowers stated that on behalf of the drivers, she thanked the committee for their hard work and especially the service recognition bonus.

**5. ADJOURN**



Motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Mood and seconded by Mr. Huggins to adjourn the meeting.

Approved: Huggins, Leaks, Mood

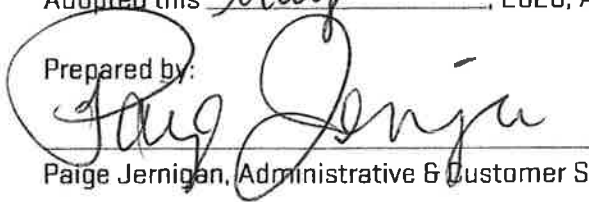
Absent: None

The meeting adjourned at 1:02 P.M.

CENTRAL MIDLANDS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Adopted this May, 2020, Agenda Item \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by:



Paige Jernigan, Administrative & Customer Service Specialist

Approved by:



Andy Smith, Secretary

