



The COMET Special 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 pjernigan@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, November 13, 2020 at 3:15 PM.

Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority
Special Board Meeting
Wednesday, November 18, 2020 - 12:00 PM
3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC 29201 - Conference Room A

Members Present:

Ron Anderson*
Joyce Dickerson*
John Furgess*
Michael Green*
Derrick Huggins
Skip Jenkins*
Al Koon*
Christopher Lawson
Lill Mood
Dr. Robert Morris*
Geraldene Robinson*
Andy Smith
Allison Terracio*
William "B.J." Unthank
Barry Walker

Guests Present:

Pam Baker, Attorney Burr & Forman Law Firm
Frannie Heizer, Attorney Burr & Forman Law Firm*
Joe Sanchez, Asst, General Manager/Operations Manager

*indicates participation by
phone

Members Absent:

Stephen Cain
Carolyn Gleaton
Representative Leon Howard



Debbie Summers

**indicates participation by
phone*

The COMET Staff Present:

John Andoh, Executive Director/CEO

LeRoy DesChamps, Director of Administration Operations/COO

Tanisha Gibbons, Customer Experience & Contract Compliance Manager

Eric Harris, Planning & Development Specialist

Paige Jernigan, Administrative & Customer Service Specialist

1. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Mr. Huggins called the meeting to order at 12:01 P.M. A quorum was present at the opening of the meeting.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion:

A motion was made by Dr. Morris and seconded by Mr. Smith to adopt the agenda.

Yay: Anderson*, Dickerson*, Huggins*, Lawson*, Mood*, Morris*, Smith*, Terracio*

Nay: None

Absent: Furgess, Gleaton, Howard

Motion passed.

3. MIDLANDS TRANSIT RIDERS ASSOCIATION UPDATE

No representation

4. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

A. INDIVIDUALS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD MUST SIGN UP PRIOR TO THE CALL TO ORDER.

B. COMMENT TIME LIMIT - TWO (2) MINUTES PER PERSON.

None

5. 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 SEPTEMBER 29, 2020 SPECIAL BOARD MINUTES

B. FINANCE COMMITTEE: AWARD PROPANE CONTRACT TO PALMETTO PROPANE DUE TO FAILURE OF AMERIGAS TO MEET CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

C. FINANCE COMMITTEE: REQUEST TO INCREASE SUBSIDY ON LYFT AND UBER FOR THE COMET ON THE GO!



D. APPROVAL OF THE INVOICE PAYMENT SELECTION LISTING ENDING
NOVEMBER 30, 2020

Motion:

A motion was made by Mr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Smith to approve the Consent Calendar.

Yay: Anderson*, Dickerson*, Huggins*, Lawson*, Mood*, Morris*, Smith*, Terracio*

Nay: None

Absent: Furgess, Gleaton, Howard

Motion passed.

6. OTHER DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

A. Update of Security at Comet Central

Mr. Andoh explained that The COMET, since 2015 has used its prime contractor to provide security services to The COMET facilities. Prior to that, The COMET directly contracted for those services. The previous transit operations and maintenance contractor, Transdev, awarded a subcontract relationship to New Age Security who successfully performed security guard services. In July 2020, while this procurement was pending, the Executive Director/CEO entered an interim contract with New Age Security to provide security guard services and The COMET's Contract Compliance and Customer Experience Manager responsible for oversight of their performance.

Mr. Andoh clarified that The COMET has a comprehensive security program to ensure the protection of The COMET's assets, passengers, employees, and contractors. As part of this program, which The COMET expends 1% of its FTA funds to cover, as required by the FTA.

Mr. Andoh explained the current program:

- Contract for security guards at COMET Central, during the operating hours of COMET Central, using armed guards without citation or arresting powers.
- Contract with City of Columbia to provide off-duty police officers to supplement the security guard at COMET Central from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week and another officer to ride The COMET buses and patrol bus stops within the City of Columbia from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week.
- Contract with Richland County Sheriff to provide off duty deputies to ride The COMET buses and patrol bus stops in unincorporated Richland County from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- Contract with City of Cayce Police to provide off duty police officers to ride routes in Cayce, West Columbia and Springdale, four days a



week for three hours.

- Contract with City Center Partnership to provide yellow shirt ambassador services at COMET Central seven days a week, which includes security, maintenance, and customer service.

He further informed that on November 9, 2020, He, Mr. DesChamps and Ms. Gibbons met with City of Columbia, City Center Partnership and the proposed security contractor to discuss armed vs. non-armed security guards at COMET Central. As result of the meeting, while there is Columbia Police there that is armed, the criminal activity that occurs at COMET Central at times warrants the need to have officers that have some form of the ability to restrain individuals that are acting violently towards themselves or others. While criminal activity has declined, it has declined because of having Columbia Police and the armed guard present. The Yellow Shirt Ambassador is there for additional support and is unarmed and provides the necessary feedback to the Columbia Police or armed guard. Each of the participants agreed in the meeting to better coordinate with each other to ensure that there is a good community approach at COMET Central so that excessive force is not used unless warranted. He continued to say that to date, while there has been the use of handcuffs, tasers and pepper spray, there has not been a use of a gun or baton on any of the criminal activity that has occurred at COMET Central.

Ms. Mood mentioned that she was in approval of non-lethal weapons. Mr. Huggins suggested a further study with experts. Discussion ensued regarding the issue.

Mr. Huggins asked that the Service Committee look further into the security program. Discussion continued regarding the contract.

Representative Howard joined the meeting at 12:18 P.M.

7. MOTION PERIODS (NO ACTION WOULD BE TAKEN ON THE MOTIONS REQUESTED) FROM BOARD MEMBERS.

None

Mr. Furgess joined the meeting at 12:28 P.M.

8. PROGRESS REPORTS - INFORMATIONAL ONLY - 2 MINUTES PER PRESENTER

A. CHAIR REPORT

Mr. Huggins thanked the Board for the support as he stepped in as the Chair. Dr. Morris commended Mr. Huggins and he welcomed Mr. Lawson to the Board. Mr. Green suggested the Board recognize Col. Leaks for his participation on the Board. The Staff and Chair confirmed that the recognition for Col. Leaks is under way.

B. COMMITTEE CHAIRS UPDATE

I. COVID-19 AD-HOC COMMITTEE UPDATES



Mr. DesChamps gave a report regarding the COVID testing and the protocols being taken to keep staff and passenger safe. He also informed that testing would continue into the 2021 year, January, February, and March. Ms. Mood verified the protocol for if a driver tests positive. She confirmed that no employee can return to work without a negative test result. She also mentioned the importance of transparency when informing the public.

II. INTERMODAL COMMITTEE UPDATES

Mr. Andoh reported that the Committee met in late October to discuss the future steps to an intermodal facility. He stated that they are looking at rail, inner city bus, site locations. He added that they are working closely with Amtrak.

III. SERVICE COMMITTEE UPDATES

Ms. Mood reported that at the last Service Committee meeting, they were informed by Mr. Robert Smith that RATP Dev had no appropriate representation and requested the meeting be deferred to a later date which would be rescheduled by the Staff.

IV. FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATES

Mr. Smith reported that the Committee was supposed to meet on November 11, however this date fell on Veterans Day and was rescheduled to November 13, 2020. He also informed that they discussed the monthly finances and the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise.

Mr. Smith and Ms. Dickerson commended Dr. Prince for the creation of her summary report. He further indicated that they also discussed the increase of the subsidy for Uber and Lyft due to the reduction in routes.

C. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO UPDATE

Mr. Andoh referred to Page 93 explaining the activities for the month. He revealed on Page 98 - 102, the Board of Directors Governance Policy that has been edited under past Board Chair, Col. Leaks. Mr. Huggins informed that he would reach out to each Board member for input regarding this document to streamline our processes.

I. COMMUNITY OUTREACH REPORT

Mr. Andoh referred the Committee to Page 103 of the packet for the outreach report.

II. REVIEW OF BOARD MOTIONS FROM JAN 2017 TO PRESENT

Mr. Andoh stated that the current motions are outlined on Page 105-109.

Mr. Andoh did confirm that the policy of all agendas will be produced by the Executive Director and the respective Chair of each Committee.

3. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ms. Dickerson and seconded by Mr. Furgess to adjourn the meeting.

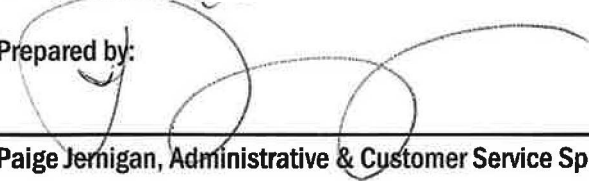


The meeting adjourned at 12:43 P.M.

CENTRAL MIDLANDS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Adopted this 

Prepared by:


Paige Jernigan, Administrative & Customer Service Specialist

 _____, 2020

Approved

by:



Allison Terracio, Secretary