

RICHLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

SOUTH CAROLINA

JAIL AD HOC COMMITTEE

February 2, 2016
9:00 AM
4th Floor Conference Room

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda was sent to radio and TV stations, newspapers, persons requesting notification, and was posted on the bulletin board located in the lobby of the County Administration Building

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Rose called the meeting to order at approximately 9:01 AM

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Mr. Jackson, to adopt the agenda as published. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Mr. Pearce moved, seconded by Mr. Livingston, to reconsider the agenda. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Mr. Pearce moved, seconded by Mr. Livingston, to add the Election of the Chair to the agenda.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIR

Mr. Pearce moved, seconded by Mr. Livingston, to elect Mr. Rose as Chair. The vote in favor was unanimous.

ALVIN S. GLENN DROP OFF UPDATE

Mr. Bronson stated the City of Columbia to evaluate the transportation of released individuals from the Detention Center. Presently the released detainees are dropped off at 1225 Laurel Street Transit Station for the following reasons: (1) Not all individuals released have personal transportation and are not able to arrange transportation; (2) Infrastructure is not in place for individuals to safely walk from the Detention Center to another location; and (3) The City Bus Station is a central location from which individuals may access COMET bus services, taxi cabs or walk to their desired final location.

One of the alternatives that has been discussed is utilizing taxi cabs to transport these individuals from the Detention Center. A pre-bid meeting was held with the taxi cab companies to evaluate how they viewed the procedure. It was generally well received, but one of the concerns for both City and County staff was the amount of liability coverage the taxi cab drivers carry. They are only required to carry the State minimum



Council Members Present

Seth Rose, Chair
District Five

Paul Livingston
District Four

Greg Pearce
District Six

Kelvin E. Washington, Sr.
District Ten

Norman Jackson
District Eleven

Others Present:

Torrey Rush

Tony McDonald

Cheryl Patrick

Brandon Madden

Warren Harley

Kevin Bronson

Ronaldo Myers

Kathy Harrell

Brittney Hoyle

Jennifer Wladischkin

Elizabeth McLean

Michelle Onley

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of \$25,000. The County, as well as the City, typically requires a minimum of \$1 million in liability coverage.

Mr. Livingston requested a legal opinion as to why the County would be liable once the individual is released.

Mr. Rose stated there are approximately 112 individuals per month that are transported to the transit station. He does not want to see an increase in usage because the taxi service will be available.

Mr. Jackson inquired about the extended bus service to the Detention Center.

Mr. Myers stated the bus service runs approximately 3 times a day out to the Detention Center and the routes are not convenient.

Mr. Pearce inquired if the 3 current bus routes could assist with the number of transports the Detention Center is currently making.

Ms. Patrick stated she spoke with Lexington and Charleston Counties. Lexington County releases the detainee without requiring they have transportation. Charleston County provides individuals bus tokens.

Mr. Rose stated the benefit of providing a bus token is that would probably alleviate the problem of who really needs transportation. The downside is a concern by the City of the image of the bus system.

Ms. Harrell stated one of the issues with releasing the individual with a bus voucher and having them wait on the bus is the chance of the individual walking off.

Mr. Jackson stated when the detention center was built the community requested to extend the bus service to prevent the released individuals from walking through their communities.

In order to provide taxi service it would cost the County approximately \$33,600 per month.

Mr. Bronson stated the impetus for City and County staff was a letter from the City of Columbia dated June 24, 2014. County staff has been meeting with City staff since receipt of the letter. The City has been advocating for the taxi service versus the current method of dropping the former detainees at the transit center.

Staff has spoken with the taxi services and gave them general parameters, but this has not been put out to bid. Therefore, there are no firm commitments at this time.

There are on average per month 173 individuals brought to the detention center from the City of Columbia. All other individuals are from the other surrounding entities.

Mr. Pearce stated his prediction is the individuals receiving these taxi rides will be taken downtown, likely to the transit station, which is not going to solve the problem.

Mr. Pearce stated the root of the problem is Transitions Homeless Center, Christ Central Ministry, Oliver Gospel Mission and Washington Street United Methodist, which are feeding and service locations for the homeless population are within a 2 block radius of the transit center. In addition, the walk-in medical clinic for the homeless is the Baptist Medical Center on Sumter Street. The detention center is just the symptom of the underlying problem of what to do about services being provided for people in need.

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Mr. Rose requested another committee meeting in approximately a week. Prior to the meeting, staff is to research:

- The liability of providing taxi service
- Potential funding sources
- Screening process to limit the service to individuals with legitimate transportation needs
- Evidence to support the problem outlined in the letter from the City

Ms. McLean stated the taxi service is not insured to the level the County would want to be.

Each transportation option comes with a certain amount of liability on the County's part.

A condition of a Richland County detainee's bond is they must have transportation or get on the van to be transported to the transit center.

Mr. Livingston suggested the County support the City's recommendation to transport their former detainees via a taxi service as long as they pay for the service.

Mr. Pearce stated there is a proposal between Transitions and Columbia Area Mental Health Center to fund a new program at the detention center, which will provide a place for the mentally ill to go upon their release from the detention center. He suggested bringing the proposal to the committee prior it being taken up during the budget.

Ms. Hoyle stated from a liability standpoint there are several other concerns: (1) County staff placing individuals in the cabs; and (2) Transporting multiple individuals to the same locations. It would be Risk Management's suggestion to have a City employee make decisions regarding their former detainees.

Mr. Rose requested Risk Management's concerns be included to the list of items to research prior to the next committee meeting.

Mr. Myers requested that Carter Goble Lee's study be included on the next committee agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:44 AM

The Minutes were transcribed by Michelle M. Onley, Deputy Clerk of Council