



## TOPEKA METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY

### Special Board of Directors Meeting

March 24, 2020

4:00 pm

820 SE Quincy St. – Topeka, KS

### COVID-19 Update

1. Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act and Emergency FMLA Expansion Act (H.R. 6201)
  
2. Timeline of events and communication:
  - 3/5/20 Management attended an APTA webinar discussing COVID-10 and having a contagious response plan.
  - 3/6/20 Management participated in an FTA phone conference about COVID-19.
  - 3/9/20 Management began developing a COVID-19 communications plan.
  - 3/11/20 A statement regarding COVID-19 was placed on the website and DoubleMap.
  - 3/11/20 The union and management met to discuss COVID-19.
  - 3/12/20 Management received a copy of the memo from ATU International President John Costa regarding prevention and union recommendations. **(see attached memo)**
  - 3/13/20 A letter addressing COVID-19 from Robert Nugent and Tom Baumgartner was disseminated to employees, agencies, passengers, & the general public. Management created a significant list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) which was distributed to all employees and our contractor CCT. An agency call tree was provided to all key managers and supervisors. Mr. Nugent also addressed managers regarding limiting in-person meetings and social distancing. **(see attached documents)**
  - 3/16/20 The union and management met to discuss COVID-19.
  - 3/17/20 Mr. Nugent sent a letter to the union responding to and addressing Costa's memo and recommendations. **(see attached letter)**
  - 3/17/20 Kansas schools were closed for the remainder of the school year.
  - 3/17/20 Suspended special routes and deviations due to reduced demand.
  - 3/18/20 The union and management met to discuss COVID-19. The union concerns included use of leave time, allowing operators to wear face masks, no Saturday bus cleaners, limit passengers to 10.
  - 3/18/20 ATU International President John Costa held a phone conference with all ATU presidents.
  - 3/19/20 Management posted a flier permitting voluntary wearing of face masks while on duty.
  - 3/20/20 The union and management met to discuss COVID-19. The union concerns included use of leave time, no Saturday bus cleaners, free fares and rear door entry.
  - 3/20/20 Management made an emergency supply request for hand sanitizer to the Shawnee County Health Department Emergency Preparedness division. The request was denied on 3/22/20.
  - 3/21/20 Three bus cleaners began working a 7:00-11:00 pm Saturday shift. The cleaners are provided respirator masks to wear when sanitizing the buses.
  - 3/21/20 The union sent a letter of concern to Mayor De La Isla. Management was not provided a copy of the letter. **(see attached letter as posted on the union bulletin board)**
  - 3/22/20 Management met with the Mayor, the Shawnee County Health Agency, and emergency management to discuss COVID-19 and critical services.
  - 3/23/20 The union and management met to discuss COVID-19.
  - 3/24/20 Management received a letter from the union stating they were going to the media. **(see attached letter)**

3. Items still being addressed:

Social Distancing

**Fare collection** – suspending fares would result in an obvious loss in revenue (especially if this included the Lift service), could increase ridership, and promote idle riding. However, suspending fare collection would result in reduced passenger interaction at the farebox and operators would not have to touch cash and cards. The operator would still need to push a fare button to count the passenger.

**Rear door boarding** – this would reduce passenger interaction with the operator. However, passengers needing to use the kneeler or ramp would still have to board and alight through the front door. The operator will need to pay special attention to the rear door to ensure they are clear before closing it and to count passengers. Without the kneeler, the rear entry step is higher.

**Passengers** – operators will ask passenger to sit apart. Although difficult, the “no idle riding” rule will be strictly enforced. Fixed route trippers may be added to particular routes to accommodate high ridership on specific trips. Lift trips will be spread out to additional buses and CCT. Lift call-takers will screen passengers by asking permitted COVID-19 questions.

**Quincy Street Station lobby** – the lobby will only be open to passengers who are using the TVM, using the restrooms, or purchasing media at the sales window. Passengers will not be able to congregate, and lobby capacity will be limited to less than 10 individuals at one time. Signage is needed.

**Quincy Street Station break room** – effective immediately, the chairs and tables will be removed from the break room thus reducing the amount of touchable surfaces. Operators are to go inside the break room only to use the facilities. They are not to stand and congregate in the room. Employees who use the employee phones must wipe down the phone following usage.

**Administration break room** – operators must use their own pen when signing in at report time. Once the operator has signed in and read the daily boards and announcements, they must exit the room and report to their vehicle. Chairs will be removed from the break room with the exception of two for show-up operators who must maintain a 6-foot distance. The length of show-up (2-hour minimum) will vary in order to accommodate service coverage yet maintain social distancing when possible. Operators should not be in the break room more than 10 minutes, with the exception of the show-up operators. Only one operator is permitted in the computer room at a time; the second computer will be blocked off. Employees who use the employee phone must wipe down the phone following usage.

**Other** – employees must conduct meetings via phone or web when possible. In-person meetings shall be limited to fewer than 10 individuals. Employees must wash their hands or use sanitizer after using the timeclock. Operators must wipe down their operator compartment each time they are at QSS. Supervisor on-board observations and NTD ridership surveys will be suspended until further notice. Only one employee is permitted in the workout room at a time. Employees who use the workout room must wipe down the equipment following usage.

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

To date, we have provided hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, tissues, disposable gloves, respirator masks (cleaners only), standing hand sanitizer stations in all facilities, and have handwashing stations (restrooms & kitchenettes) in all facilities. Supplies are in high demand and difficult to acquire. If supplies cannot be obtained to keep employees safe, service cannot be provided.