

To: Board of Directors

Date: 02/08/2023

From: Bill Churchill
General Manager

SUBJECT: Transit Operator Recruitment Update

Background:

In January 2022, the Board of Directors approved an increase to the starting wage for newly hired Transit Operators to maximize County Connection's ability to recruit operators, following the COVID-19 pandemic. This increase moved the starting wage for new Operators from \$23.24 per hour to \$26.15 per hour, or to the third step of a five-step pay scale within the current Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In addition, any Operator already employed under the first or second step of the pay scale was elevated to the third step.

Ongoing Labor Shortages

County Connection alongside many other transit agencies continue to face the challenges of labor uncertainties. Since the approval of an increase to the starting wage in early 2022, County Connection has received roughly 100 applications for the Transit Operator position and recruited 23 new Operators. This has represented a considerable improvement as normal attrition throughout the agency has occurred. However, while County Connection has been able to reduce its Operator shortfall, we are still not fully staffed and ongoing recruitment is vital to protecting current service levels and responding to any new service demands.

In late December 2022, County Connection reached an agreement with the ATU, extending their contract through January 2026. With the success of this strategy and to remain competitive within the current labor market, at this time, County Connection proposes maintaining the increase of the starting wage for all new Operators. The terms of the new agreement with the ATU include a five percent (5%) increase in year one, which increased the third step of the pay scale from \$26.93* per hour to \$28.28 per hour. County Connection, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to discontinue this temporary increase.

Financial Implications:

*\$26.93 – 3% increase effective 2/1/2022 per ATU MOU

Inclusive of the terms of the agreement in year one (5%) with the ATU, there is a projected incremental increase of approximately \$7,600 per new hire annually. This increase encompasses wages and benefits and is well within the scope of the existing budget.

Recommendation:

The General Manager and A&F Committee recommend maintaining the increase in the starting wage for incoming Operators to meet the current recruitment needs of the Authority. The A&F Committee also recommends that the General Manager, at his discretion, have the ability to adjust the starting wage for incoming Operators from Step A up to Step C based on an evaluation of staffing needs and state of the economy.

Action Requested:

For information only.