

**CONNECT TRANSIT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PROCEEDINGS OF JUNE 30, 2015**

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held at Uptown Station, 4th Floor, Room 409, Normal, IL on June 30, 2015 at 4:30 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Bill Wilson, Chairman
 Mike McCurdy, Vice-Chairman
 John Bowman, Secretary
 John Thomas
 Ryan Whitehouse

TRUSTEES ABSENT: Judy Buchanan

CITY MANAGERS:

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Johnson, General Manager
 Melissa Chrisman, Marketing and Business Development Manager
 Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director
 Julie Phillips, Executive Assistant - Labor Relations

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 4:31 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Town of Normal City Manager, Mark Peterson arrived at 4:31 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Bill Wilson stated that the Board of Trustees would allow up to five (5) persons to speak for three (3) minutes each. Four (4) public comment cards were received. Each person would be allowed to speak for three (3) minutes.

Tom Strickler addressed the Board. He is a former Bloomington Public Transit System employee. He left prior to rebranding. He had concerns for the Connect Transit employees. There were a lot of unhappy people. He stated that there have been numerous articles in the Pantagraph concerning Connect Transit and he believed things were not getting better, but getting worse. As a taxpayer, he questioned the amount of money that Connect Transit spends on legal fees and arbitrations. Mr. Strickler stated that he was unhappy that Ms. Trish Tilton was laid off. He stated that if he could, he would employ her anywhere at any time. He noted that it has been eight (8) years since he left the transit system, since that time the system has doubled. He questioned the amount of money spent, and the formula for ridership numbers.

Bill Tolone addressed the Board. He was a retired Illinois State University faculty member. He questioned if Connect Transit had conducted an employee satisfaction survey and if so, when the last survey was completed.

James Riordan addressed the Board. He stated that he has known Trish Tilton for twelve (12) years, since she started working for Connect Transit. He stated that he was unhappy that Ms. Tilton was laid off and upset that she was notified of her layoff while she was on vacation.

Charles Smith, Chairperson for the Citizens to Ensure Fair Transit (CEFT) addressed the Board. He stated that CEFT strives to remain neutral. He noted that the State of Illinois is approaching a government shutdown. He stated that some Connect Transit employees had been let go and he questioned the reasons for their termination. He believed that good bus operators had been let go. He stated that CEFT would be recruiting members from former Connect Transit staff. Mr. Smith stated that the system could not afford to be disorganized or not unified.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting of May 26, 2015 and Board of Trustees Advocacy Committee Meeting of May 26, 2015
2. Disbursements for Month of June, 2015
3. Financial Report for Month of May, 2015
4. Capital and Self Insurance Reserve Fund Balances for month of May, 2015
5. Monthly Statistical Report for month of May, 2015

Motion by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy, Seconded by Secretary John Bowman that the Consent Agenda be approved.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Andrew Johnson, General Manager requested that item F7, Approval of a Revised Procurement Policy be discussed first, due to a scheduling conflict. Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director had another commitment and would need to leave the meeting early. Chairman Bill Wilson authorized moving the Revised Procurement Policy to be the first item for discussion.

Approval of a Revised Procurement Policy

Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director stated that there were minor changes to the Procurement policy. Most of the changes involved changing the minimum purchasing thresholds. These changes would allow for expedient purchasing in emergency situations. Andrew Johnson, General Manager noted that the requested threshold increases are below the federal purchasing levels.

(2015 Revised Procurement Policy is on file in in the Procurement Department).

Motion by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy, Seconded by Trustee John Thomas that the revised Procurement Policy be approved.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Approval of the Illinois Farm Bureau Family of Companies Universal Access Agreement

Andrew Johnson, General Manager introduced this item. He reminded the Board that Melissa Chrisman, Marketing and Business Development Manager started a pilot program at the Illinois Farm Bureau Family of Companies. The Illinois Farm Bureau Family of Companies believes that is a worthwhile program and is now prepared to accept a more formal Universal Access Agreement. This Universal Access Agreement allows for the full fare payment of \$1.00 for every ride.

Secretary John Bowman questioned if the \$1.00 per ride included transfers. Mr. Johnson responded that with all Universal Access Agreements, the agreement with the Illinois Farm Bureau of Families does not recognize transfers. This is an issue that will be cleared up when the new fare box system is put into place.

Motion by Trustee John Thomas, Seconded by Secretary John Bowman that the Illinois Farm Bureau Family of Companies Universal Access Agreement be approved.

AYE: Chairman Bill Wilson, Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy, Secretary John Bowman and Trustee John Thomas.

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Trustee Ryan Whitehouse

Motion carried.

Approval of the Heartland Community College Universal Access Agreement

General Manager Andrew Johnson introduced this item. He stated that Connect Transit has had a long standing Universal Access Agreement with Heartland Community College. This is the annual renewal. With this renewal, there is an increase of 8.3% over last year

Motion by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy, Seconded by Trustee John Thomas that the Heartland Community College Universal Access Agreement be approved.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Approval of the Lincoln College Universal Access Agreement

Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated that the Lincoln College Normal Universal Access agreement is at renewal. There is a 27% increase over last year reimbursement. Staff has been working with the Lincoln College Normal staff to bring the terms of the agreement more in line.

Motion by Secretary John Bowman, Seconded by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy that the Lincoln College Normal Universal Access agreement be approved.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

City of Bloomington City Manager arrived at 4:50 p.m.

Approval of the Radio Advertising Agreement with Great Plains Media

Andrew Johnson, General Manager introduced this item. Connect Transit has had an agreement with Great Plains Media for radio advertising. This renewal agreement is for less than previous years in order to spread remaining marketing dollars into other areas. Melissa Chrisman, Marketing and Business Development Manager would be using some of the monies to advertise on other radio stations.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy stated that he works for WGLT. He would not advocate for additional marketing dollars for WGLT but questioned why half of the marketing budget was being given to one radio station. He believed that Connect Transit should spread its marketing dollars among a variety of media outlets in order to reach the various audiences and demographic groups within the community. He suggested that this item be tabled in order for staff to research opportunities for advertising with other radio stations and media outlets.

Trustee Ryan Whitehouse echoes Vice Chairman McCurdy and suggested that staff research the demographic groups of Connect Transit to determine which media outlets would best target those groups.

Melissa Chrisman, Marketing and Business Development Manager stated that the Comprehensive Operational Analysis project would glean the demographic groups that make up Connect Transit ridership. Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated that the Great Plains Media Agreement could be extended for one (1) month until the suggested research could be completed.

Motion by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy, Seconded by Trustee John Thomas that Radio Advertising Agreement with Great Plains Media be tabled until the July Board meeting.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Approval of an Economic Impact Study

Andrew Johnson, General Manager introduced this item. He reminded the Board that there had been previous discussion regarding the need to fully understand the economic impact of public transportation within the community. Staff requested proposals for an Economic Impact Study. Three (3) proposals were received, one (1) was non-competitive, and two (2) were competitive. The proposals were analyzed by staff and it was determined that HDR, Inc. was the most cost effective.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy questioned if there would be any overlap between the Comprehensive Operational Analysis and the Economic Impact Study. Andrew Johnson, General Manager responded that there would not be any redundant studies.

Bloomington City Manager David Hales questioned if the study was critical considering budgetary concerns. He questioned if Illinois State University could perform a similar study at a lower cost. Mr. Johnson responded that Connect Transit staff had explored that option; however a more generic result would be expected from a lower cost study. He stated that a critical key to Connect Transit future is securing stable funding. The State of Illinois and Federal Government are not stable funding sources. He stated that in addition, Connect Transit does not have stable local operational support. It is imperative that Connect Transit is able to convey the value of the system to the local community in the event of public transportation funding cuts. The proposed Economic Impact Study would be tailored to the Bloomington/Normal community.

Town of Normal City Manager, Mark Peterson stated that it is a foregone conclusion that public transit has a positive impact on the Bloomington/Normal community. He noted that many communities have conducted economic impact studies, as well as analyses performed at the State and Federal levels. He believed that they all have somewhat consistent results. There may be small differences depending on locale, but most glean the same result that for every dollar invested in public transportation, there are multiple dollars of economic impact. Mr. Peterson questioned if Connect Transit could use the information from those previous studies, and from the results of the ongoing Comprehensive Operational Analysis. He questioned if Connect Transit would be better served by avoiding the cost of conducting an economic impact study and using those dollars elsewhere.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy questioned what would be learned from the economic impact study that is specific to the Bloomington/Normal community. Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director responded that the study would determine things such the impact of the system how important public transportation is in the community for transporting people to/from their jobs and to school, shop, etc. The study would analyze all of the economic impacts of public transportation within the community.

Trustee John Thomas stated that he viewed this study as a way to make a case for stable funding sources and to show to the non-riding community how important public transportation is to the community as a whole.

Secretary John Bowman questioned whether any prior economic impact studies had been conducted by Connect Transit and if it was critical to conduct one at the present time, or if such a study might better be performed after the results of the Comprehensive Operational Analysis had been received. Andrew Johnson, General Manager responded that no previous studies had been conducted and it was difficult to determine if such a study would prove to be beneficial now or later. Staff was looking to the Board for guidance on this issue.

Motion by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy, Seconded by Trustee John Thomas that a cost plus fixed fee contract in an amount not to exceed \$54,412.52 be awarded to HDR, Inc. for Economic Impact Study and the General Manager be authorized to execute the necessary documents.

AYE: Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy and Trustee John Thomas

NAY: Chairman Bill Wilson, Secretary John Bowman and Trustee Ryan Whitehouse

Motion failed.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy questioned the next steps. Andrew Johnson, General Manager responded that it was now a dead issue. Staff will notify those who submitted proposals that the project is cancelled. Staff would seek input from the Board in the future concerning any modified economic impact studies.

Approval of a Revised Substance Abuse Policy

Andrew Johnson, General Manager introduced this item. It is a Federal requirement that public transit agencies have a substance abuse policy in place. From time to time it is necessary to update the policy. He requested that Dave White, Safety and Training Director review the changes to the policy.

Dave White, Safety and Training Director addressed the Board. He stated that the changes were minimal. The bulk of the policy changes address synthetic drugs and synthetic drug use. Additional changes address illegal and/or unauthorized use of prescription drugs. There is guidance within the policy regarding legal use of prescription drugs and any known or unknown side effects of their use.

Mr. White informed the Board that other revisions include the requirement of employees to notify management of any driving under the influence and/or criminal conviction. There were no changes to the agencies testing procedures. Testing would be required when there is reasonable suspicion, post-accident and random.

Motion by Trustee John Thomas, Seconded by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy that the revised Substance Abuse Policy be approved.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated that the State of Illinois is no longer looking at cutting operating assistance funding for public transportation in its current budget, however, all Capital Project Funds have been frozen. Those funds are in limbo. Connect Transit does not have any current Capital Projects underway. This freeze will not affect the first batch of new buses being built as part of Connect Transit ongoing Bus Procurement project as Federal funds are being used to purchase the first few buses which are expected to be delivered in early August. Staff will continue to keep the Board informed of the State budget.

Mr. Johnson informed the Board that the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) would be visiting Connect Transit on July 13 and 14, 2015 for the Triennial Review. Staff has been preparing for the visit since November, 2014 and expects a good review. It is possible that the FTA examiner may wish to speak with one of the Board members.

Mr. Johnson introduced a new member of the Connect Transit family, Gabe Goldsmith, Public Outreach Coordinator. He will be handling public outreach and social media.

Mr. Johnson stated that he, Trustee Judy Buchanan, Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director and Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director had the opportunity to attend a seminar in Grand Rapids, Michigan that was provided by Center for Transportation Excellence. The Center for Transportation Excellence is an organization that is centered on grass roots initiatives. The seminar was very informative.

TRUSTEE'S COMMENTS

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy stated that as President of the Bike BloNo organization, he had the opportunity to meet with and talk to Congressman Rodney Davis. Discussion centered on the Highway Trust Fund, and Congressman Davis indicated that a long term funding bill would be presented.

Chairman Bill Wilson stated that Trustee Judy Buchanan was unable to attend this evening had forwarded to him her notes from the Center for Transportation Excellence seminar in Grand Rapids, MI. She appreciated the opportunity to attend. She had very positive comments regarding the sessions that were held at the seminar.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy, Seconded by Secretary John Bowman to adjourn.

Time: 5:39 p.m.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

John Bowman, Secretary