

**CONNECT TRANSIT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PROCEEDINGS OF JULY 22, 2014**

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held at the Connect Transit Board Room #135, 351 Wylie Drive, Normal, Illinois 61761 on July 22, 2014 at 4:30 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Bill Wilson, Chairman
Mike McCurdy, Vice-Chairman
Judy Buchanan
Felicia Shaw
John Thomas
Ryan Whitehouse

TRUSTEES ABSENT: John Bowman, Secretary

CITY MANAGERS: Mark Peterson, Town of Normal Manager

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Johnson, General Manager
Melissa Chrisman, Business Development Manager
Jenifer Clark, Human Resources Director
Roy Rickert, Transit Operations Director
Julie Phillips, Executive Assistant - Labor Relations

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 4:30 p.m. Roll call was taken.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Marilyn Evans, 710 W. Orlando, Normal, IL., 61761, addressed the Board. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. She stated that she belonged to a group called "Citizens to Ensure Fair Transit", (CEFT). She had belonged to the group for a year and a half. During her time with the group she has learned a lot about the transit system. Many of the CEFT members had participated in the recent photo shoots conducted by Connect Transit in preparation for the new website and for other marketing materials. The group was very happy that the Connect Transit Board and staff were including the group and encouraged Connect Transit to continue to keep the public informed.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting of June 24, 2014 and Executive Session of May 27, 2014.
2. Disbursements for Month of July, 2014
3. Monthly Statistical Report for month of June, 2014

Motion by Trustee Judy Buchanan, seconded by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy that the Consent Agenda items be approved as presented.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

Motion by Trustee Judy Buchanan, seconded by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy to adjourn to Executive Session.

Ex Officio Trustee Mark Peterson stated for the record that the purpose of the Executive Session was to discuss Personnel matters.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Time: 4:35 p.m.

Motion by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy, seconded by Trustee Judy Buchanan to return to Regular Session.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Time: 5:27 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

Trustee Ryan Whitehouse left the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Proposed Amendment to FY 2015 Operating Budget

General Manager Andrew Johnson introduced this item. The purpose of the budget amendment was to provide funding for two new positions, a Chief Operating Officer (C.O.O.) and a Procurement Specialist. The Procurement Specialist would assist with the high volume and technically complex procurement process as well as ensure compliance with federal and state mandated regulations and requirements.

There was not currently a succession planning procedure in place. The C.O.O. would be the second in command. The C.O.O. would provide additional executive leadership as Connect Transit advances its mission and vision.

These two new positions add a total of \$171,000 to the budget. 65% of the additional money for salaries would be covered by State funding and the remaining balance would be covered by the local building lease, advertising revenues if necessary and finally savings realized by the Insurance savings rate relief. The total addition to the budget represents .5% of the total operating budget.

Chairman Bill Wilson cautioned that the advertising revenues have already been earmarked for other purposes. Mr. Johnson agreed and stated that there were several sources of funding to cover the remaining salaries not covered by State funding.

Motion by Trustee Judy Buchanan, seconded by Trustee Felicia Shaw that the Budget Amendment be approved.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Code of Conduct

Mr. Johnson introduced this item. The Board has had several discussions regarding an employee code of conduct and a mechanism to provide standards of accountability. A Code of Conduct had been discussed with the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 752 (ATU) during the recent contract negotiations. The labor contract with ATU has since been settled. The Code of Conduct is now being presented to the Board for approval.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to provide areas where employees should excel and if there are violations, provides a framework to address violations both cumulatively and progressively. The Code of Conduct provides the framework to identify negative trends in employee behavior and a tool that will allow management to keep employees on the right track.

The Code of Conduct would not be implemented until after Board approval.

Chairperson Bill Wilson questioned if a Code of Conduct was industry standard. Mr. Johnson responded that a Code of Conduct or similar document is industry standard.

Motion by Trustee John Thomas, seconded by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy that the Code of Conduct be approved.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Health Insurance Renewal

Staff had been working on the Health Insurance Renewal policy for some time and have been unable to obtain competitive quotes from other insurance companies. This is due to the group being unhealthy and aged. Connect Transit had recently changed to a different insurance broker that has been able to obtain some insurance savings rate relief. There would be a total increase in insurance premium of 5.47%. The increase is much less than anticipated with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

Staff would soon present some wellness programs to all employees to encourage embracing healthy lifestyles. Staff would continue to research alternative health insurance plans. Chairman Bill Wilson stated that there should be a huge initiative to encourage and reward the use of wellness programs. It is important for Connect Transit to stay in sync with industry standards. Mr. Johnson agreed.

Secretary John Bowman arrived at 5:55 p.m.

Motion by Trustee Judy Buchanan, seconded by Vice President Mike McCurdy that the Health Insurance Renewal with Health Alliance be approved.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

RIDERSHIP: Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated that approximately 2.5 million trips have been provided in 2014. That is over 500,000 rides more than in 2013. That is a significant ridership growth. He reminded the Board that investments in new technology have been paying off. Prior to the new technology, ridership had not been accurately counted. The more accurate counts are proving how important transit is to the community.

ADVOCACY: Several ride alongs have taken place with both the Town of Normal council members and the City of Bloomington council members. The comments received have been generally positive.

BUS PROCUREMENT: The bus procurement project now includes a 360 bus procurement. There are seven states participating. The final proposals are due on August 18th. It is anticipated that the new buses will be received by mid-2015.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: A pilot project of a pass program has been implemented with Country Financial. Melissa Chrisman, Business Development Manager has spear headed this program.

Ms. Chrisman addressed the Board. The program began one week ago. She had been spending a lot of time at the Country Financial offices conducting lunch and learns, working with their marketing department to produce "how to" videos, internal communications and press releases to promote the program. Since the program began a total of 110 riders have been logged and she is pleased with the number of users in the short amount of time that the program has been implemented. She will continue to promote the program.

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE:

FUNDING: Mr. Johnson stated that an application for a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recover (TIGER) Grant has been submitted. Grant funds received will be used for the architectural design and engineering of a new Front Street transfer station. Another grant opportunity has presented called "Ladders of Opportunity". An application is being prepared for funds to purchase the remaining buses for the fleet.

ADVOCACY: Connect Transit had recently hosted US Congressman Rodney Davis. He was given a tour of the facility and provided information regarding the procurement process and the troubles that transit systems have with spending monies that are granted. Congressman Davis stated his public support of Connect Transit and his support for grant funding of the Front Street transfer station upgrade.

Mr. Johnson thanked Jennifer Sorenson, Community Relations Manager for her hard work preparing for and planning Congressman Davis's visit and tour.

EXPANDED SERVICES: A Request for Proposals (RFP) has been prepared for a Comprehensive Operational Analysis. An RFP had been released and proposals received for a Bust Stop Study. The proposals were being evaluated.

AWARENESS AND EDUCATION: Radio advertising has been implemented with a catchy jingle. Connect Transit had recently promoted and participated in "Dump the Pump" day and "Earth Day".

KEY RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS: Staff has met with the leaders of the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Council to ensure that Connect Transit is prominently featured within the community. Additionally, staff met with the leaders of the Convention and Visitors Bureau to continue the process. Staff has met with leaders of the United Way to discuss ways to collaborate.

Mr. Johnson stated that Connect Transit has partnered with the Normal Cornbelters and the Corn Crib for a contest to win Tim McGraw concert tickets.

Connect Transit's rebranding, marketing and advocacy efforts have received national attention. As a result, the State of Michigan's Public Transit Association has invited him to be their keynote speaker at their annual conference in August.

Finally, Bloomington/Normal will be hosting the Illinois Public Transit Association annual conference in 2015. He encouraged Connect Transit staff to attend the 2014 conference in Rockford to gain perspective on how a conference is conducted. There would be a lot of work involved to prepare for hosting it in 2015.

TRUSTEE'S COMMENTS

Secretary John Bowman stated that he had attended the American Public Transit Association (APTA) Board Member and Support Staff conference in Cleveland, OH. APTA had released a transit board member handbook. He believed that the handbook would be beneficial for all of Connect Transit's Board members and would help model the Connect Transit Board Policy Manual that is being constructed. He learned a lot at the conference about the culture of the organization. He had met several APTA board members and its President and CEO, Michael Melaniphy. Overall it was a worthwhile trip. He encouraged the Board and Board support staff to attend the 2015 conference in Denver, CO.

Trustee Mike McCurdy stated that he was pleased with the way the Connect Transit staff has integrated and supported the “Bring It On Bloomington” campaign. He gave kudos to Connect Transit staff.

Trustee McCurdy questioned the nonprofit rate for bus advertising. Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated that interior space would be offered to nonprofits at no cost unless a paying customer needs the space. In that case the nonprofit advertisement would defer to the paid advertisement. Melissa Chrisman, Business Development Manager stated that there was plenty of interior space within the bus fleet and she did not anticipate there being any issues with space availability for nonprofit organizations.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee Felicia Shaw, Seconded by Trustee Judy Buchanan to adjourn.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Time: 6:30 p.m.

John Bowman, Secretary