

**CONNECT TRANSIT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PROCEEDINGS OF SPECIAL MEETING OF JANUARY 11, 2014**

The special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held at Four Seasons Club ó Community Room, 2401 Airport Road, Bloomington, IL at 8:00 a.m.

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

TRUSTEES ABSENT: Ryan Whitehouse

CITY MANAGERS:

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Johnson, General Manager
Tom Crouch, Maintenance Director
Patrick Kuebrich, Finance Director
Roy Rickert, Operations Director
Dave White, Safety & Training Director
Julie Phillips, Labor Relations Executive Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT: Kay Titchenal ó Goranson Consulting
Dave Goranson ó Goranson Consulting

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 8:10 a.m. Roll call was taken.

The following was presented:

Chairperson Judy Buchanan opened the meeting and stated that there was one (1) item on the Consent Agenda for approval. The item was to approve the minutes of the previous December 3, 2013 Connect Transit Board of Trustees Advocacy Committee Meeting.

Motion by Trustee Felicia Shaw, seconded by Secretary Mike McCurdy that the Minutes of the Previous December 3, 2013 Board of Trustees Advocacy Committee Meeting be approved.

Ayes: Chairman Judy Buchanan, Vice-Chairman Bill Wilson, Secretary Mike McCurdy, Trustees John Bowman, Felicia Shaw and John Thomas.

Nays: None

Motion passed.

The following item was presented:

The Board of Trustees, Connect Transit General Manager, Andrew Johnson and Connect Transit staff reconvened to continue discussions for the three (3) year Strategic Plan.

Kay Titchenal, Goranson Consulting welcomed the group to the Strategic Planning meeting. She reminded the group that the process involved four to five (4-5) sessions and roughly sixteen to twenty-two (16-22) hours of work. The group had met in September, October and November of 2013. This would be the fourth (4th) session.

Ms. Titchenal reviewed the previous sessions. The group would continue with the Strengths, Opportunities and Results (SOAR) process. She reminded them of the previous meeting in November which resulted in a list of aspirations. For this session she wanted to expand and look beyond those aspirations. She suggested that the group consider both farfetched aspirations and aspirations that might be accomplished in the next decade. She had the group break out into smaller work groups for discussion.

After a brief period of discussing different ideas, the group came up with a list of several farfetched ideas, including Hover buses, auto piloted buses or Global Positioning System (GPS) controlled; holographic information systems and windmill powered buses. The second list discussed aspirations that were plausible within the next decade included increased frequency, real time market data collection, management of large data by small organizations, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), alternative fuels, a regional transit system, an east side hub, (including a maintenance garage and transfer station) and increased customer amenities such as Wi-Fi and electronic device chargers.

Ms. Titchenal suggested that the group discuss how a regional transit system might become a reality. She encouraged the group to consider what communities it might serve, what issues, such as parking might be problematic. She questioned what type of customers might use a regional transit system.

Secretary Mike McCurdy questioned what type of agreement a regional transit system would require. Andrew Johnson, General Manager replied that intergovernmental agreements between municipalities would be required, in addition there would be funding issues. Secretary McCurdy stated that there was not a commuter system between Bloomington and Peoria, or Bloomington to Champaign. He stated that there was opportunity to expand Connect Transit's services to include such a commuter service. Chairperson Judy Buchanan stated that there would only be an opportunity if enough people were to use the service. Roy Rickert, Operations Director stated that the service could be a "Park and Ride". Chairperson Buchanan agreed, noting that "Park and Ride" is a popular service in larger communities.

Secretary McCurdy reminded the group that with any increase in service, funding would need to be in place. He questioned if a regional transit system would be property tax viable. Trustee John Thomas stated that a regional transit system would have a broader tax base.

Ms. Titchenal inquired about how the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) might benefit a regional transit system. Secretary McCurdy responded that BRT should be discussed as an alternative option before more lanes and/or roads are built. He cited an example of Veterans Parkway. Before any new lanes were built, BRT would be considered an alternative mode of transportation from north Veterans Parkway to south Veterans Parkway with service every 10 minutes. Trustee John Thomas agreed, stating that the BRT could be combined with "park and ride" at each end.

Vice Chairman Bill Wilson stated that people in the community were concerned with timing. He stated that even at 4:30 p.m. a person could travel from north Veterans Parkway to south Veterans Parkway in 10 to 12 minutes. He did not believe that there would be much interest in a BRT if it were not more efficient than driving.

Secretary McCurdy stated that there would need to be incentives for people to use the service. Andrew Johnson, General Manager agreed, noting that it must be an important service to the community for it to be successful. Vice Chairman Wilson stated that people value their cars. Trustee John Bowman reminded the group that the community has an aging population and that more "on demand" service would be an incentive. Secretary McCurdy agreed and reminded the group of the lifestyle of "Millennials".

Ms. Titchenal stated that another plausible aspiration discussed in the next ten (10) years was customer amenities such as electronic device chargers and Wi-Fi on the buses. Mr. Johnson stated that Connect Transit aspires to add Wi-Fi and outlets on all of its vehicles. It was not a difficult process, and even older vehicles could be retrofitted.

Secretary McCurdy stated that additional amenities that had been discussed were flat panel displays on buses providing real time information on transfers, stops, etc. Dave White, Safety & Training Director stated that other amenities could include heated "Smart" shelters at transfer stations.

Trustee Felicia Shaw stated that more involvement in community events and adding a dedicated downtown Bloomington to uptown Normal route would be beneficial. Mr. Johnson responded that Connect Transit's Community Relations Manager was currently working to formalize community partnerships which would include value added services such as bus rider discounts at local businesses. He noted that special events such as a "Small Business Saturday" could be signature events. Secretary Mike McCurdy stated when an event such as "Dump the Pump" day is planned, the organizers encourage as many community leaders to use Connect Transit to go to and from work, which also garners media attention.

Kay Titchenal stated that another ten (10) year aspiration listed was the management of large amounts of data by a small organization. She questioned what it meant and how it would serve Connect Transit.

Mr. Johnson stated that there were large amounts of data collected on a daily basis and Connect Transit staff needed to determine how best to manage it. He stated that Connect Transit generates 3,000 pages of data per route, per month.

It was important to manage and determine what data was valuable and how best to use it. Secretary McCurdy questioned what information would be useful in the 3,000 pages of data. Mr. Johnson responded with several examples, such as how many customers were getting on and off the buses at specific locations, and having the ability to tailor services around that information and around the needs of its customers. Secretary McCurdy questioned if this data mining would result in hiring more employees at Connect Transit or if an outside company would mine and analyze it. Mr. Johnson replied that it was his belief that a report would be generated by a computer program that the data would be analyzed by existing staff.

Ms. Titchenal stated that the last item on the ten (10) year aspiration list was alternative fuels. She questioned the group on how alternative fuels might impact Connect Transit's ability to serve the community and what types of alternative fuels might be available.

Trustee Felicia Shaw stated that Hybrid Vehicles may become available for public mass transit. Roy Rickert, Operations Director, stated that some alternative fuels could be compressed natural gas and/or propane. Additional group discussion centered on the various types of alternative fuels such as propane, solar and electric powered vehicles.

Ms. Titchenal provided the group with a summary of the aspirations plan that had been discussed at the previous, November 9, 2013 Strategic Planning session. She reviewed the aspirations plan summary which included four (4) categories with several bulleted items under each category. She stated that the final upcoming Strategic Planning session would discuss measuring results, which would be a two (2) step process. She instructed the group to review the document and to consider any additions or subtractions that should be made before the final document was produced. This would be the first step. The second step would be to determine how to measure the progress of reaching the aspirations.

Trustee John Thomas questioned if the aspirations were lucid. Ms. Titchenal responded that it was important to keep the aspirations lucid; there were things and events that Connect Transit would not be able to control. The Board would need to keep a list of questions for measurement purposes, so that in addition to their fiduciary responsibility to Connect Transit, they were able to continue to partner with staff to achieve its aspirations.

Doug Goranson, Goranson Consulting added that priorities could change with unforeseen circumstances. This could be discouraging and have a negative effect. Ms. Titchenal agreed and noted that the strategic plan would assist the Board and staff with staying on the path toward achieving its goals.

Ms. Titchenal instructed the group to examine each item on the summary aspirations plan and discuss what should be added or subtracted, beginning with "Funding" category. Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated that the word "increased" fares should be changed to "revised" fares, and that the words "increased fares" should be eliminated from the entire document. In addition, the words "including seniors pay/graduated fares" in parenthesis should be deleted.

Secretary Mike McCurdy suggested that "Responsible use of funds received" should be changed to "Continued responsible stewardship of funds". The group agreed.

Chairperson Judy Buchanan and Trustee Felicia Shaw suggested that a subheading should be added under the bullet "Planning for improvements" and alternative fuels should be listed. Mr. Johnson suggested that an "increase in non-fare revenue" bullet should be added. He elaborated on non-fare revenue with items such as advertising and to include retail services in any new transfer stations that would support Connect Transit.

Ms. Titchenal inquired if any additions or subtractions should be made to the "Expanded Services" category. Mr. Johnson stated that the bullet "shelters/transfer points" should be changed to "amenities" so that it would encompass both shelters/transfer points *and* buses. He cited Wi-Fi, power outlets and panel displays.

Secretary Mike McCurdy suggested that "BRT/Demand Response Transit (DRT) and East Side Hub Planning" be added to the "Expanded Services" category. Trustee Felicia Shaw questioned if these items should be listed under the "Awareness and Education" category. Secretary McCurdy suggested that it was better to leave the item under the "Expanded Services" category, where it would ultimately be listed if completed within the three (3) year plan. Mr. Johnson agreed, and stated that *planning* did not necessarily mean preparing architectural plans or building, but just having it on the radar and/or researching feasibility. The group suggested that a new bullet be added to the "Expanded Services" category for "Planning". Under this bullet, BRT/DRT, East Side Hub, Park & Ride and Regional Services would be listed as sub-bullets.

The last item under the "Expanded Services" category was "Maximize what we currently have". Secretary Mike McCurdy questioned the bullet's meaning. Andrew Johnson, General Manager explained that it meant utilizing existing technology before purchasing or adding new. Roy Rickert, Operations Director stated that data mining of existing data would be used to maximize services.

The third category on the Aspiration Plan was "Awareness and Education". Ms. Titchenal questioned what items should be added or subtracted to this category. Mr. Johnson stated that the bullet "Website" should be changed to "Social Media and Web". Trustee John Thomas stated that the bullet "Digital footprint presence" should be changed to "Increase digital footprint". Mr. Johnson questioned the sub-bullets under the "Community outreach" bullet. Trustee Thomas stated that several sub-bulleted items could fit in this bullet item. Chairperson Judy Buchanan questioned if the sub-bullets should be removed altogether, since the list could be substantive. The group agreed to remove all sub-bullets out of the "Community outreach" bullet item. Chairperson Buchanan suggested that "manage and use data" replace "how to connect to the world" as a sub-bullet under the bullet "Market Research".

The fourth category on the Aspiration Plan was "Key Relationships/Partnerships". Chairperson Judy Buchanan suggested that "local governments" be added as a sub-bullet under the bullet "Expanded strategic relationships". The group agreed. Mr. Johnson stated that local governments should not be limited to elected officials. It should also include the organizations staff.

Kay Titchenal reviewed all of the additions and changes to the "Aspirations Plan" Summary. She questioned if the group felt comfortable with all of the changes that had been discussed and if the items listed on the plan could be achieved within the next three (3) years. Trustee John Bowman stated that the list was ambitious but it was his opinion that they were realistic. Mr. Johnson agreed, noting that some goals might be unreachable due to unforeseen circumstances. He questioned if staff believed that the aspirations were attainable. Dave White, Safety and Training Director stated that he believed the aspirations were attainable. The other staff members agreed. Secretary Mike McCurdy stated that the aspirations were not set in stone. Deadlines could be changed, and the Board could review progress on a quarterly basis. Trustee Felicia Shaw agreed and stated that the Three (3) Year Strategic Plan would be a living document.

Ms. Titchenal stated that there would be two (2) assignments to complete prior to the next session and would serve as a guideline for measuring results. The first assignment was for the General Manager and staff to prepare a list of questions for the Board. The questions would provide guidance for the timing of goal completion. The second assignment would be for the Board. The Board would prepare a list of questions for staff. The questions would provide guidance for measuring goal results. Ms. Titchenal provided examples of some of the questions that staff and the Board might ask each other. The goal was for staff to understand the Board's expectations and to be able to measure progress.

Secretary Mike McCurdy questioned the structure for managing goals. He noted that there would be no target dates in the plan and questioned if staff would be delegated individual goals. Mr. Johnson responded that as the plan is finalized, it would provide him and staff with a guide for decision making. He noted that staff was currently in the process of revising performance evaluations. The new performance evaluations would include how the employee's performance fit into the goals of the strategic plan. He stated that he would be hesitant to assign specific items from the strategic plan to specific employees but would rather use the strategic plan as a guide and evaluate how an employee's performance related to achieving the goals within the plan.

Secretary McCurdy questioned if an employee's performance would only be compared with the strategic plan at review time. Mr. Johnson responded that the performance evaluation was a two (2) part process. Performance would be measured and future goals would be set.

Ms. Titchenal reminded of the importance of thinking outside the box. It was difficult to put specific timeframes on some of the aspirations, but to not lose sight of target dates. Unforeseen changes could impact target dates. She provided the example of a new Downtown Bloomington Transfer Station as an aspiration. Changes could affect the timing of a target date. The perfect opportunity may arise sooner than expected or later than expected. There should always be interactive discussion between staff and the Board concerning reaching the goals within the strategic plan.

Trustee John Thomas questioned if goal dates should be set so that staff was not juggling multiple projects. Ms. Titchenal responded yes and no, there should be objectives but there should be no fixed dates. Trustee John Bowman questioned if a "dashboard" should be created.

Ms. Titchenal responded that a dashboard would be a good tool but that it should not be the driving force behind every goal. She stated that determining how to measure the success of the goals within the Three (3) Year Strategic Plan would be the focus of the next and final meeting.

Mr. Johnson stated that it is important for the Board to be comfortable with and trust staff to enforce accountability. There was no way to have a solid framework for reaching each goal within the plan initially, but after time, everyone would have a better understanding of how to manage the goals. He believed that staff already felt comfortable enough with the Board to ask questions and to be accountable. He stated that the Board would measure results by evaluating and setting goals for the General Manager and in turn, the General Manager would evaluate and set goals for staff.

Ms. Titchenal stated that she was glad that the dashboard had been discussed. The Board was responsible for certain things, but not the day to day operations. A dashboard would be a tool to help the Board determine if staff was on the right path for achieving the goals set in the strategic plan. She stated that it was obvious that both staff and the Board cared very much about the success of Connect Transit.

Ms. Titchenal reminded the group that the final session would be held on February 1, 2014 at the Four Seasons Club, 2401 Airport Road, Bloomington at 8:00 a.m. She would revise the Aspirations Plan summary with the changes that were discussed and would provide same to the Board and staff prior to the next meeting. She requested that the Board and staff prepare questions to discuss for measuring results.

There being no further business, a Chairperson Buchanan requested that a formal motion be made to adjourn.

Motion by Trustee Felicia Shaw, seconded by Secretary Mike McCurdy that the meeting be adjourned.

Motion passed. Time: 11:00 a.m.

Mike McCurdy, Secretary