

Connect Transit Board of Trustees
May 28, 2024, 4:30 p. m.
351 Wylie Drive, Normal, IL 61761 – Board Room
Regular Session Minutes – Approved at 6/25/24 Meeting

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Ryan Whitehouse called the meeting to order at 4:45 p. m.

B. ROLL CALL:

Board Clerk, Janice Crago, recorded attendance via roll call.

Trustees Present:

Trustee Judy Buchanan
Trustee Linda Foster
Trustee Mandava Rao
Chairman Ryan Whitehouse

Trustees Absent:

Vice Chair Julie Hile
Trustee Barbara Singer

City Managers Present:

City Manager Pam Reece
City Manager Jeff Jurgens (Virtual)

City Managers Absent:

None

Staff Present:

David Braun, General Manager
Aubrey Staton, Marketing Manager
Brady Lange, Assistant General Manager/Int. Procurement Manager
Charlie Busse, Maintenance Manager
Janice Crago, Board Clerk
Lauren Bridgewater, HR/Payroll Administrator
Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director
Shelly Moss, Operations Director
Steve Stockton, IT Manager

Guest(s) Present:

None

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MISSION STATEMENT:

Chairman Whitehouse led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance and read the Connect Transit Mission Statement.

D. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

E. CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. Approval of Annual Meeting Minutes for April 23, 2024
- b. Approval of Regular Session Minutes for April 23, 2024
- c. Approval of Executive Session Minutes for April 23, 2024
- d. Approval of Financial Information for April 2024

- e. Monthly Statistical Reports for April 2024
- f. Cardinal Infrastructure Federal Report
- g. Cornerstone – Illinois Weekly Update

Chairman Whitehouse called for a Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda.

Trustee Buchanan motioned; seconded by Trustee Foster.

Discussion:

David Braun, General Manager, stated the financial report reflects an expense for property damage insurance, not property damage. He stated the income statement shows about 77% of our annual budget expended, when we should be at about 83% at this time of year, which puts us under budget going into the end of the fiscal year. Conversely, we are at about 90% of our revenue, higher than budgeted, another positive for our budget.

Mr. Braun stated our statistical reports reflect ridership to date is 9.75% higher than last year at this time; Mobility has decreased at 17% higher than this time year; Operator Pay Hours to Service Hours reflects some recent overtime hours, hovering at around 1.29% year to date.

Mr. Braun encouraged the Trustees to read the Cardinal Infrastructure report, noting the Department of Justice Rules for Transit Agencies mentions implementations specific requirements of making information accessible online. He stated we work with LifeCil to make sure our online to make sure our website is ADA accessible, with the last review being six months ago. The report also discusses the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Act, which may have an impact on our transit center funding because of the cost of relocating the Post Office if they ask for assistance. It is our understanding they have no intention of moving back and we do not know their final move out date, nor have they asked for any relocation assistance.

Mr. Braun stated the Cornerstone report is quite informative and encouraged the Trustees to read this report as well. He stated we just learned that \$3m is in the state budget for our transit center; it was authorized in 2019 and will be appropriated in the FY25 budget.

City Manager Reece stated that the ADA website accessibility includes all of the attachments within meeting packets also have to be ADA compliant and encouraged Connect Transit to look into those requirements.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Buchanan, Trustee Foster, Trustee Rao, Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None

Consent Agenda was **approved**.

F. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Marketing and Communications Committee:

No report.

Finance Committee:

No report.

Operations and Planning Committee:

No report.

G. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Recommendation to Approve Federal Lobbying Services Contract Extension – Roll Call Vote

Chairman Whitehouse called for a motion to authorize the General Manager to execute a single-year contract extension with Cardinal Infrastructure to provide federal representation in Washington, D.C.

Trustee Rao motioned; seconded by Trustee Foster.

Discussion:

Brady Lange, Interim Procurement Manager, explained that Connect Transit has contracted with Cardinal Infrastructure for eight years to provide federal representation in Washington, DC. Federal lobbying services help increase our return on federal dollars through grant programs, legislation, and regulatory actions. Lobbying services also help Connect Transit maintain and develop relationships with our Congressional Delegation and federal agencies to promote and protect the interests of Connect Transit. Finally, lobbying services provide information and insights into funding opportunities and shares Notices of Funding Opportunities, as well as insights into success factors for funding applications.

Over the past several years Cardinal Infrastructure has helped Connect Transit build strategic relations with our Congressional Delegation and the Federal Transit Administration. In addition, they have provided valuable insight into the priorities of the current Administration to assist Connect Transit's ability to create competitive discretionary grant applications. Cardinal Infrastructure has been instrumental in our success with federal discretionary grants, which have provided over \$32.6 million in capital funding coming back to Bloomington-Normal.

This single-year contract extension will cost \$84,000. The new rate is an increase of \$500 per month over our current contract. Federal and state regulations require the use of local funds.

Trustee Buchanan asked when the last increase took place?

Mr. Lange stated that there was a small increase last year but that he did not have the notes with him.

Trustee Rao asked what the difference between last year and this year will cost

Mr. Lange stated it will be \$6,000 for the year.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Buchanan, Trustee Foster, Trustee Rao, Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None

Motion to authorize the General Manager to execute a single-year contract extension with Cardinal Infrastructure to provide federal representation in Washington, D.C was **approved**.

- b. Recommendation to Approve FY25 Health Insurance Renewal – Roll Call Vote

Chairman Whitehouse called for a motion to approve a contract with Connect Transit's current healthcare insurance provider, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBS), for a term of July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.

Trustee Foster motioned; seconded by Trustee Buchanan.

Discussion:

Stephanie Butler, HR Manager, stated that the current health insurance policy with BCBS is set to be renewed July 1, 2024. Employees will maintain the choice of three (3) plans: low, medium, and high deductible plans.

1. MPP83436: This plan has a \$1,000 individual deductible and a \$3,000 family deductible.
 - a. CHANGES: No changes have been made to this plan.
2. MPP9383C: This plan has a \$1,500 individual deductible and a \$4,500 family deductible.
 - a. CHANGES: No changes have been made to this plan.
3. MPEQ1Z0724: This plan is a high deductible HSA. This plan offers a \$3,200 individual deductible and a \$6,400 family deductible.
 - a. CHANGES: Last year's \$3,000 individual deductible HSA plan will increase to \$3,200 at renewal per IRS requirements. Last year's \$6,000 family deductible HSA will increase to \$6,400 at renewal per IRS requirements.

The total cost for our health insurance cost is 8.05% higher for the FY25 renewal. This increase was anticipated in our approved FY25 Budget.

There will be a change to our Short-Term Disability, Life/AD&D, Dental and Long-Term Disability carrier, as we will be moving from Mutual of Omaha to Blue Cross Blue Shield Dearborn for the FY25 renewal. There will be no increase in our Vision premium cost. Our vision insurance has a 4-year rate lock until 7/1/26.

Mr. Braun stated that by moving the insurance to Blue Cross Blue Shield Dearborn, netted us an additional 2% reduction making our actual increase next year 5.89% instead of 8.05%.

Chairman Whitehouse asked what the percentage increase translates to?

Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director, stated he did not have that information with him but would get it to the Board.

Trustee Foster asked was the additional cost for the families was going to be?

Ms. Butler stated the cost went from \$6,000 to \$6,400.

Trustee Buchanan asked if we asked for proposals?

Ms. Butler stated that Troxell handled the proposals and that we were able to negotiate down from 19% to 5.59%.

Trustee Buchanan asked if there were other proposals?

Ms. Butler stated United Healthcare, Humana, and a few others had sent in proposals.

Trustee Buchanan asked if we had seen the proposals, to help them appreciate why this carrier had been selected?

Mr. Braun stated Troxell shared all of the proposals with us in great detail.

Chairman Whitehouse clarified that Trustee Buchanan meant she was asking if the proposals had been shared with the Trustees.

Mr. Braun stated he would send the proposals to the Board.

Chairman Whitehouse asked if we put anything towards an HSA to incentivize the employees to go that route and lower our costs?

Mr. Braun stated the last time we negotiated a Collective Bargaining Agreement we negotiated that option out because the cost with the incentive exceeded the cost of the highest cost plan, and we had few employees who took advantage of it.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Buchanan, Trustee Foster, Trustee Rao, Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None

Motion to approve a contract with Connect Transit's current healthcare insurance provider, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBS), for a term of July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, was **approved**.

c. Recommendation to Approve 2024 Title VI Update – Roll Call Vote

Chairman Whitehouse called for a motion to the Connect Transit 2024 Title VI Program.

Trustee Rao motioned; seconded by Trustee Foster.

Discussion:

Shelly Moss, Operations Director, stated that Connect Transit is required by the FTA to update its Title VI Program every three years.

The following areas of the Title VI have been revised from the previous Title VI Program.

- Removal of the Community Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)
- Public Participation Plan & Opportunities for Participation
 - Revised to reflect current practices and partnerships.
- Vehicle Headways
 - Updated to reflect current route structure time points.
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – Language Assistance Plan Four Factor Analysis
 - Language Spoken in Homes for Bloomington & Normal II, surveys/graphs updated with most recent data.
 - Included LEP factor definitions to provide better comprehension for readers.
- Implementation Plan on Language Assistance
 - Updated to reflect recent census numbers.
 - Updated to include Connect FLEX on-demand service.

There is no financial impact.

Chairman Whitehouse asked what the Title VI Program is?

Ms. Moss stated it is to make sure we are staying in compliance with the population we serve and need the service, looking at route changes, demographics, and hiring.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Buchanan, Trustee Foster, Trustee Rao, Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None

Motion to approve the Connect Transit 2024 Title VI Program was **approved**.

d. Recommendation to Approve Title Change – Roll Call Vote

Chairman Whitehouse called for a motion to approve the position of General Manager be changed to Managing Director, in alignment with the Local Mass Transit District Act (70 ILCS 3610/4) and other transit agencies across the state.

Trustee Buchanan motioned; seconded by Trustee Foster.

Discussion:

Mr. Braun stated that the Local Mass Transit District Act (70 ILCS 3610/) Section 4 indicates that “The Board shall employ a managing director...” In accordance with the Act, the managers of most transit systems in Illinois have Managing Director as their title, sometimes accompanied by CEO. The transit industry association, APTA, often uses the term CEO to represent transit system managers, and verbally uses Executive Director as well.

General Manager is a title that has lost favor in the transit industry and is most often associated with retail, sports or commercial goods and services industries. Some private for-hire transportation providers continue to use the title General Manager; however, their roles tend to be operational only, and do not encompass the political, public finance, and other responsibilities of public managers.

While some transit systems call their transit leaders CEOs, due to the responsibility of the position, the term implies a position that is less involved in the daily operation of the system and is most often associated with private industry.

This change would merely be reflected in signatures and documents and other media in which a title is included. A Board Action would indicate Board approval and would apply to the By-Laws and IGA without the need to change those documents.

With this change, we would also change the position of Assistant General Manager to Deputy Managing Director.

Trustee Foster asked if Mr. Braun anticipated any confusion with people thinking his role has changed?

Mr. Braun stated he is often introduced as the CEO and the title change is something he would need to clarify if asked.

City Manager Jurgens asked if we would need to update the IGA?

Mr. Braun stated that he had spoken to our Attorney, Steve Mahrt, and that he felt we would just need to do an addendum to our IGA.

Chairman Whitehouse asked if the City Managers were comfortable with this?
City Manager Reece and City Manager Jurgens indicated they were comfortable.

Trustee Rao asked how this would impact the Assistant General Manager's title?
Mr. Braun stated it would make him the Deputy Managing Director.

Trustee Buchanan stated she was first concerned the community would think he was now an Ex-Officio member of the Board and Mr. Braun had put her fears at ease on this, but asked how he felt about Managing Director/Executive Director?

Mr. Braun stated the Executive Director title fell more in line with the non-profit sector and the Managing Director is just following the Local Mass Transit District Act.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Buchanan, Trustee Foster, Trustee Rao, Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None

Motion to approve the position of General Manager be changed to Managing Director, in alignment with the Local Mass Transit District Act (70 ILCS 3610/4) and other transit agencies across the state was **approved**.

H. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Chairman Whitehouse stated he, Mr. Braun and Mr. Lange had attendee the Economic Development Council One Voice trip to Washington, D.C. He stated they met with delegations, Senators, and two members of Congress that represent parts of Bloomington-Normal and the meetings went well and shared his hopes that we'll see some positives come from it. He explained it is a good project that we have benefited from, with support on the transit center, among other things.

City Manager Pam Reece confirmed the meetings with the legislators went well and looks forward to seeing how everything plays out.

Chairman Whitehouse stated Billy Tyus from the City of Bloomington was also there.

I. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT:

Mr. Braun shared his monthly General Manager's report available online as part of the General Manager's Presentation.

Congratulations!

Mr. Braun congratulated Brady Lange on his promotion to Assistant General Manager and shared the layout of responsibilities with a layout on screen.

Mr. Braun will oversee the broader environment of the agency and the impact to the community with the Finance Director, Safety and Training Director, Human Resources Manager, Marketing Manager, and Transit Planner reporting to him. Mr. Lange will oversee the day to day operations and the Procurement Manager, Operations Director, Maintenance Manager, and IT Manager. The Executive Assistant and Board Clerk will support both Mr. Braun and Mr. Lange. He stated that the

layout and positions within each department have not changed and will continue to do what is best for the agency. Mr. Braun stated that he and Mr. Lange are comfortable with this plan, and it allows him to spend more time with the Trustees.

Strategic Plan Scorecard:

Mr. Braun shared the scorecard he had developed for the Strategic Business Plan, referring to the on screen presentation. The scorecard is laid out so all objectives and activities are broken out without much narrative, includes a timeline, and when they are expected to be completed. They are scored by whether they are in process, complete, pending, or past due. Mr. Braun stated he is not thrilled with this format but did promise a scorecard this month, and that he is open to suggestions if the Trustees would prefer a different format. He encouraged the Trustees to review the scorecard and reach out to him if they have any questions or suggestions.

Board of Trustees Handbook Introduction:

Mr. Braun stated that our Strategic Business Plan includes a handbook and presented a draft preview of our Board of Trustees Handbook on screen. The handbook gives an at a glance of our service and serves as guide that Board members can refer to, what they are responsible for, and what we are all about. The draft handbook is based on a 2017 draft before he arrived and has been updated but is easily updated and changed anyway we want. He explained he would like each Trustee's input and would be setting up 1:1 meetings to discuss the handbook so that we can present a final version at our next meeting.

Earmark Award:

Mr. Braun shared that Connect Transit was awarded an earmark for \$800,000 for communications and safety equipment on our buses today. He expressed his appreciation to Senator Durbin for getting this approved in the budget and for recognizing the importance of safety for everyone in our community and workplace.

Community Outreach:

- Town of Normal Vision 2050/Sustainability Plan
- Education Day at the Corn Crib
- Best Buddies Friendship Walk
- Luther Oaks Presentation re: Connect FLEX
- Rivian Tabling
- Participation in the Salvation Army/Good Cities Plan
- Twin Cities Showcase tabling
- BACC Partner Breakfast
- Low Vision Fair at Westminster Village

Employee Morale

- May employee birthdays and work anniversary celebrations

Professional Development:

- Economic Development Council One Voice Trip
 - Ryan Whitehouse, Board Chair
 - David Braun, General Manager

- Brady Lange, Procurement Director
 - Washington, DC
 - April 30 – May 2, 2024
- APTA Mobility Conference
 - Charlie Busse, Maintenance Manager
 - Jared Simons, Operations Supervisor
 - Jeff Mancil, Operations Supervisor
 - Portland, OR
 - April 28 – May 1, 2024
- Transportation Safety Institute courses: Project Management for Transportation Professionals and Intro to Transit Service Planning
 - Carrie Bailey, Operations Analyst
 - Skills learned include risk management, budgeting and scheduling, route design and performance analysis fundamentals.

Recruiting:

- Positions Open
 - Maintenance Supervisor (1)
 - Marketing & Social Media Coordinator (1)
 - Marketing Intern (1)
 - Mechanic (1)
 - Operations Supervisor (1)
 - Procurement Manager (1)
 - Scheduler (2)
 - Service Technician (1)
 - Travel Support Specialist (1)
- Positions Filled
 - Bus Operator (6)
 - Dispatcher (1)
 - Microtransit Operator (1)

Reminders:

- Updated/New Board Photos
 - Please set up an appointment with Board Clerk
- Connect Transit apparel allocation

Trustee Foster thanked everyone who attended conferences for attending and bringing back information, stating everything they bring back helps everyone do their job better.

J. TRUSTEE COMMENTS:

None

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- a. ILCS 123/2(c)(5)-Property Acquisition

Mr. Braun asked to include Brady Lange in the Executive Session. Trustees concurred.

Chairman Whitehouse called for a motion to adjourn Regular Session and move into an Executive Session.

Trustee Foster motioned; seconded by Trustee Buchanan.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Buchanan, Trustee Foster, Trustee Rao, Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None

Motion passed by consensus and the Board of Trustees adjourned Regular Session then moved to the Administrative Conference Room for Executive Session at 5:24 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION RE-OPENED:

Chairman Whitehouse called Regular Session back to order at 6:09 p.m. in the Board Room and the Board Clerk, Janice Crago, took attendance via roll call.

Trustees Present: Trustee Judy Buchanan
Trustee Linda Foster
Trustee Mandava Rao
Chairman Ryan Whitehouse

Trustees Absent: Vice Chair Julie Hile
Trustee Barbara Singer

City Managers Present: City Manager Pam Reece

City Managers Absent: City Manager Jeff Jurgens

Staff Present: David Braun, General Manager
Aubrey Staton, Marketing Manager
Brady Lange, Assistant General Manager/Int. Procurement Manager
Charlie Busse, Maintenance Manager
Janice Crago, Board Clerk
Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director
Shelly Moss, Operations Director
Steve Stockton, IT Manager

L. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Whitehouse called for a Motion to Adjourn.

Trustee Foster motioned; seconded by Trustee Buchanan.

Meeting adjourned by consensus at 6:09 p.m.

 6/25/24
Ryan Whitehouse, Board Chair / Date

 6/25/24
Janice Crago, Board Clerk / Date

[SEAL]

