

Connect Transit Board of Trustees
August 27, 2024, 4:30 p.m.
351 Wylie Drive, Normal, IL 61761 – Board Room
Meeting Minutes – Approved at 9/24/24 Meeting

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Ryan Whitehouse called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL:

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

Trustees Present: Trustee Judy Buchanan
Secretary Linda Foster
Vice Chair Julie Hile (Virtual)
Trustee Mandava Rao
Trustee Barbara Singer (Virtual)
Chairman Ryan Whitehouse

Trustees Absent: None

City Managers Present: City Manager Jeff Jurgens

City Managers Absent: City Manager Pam Reece

Staff Present: David Braun, Managing Director
Brady Lange, Deputy Managing Director
Alex Giantamidis, Transit Planner
Ashley Strupek, Procurement Manager
Charlie Busse, Maintenance Manager
Janice Crago, Board Clerk
Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director
Shelly Moss, Operations Director
Stephanie Butler, HR Manager
Steve Stockton, IT Manager

Guest(s) Present: None

Chairman Whitehouse called for a motion to allow Vice Chair Hile and Trustee Singer to attend virtually.

Trustee Foster motioned; seconded by Trustee Buchanan.

Discussion:

None

Rollcall Vote:

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

NAY: None

Motion to allow Vice Chair Hile and Trustee Singer to attend virtually was **approved**.

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 Regular Session Minutes for June 25, 2024
- b. Approval of Regular Session Minutes for July 30, 2024
- c. Approval of Special Meeting Minutes for August 8, 2024
- d. Approval of Financial Information for June 2024
- e. ~~Approval of Financial Information for July 2024~~ – delayed due to year end closing
- f. Monthly Statistical Report for June 2024
- g. Monthly Statistical Report for July 2024
- h. Cardinal Infrastructure; Federal Reports
- i. Cornerstone; Illinois Weekly Updates

Chairman Whitehouse called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Trustee Buchanan motioned; seconded by Trustee Rao.

Discussion:

David Braun, Managing Director, stated the June Financial Report shows we ended FY24 95% or \$821,000 under budget, and revenue at 105% or \$81,000 higher than we planned for. He attributed these amounts to the reduction in peak service in FY24. He explained that our budget is a reimbursement budget, meaning we do not get the money we did not spend back to the State, we just do not get reimbursed for it.

Chairman Whitehouse asked where the revenue came from.

Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director, stated the revenue came from contract fares like Heartland, Medicaid, and others. Mr. Braun stated some of the other revenue came from miscellaneous revenue.

Trustee Buchanan stated that Advertising Revenue is also up and asked if we expect that to continue.

Mr. Braun stated we have a five-year contract with the advertiser with a guaranteed rate every year.

Mr. Braun stated that the July report is only the first report of the new fiscal year so there are no trends to report on there at this time.

He encouraged the Trustees to read both Cardinal Infrastructure reports. Mr. Braun stated we did not receive these reports in time to include them in the packet that was emailed to them Friday but emailed them Monday afternoon and left them at their seats this evening. He pointed out the last article stating public transit is 28% more expensive that it was in 2004; parking and tolls are up 100%; used cars and

trucks are 43%; new vehicles are up 30%; gas is up 95%; parts and equipment are up 66%; and car insurance is up 121%. He stated public transit is still a very good, viable option.

Mr. Braun stated the Cornerstone report shows they are still monitoring bills for us at the state level.

Trustee Buchanan noted that our rides in FY24 were over two million.

City Manager Jurgens asked if that was back to pre-COVID numbers.

Mr. Braun stated we are not quite back to pre-COVID numbers, but that we are close.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Buchanan, Trustee Foster, Vice Chair Hile, Trustee Rao, Trustee Singer, Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda was **approved**.

F. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Operations and Planning Committee:

No report.

Marketing and Communications Committee:

No report.

Finance Committee:

No report.

G. NEW BUSINESS:

a. System Performance Update – Informational

Discussion:

Mr. Braun referred to an onscreen presentation available as part of the Managing Director's Presentation online.

Trustee Buchanan asked where the Sapphire Route serves.

Mr. Braun stated it runs between Walmart and Rivian.

Chairman Whitehouse stated he would have thought more people would ride in the winter.

Mr. Braun stated that many people with disabilities don't want to travel during winter because they have to experience the elements, so they travel less frequently.

Chairman Whitehouse asked if the "seat unavailable" on FLEX is happening frequently.

Mr. Braun stated it is happening more than we would like and that we are looking into it.

Chairman Whitehouse stated he would like more information on this, a deeper dive is something he would like to see at the next meeting so we can determine our course of action.

Trustee Buchanan asked if riders having a walker or bicycle would impact them finding a seat available.

Mr. Braun stated it would not, there are bike racks on the vehicles.

Trustee Buchanan asked if we are getting inquiries from other areas that might be interested in FLEX.

Mr. Braun stated that we are getting asked frequently because a lot of people want to see FLEX in their area. He explained that we need the vehicles, which will take about nine to 12 months to acquire. The service is very expensive to run with a subsidy per passenger rate of \$15.15 so we need the budget to support the additional zones.

Trustee Buchanan asked if there are grants or special lines of funding available.

Mr. Braun stated our software provider offers a service to look for grants, but he is hesitant to use a grant for operating funds because grants eventually end, and then we have the challenge of finding new funding.

Chairman Whitehouse asked if we are looking at other zones to replace this zone since we are struggling to get additional vehicles and funding, or does this zone remain.

Mr. Braun stated this is a good zone and was selected because it had the highest number of low-income families, low auto ownership, and more. He stated he put an additional zone in the budget for the end of this fiscal year and hopes to roll out new zones by May if we have the vehicles.

Vice Chair Hile asked if we are considering fixed route in the high demand FLEX areas and what our end game plan is?

Mr. Braun stated our end game has always been access to public transit, and many of these neighborhoods do not support fixed route service due to insufficient entrances, twisty roads, safety concerns for passengers, and more. He explained their solution is for safety and access to service.

Vice Chair Hile stated it is almost like a last mile solution.

Mr. Braun explained it is a feeder service into our fixed route service.

Chairman Whitehouse asked if a lot of people are using it for direct access from point to point.

Mr. Braun said they are and that he thinks we created the zone larger than we should have, but that we have learned a lot and will be making some adjustments.

H. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Chairman Whitehouse stated Congressman Sorensen visited and thanked Trustee Singer for attending that event.

I. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

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

Strategic Plan Scorecard:

Mr. Braun gave an update on the Strategic Plan, noting that he had indicated changes or updates to the scorecard with an “X” on the far left. (Updates included as part of the Managing Director’s Presentation available online.)

Community Outreach:

- Congressman Sorensen Press Visit
- Pride Fest
- Young Fan Field Trip
- Back2School Alliance Shuttle
- HCC Welcome Fair
- ISU Bus Photo Shoot
- Bloom School Field Trip Pass
- Chamber RAMP Event – Table Captain

Employee Morale

- August employee birthdays & work anniversary celebrations

Professional Development:

- 2024 APTAtech Conference:
 - Attended by Steve Stockton, IT Manager
 - Cybersecurity is more important than ever. CISA and TSA have tools and best practices available for all agencies to utilize.
 - Due to increased SAAS, security, and cheaper cloud storage, most agencies are going to a Hybrid Cloud/On-premises model.
 - The role of AI in transit is increasing exponentially, especially in planning and data analytics.

Recruiting:

- Positions Open
 - AP/AR Clerk (1)
 - Bus Operator (11)
 - Dispatcher (1)
 - Maintenance Supervisor (1)
 - Marketing Manager (1)
 - Mechanic (1)
 - Scheduler (1)
 - Service Technician (2)
 - Technology Support Specialist (1)
- Positions Filled
 - Customer Service Rep. (1)
 - Service Technician (1)
 - Transit Planner (1)
 - Operations Supervisor (1)
 - Justin Allen, S&T Coordinator to O.S.
 - Scheduler (1)
 - Jeremy Schou, Dispatcher to Scheduler

Reminders:

- Updated/New Board Photos
 - Please set up an appointment with Board Clerk
- Employee Awards Banquet, September 22, 2024
- Next Board Meeting September 24, 2024

J. TRUSTEE COMMENTS:

Trustee Foster thanked Connect Transit for supporting the library card free ride month.

Vice Chair Hile shared her appreciation for the Strategic Plan Scorecard.

Trustee Buchanan thanked staff for their hard work in how the FY24 budget turned out, stating it doesn't just happen and she appreciates their efforts.

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

None.

L. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Whitehouse called for a Motion to Adjourn.

Trustee Foster motioned; seconded by Trustee Buchanan.

Meeting adjourned by consensus at 5:05 p.m.

 9/24/24
Linda Foster, Secretary / Date

 9.24.24
Janice Crago, Board Clerk / Date

[SEAL]

