

Connect Transit Board of Trustees
September 24, 2024, 4:30 p.m.
351 Wylie Drive, Normal, IL 61761 – Board Room
Regular Session Minutes – Approved at 11/26/24 Meeting

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Ryan Whitehouse called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL:

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

Trustees Present:

Trustee Judy Buchanan
Trustee Linda Foster
Vice Chair Julie Hile
Trustee Mandava Rao
Trustee Barbara Singer
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
Mark Huffman, Marketing Manager
Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director
Shelly Moss, Operations Director
Stephanie Butler, HR Manager
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 Regular Session Minutes for Augst 27, 2024
- b. Approval of Board Workship Minutes for August 27, 2024

- c. Approval of Financial Information for July 2024
- d. ~~Approval of Financial Information for August 2024~~ – delayed to year end closing
- e. Monthly Statistical Reports for August 2024
- f. Cardinal Infrastructure Federal Report
- g. Cornerstone – Illinois Weekly Update

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

Trustee Rao motioned; seconded by Trustee Singer.

Discussion:

David Braun, Managing Director, stated that the July reports were included in the Consent Agenda, but the August report was not due to year end closing. He stated the financial report did not reflect any unusual expenses and that it was too early to discuss trends. Mr. Braun stated it is also too early to comment on trends for the statistical reports, however, ridership has dipped compared to prior year.

The Cardinal Infrastructure report shows Congress is in recess, with a deadline of September 30 to keep federal agencies funded but that we do not expect that to impact us because FTA now falls under a different agency.

The Cornerstone report shows they are working closely with the State to get our \$3m appropriation for the transit center and stated we talk with them monthly to determine how we can move that forward.

Chairman Whitehouse asked if the Trustees had any comments on the Consent Agenda.

There were no comments on the Consent Agenda.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Buchanan, Trustee Foster, Vice Chair Hile, Trustee Rao, Trustee Singer, 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 for Avail Software Contract Extension – Roll Call Vote

Chairman Whitehouse called for a motion to authorize the authorize the Managing Director to execute a single-year license and maintenance contract with Avail Technologies, Inc. to provide our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software.

Trustee Foster motioned; seconded by Trustee Rao.

Discussion:

Mr. Braun stated Connect Transit has been using Avail Technologies (FleetNet) as our ERP provider since 2012 and that Ashley Strupek, Procurement Manager, has been looking at a one-year extension for this.

Ms. Strupek explained that in 2018 FleetNet was purchased by Avail Technologies. In 2022, Avail migrated their Enterprise Transit Management Software (ETMS), formerly known as FleetNet, from on premises to a cloud-based solution. Part of the subscription cost from Avail includes cloud server space and Microsoft Azure, which is a cloud computing platform. We use Avail for the following departments: Human Resources, Finance, Transit Assets, Timekeeping, Payroll, and Scheduling.

This contract will begin on January 1, 2025, and extend through December 31, 2025. Because this contract is continuing service currently in place, this is considered a single source award.

This Board recently awarded a contract to Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) in partnership with three peer agencies to develop a Request for Proposals for replacement ERP software. That project is progressing well, and we hope to issue the RFP in the coming months. Upon award of replacement software, this contract will not be renewed.

Expenses associated with this single-year license and maintenance contract are \$72,922 which is a 3.8% increase from last year. As in past years, Connect Transit will utilize operating funds for this contract and this expense was included in our FY25 budget.

Trustee Rao asked what kind of software this is.

Ms. Strupek explained it is a cloud-based software that we use for HR, finance, transit assets, time keeping, payroll, and scheduling.

Trustee Buchanan asked if this is a one-year contract.

Ms. Strupek stated that we just awarded a contracted to Government Finance Officers Association to research our needs and that hopefully in that time frame we can have that taken care of.

Rollcall Vote:

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

NAY: None

Motion to authorize the Managing Director to execute a single-year license and maintenance contract with Avail Technologies, Inc. to provide our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software was **approved**.

b. Recommendation for Purchase of a Maintenance Service Truck – Roll Call Vote

Chairman Whitehouse called for a motion to authorize the Managing Director to execute a contract with Morrow Brother’s Ford in Greenfield, Illinois for the purchase of a 2024 Ford F250 utilizing a State of Illinois contract.

Trustee Singer motioned; seconded by Trustee Foster.

Discussion:

Ms. Strupek stated Connect Transit’s Maintenance Department is responsible for responding to maintenance issues with Connect Transit vehicles while in service as well as maintaining all the bus stops throughout our community. To do that, they need vehicles and equipment to make their work safe and efficient. As our services continue to expand, the two existing service vehicles are often in use. As such, the Maintenance Department has requested adding an additional vehicle to their fleet to help support facilities and services throughout the community.

As with previous service vehicle purchases, we are utilizing a State of Illinois contract. The Ford F250 will also be upfitted with various options also included in the contract including: Six compartment 8’ service body, safety lighting, liftgate, and ladder rack.

The total cost of this vehicle will be \$82,340 which will be funded by FTA 5307 and IDOT DOAP Debt Service funds available for this purchase.

Chairman Whitehouse asked if they were going to Greenfield because they can’t get this in Bloomington-Normal.

Brady Lange, Deputy Managing Director, explained the state awarded the contract to the dealership in Greenfield so we have to use that dealership.

Rollcall Vote:

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

NAY: None

Motion to authorize the Managing Director to execute a contract with Morrow Brother’s Ford in Greenfield, Illinois for the purchase of a 2024 Ford F250 utilizing a State of Illinois contract was **approved**.

H. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT:

Chairman Whitehouse stated his appreciation for Connect Transit’s support of the St. Jude Run/Walk and then gave a shout out to Cal Boddie, the driver for the day. Mr. Whitehouse read aloud the email from the event organizer praising Mr. Boddie’s excellent support.

I. GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT:

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

Welcome Aboard:

Mr. Braun welcomed new Marketing Manager, Mark Huffman. Mr. Huffman comes to Connect with 25+ years' experience as a Creative Director, former owner of his own business, and is an ISU graduate.

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:

- HCC Welcome Fair
- ATU Labor Day Parade
- St. Jude Walk/Run
- Home School Field Trip Tour
- Center for Youth and Family Solutions Safety Fair
- ISU CommU

Employee Morale

- September employee birthdays & work anniversary celebrations
- Employee Awards Banquet (FY24)

Professional Development:

- 2024 IPTA Fall Conference:
 - Moline, IL; September 4 – 6, 2024
 - Attended by:
 - Brady Lange, Deputy Managing Director
 - Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director
 - Charlie Busse, Maintenance Manager
 - Ashley Strupek, Procurement Manager
 - Jon Spratt, Data Management Specialist
 - Chris Fuller, Operations Supervisor
 - Alex Giantamidis, Transit Planner
 - Janice Crago, Executive Assistant
- Lessons learned include:
 - That there is a lot more we can do for our community than just provide transportation. We are the center of the community and a way to get people the help they may need. We have the opportunity and the responsibility to coordinate and cooperate with other organizations to help better our community.
 - Developing AI technology is making its way into a lot of transit specific equipment. AI assisted camera's, route planning software, etc.
 - Everything in transit is moving or has moved to the cloud. Cloud services take what has traditionally been a capital expense and transforms it into an operating expense.
 - A group called Building Support for Transit program offered TransitIsTheAnswer.org to educate legislators about our funding issues. Transit

helps facilitate all other social service activities. We need to tell real people's stories of how transit improves their lives.

- Updates from FTA included new oversight tracking system for Triennial Reviews, and grant/funding platform closing dates.
- Updates from IDOT included state paratransit vehicle purchase updates, funding contracts and new forms
- Recognition that many of our issues are experienced by other transit systems as well, specifically manpower shortages.
- Staff attended job specific workshops, including procurement and planning.
- Newer staff networked with their peers at other transit systems in the state to be able to share experiences and knowledge.
- We are already doing good things to build DEI, but there may be more things we can do and possibly grants to help fund them.
- Unused ad space on buses can be used to advertise cultural holidays, welcome all walks of people.
- Ideas for Downtown Transit Center concerning the unhoused, displays and passenger communications.

Recruiting:

- Positions Open:
 - Bus Operator (10)
 - Dispatcher (2)
 - Maintenance Supervisor (1)
 - Mechanic (1)
 - Scheduler (1)
 - Service Technician (2)
 - Technology Support Specialist (1)
- Positions Filled
 - AP/AR Clerk (1)
 - Bus Operators (10)
 - Dispatcher (1)
 - Marketing Manager (1)

Reminders:

- Updated/New Board Photos
 - Please set up an appointment with Board Clerk

J. TRUSTEE COMMENTS:

Vice Chair Hile welcomed Mark Huffman to Connect Transit and expressed her appreciation of Cal Boddie's service, stating it is the type of thing we want to include in our messaging campaign. Ms. Hile stated she looks forward to the stakeholder groups and getting to know the panels and requested that Mr. Braun please share the list with the Board. She stated she would like to know what we could do to get the state contracts, like the one used to purchase the Maintenance Department truck, brought to the Bloomington-Normal area and how we can compete to get those.

City Manager Jurgens stated the City had previously tried to do this and they were not successful. He stated the issue does come up every couple of years and that they might try again, but that maybe if they work together, they might be successful.

Chairman Whitehouse asked Trustee Foster how the banquet was on Sunday.

Trustee Foster stated it was awesome; the gift certificates and food were great. She stated that it was nice to see how many employees had longevity at Connect Transit, and to see this banquet happen for the second year.

Trustee Rao stated he also enjoyed the banquet, noticed how the employees enjoyed the raffle prizes and felt it was a great team building experience.

Trustee Buchanan welcomed Mark Huffman to Connect Transit and the Communications Committee.

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- a. (ILCS 120/2(c)(1) – Personnel Matters

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

Vice Chair Hile motioned; seconded by Trustee Buchanan.

Motion passed by consensus and the Board of Trustees adjourned Regular Session and moved to the Administrative Conference Room for and Executive Session at 4:56 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION RE-OPENED:

Chairman Whitehouse called Regular Session back to order at 5:13 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
Vice Chair Julie Hile
Trustee Mandava Rao
Trustee Barbara Singer
Chairman Ryan Whitehouse

Trustees Absent: None

City Managers Present: City Manager Jeff Jurgens

City Managers Absent: City Manager Pam Reece

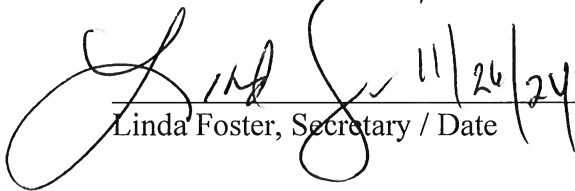
Staff Present: David Braun, Managing Director
Brady Lange, Deputy Managing Director
Alex Giantamidis, Transit Planner
Ashley Strupek, Procurement Manager
Charlie Busse, Maintenance Manager
Janice Crago, Board Clerk
Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director
Shelly Moss, Operations Director
Steve Stockton, IT Manager

L. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Whitehouse called for a Motion to Adjourn.

Trustee Foster motioned; seconded by Vice Chair Hile.

Meeting adjourned by consensus at 5:14 p.m.


Linda Foster, Secretary / Date 11/26/24


Janice Crago, Board Clerk / Date 11/26/24

[SEAL]

