

Connect Transit Board of Trustees
November 26, 2024, 4:30 p.m.
351 Wylie Drive, Normal, IL 61761 – Board Room
Regular Session Minutes– Approved at 2/25/25 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 Gina Bianchi
Trustee Judy Buchanan
Trustee Linda Foster
Vice Chair Julie Hile
Trustee Mandava Rao (4:46)
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
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

Chairman Whitehouse called for a motion to allow Trustee Singer to attend virtually.

Trustee Buchanan motioned; seconded by Secretary Buchanan.

Discussion:

None

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Bianchi, Trustee Buchanan, Trustee Foster, Vice Chair Hile, Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None

Motion to allow 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:

Wanda Holloway, resident of Bloomington, stated she is here as a representative for her sister and fellow church members, who are Connect Mobility customers. Ms. Holloway stated they are following the Mobility rules to reserve a Mobility ride to and from destinations, paying the fees associated with the service, and yet they continue to have service issues. Ms. Holloway expressed her frustration with how disabled Mobility riders are being treated and they want to be treated just like anyone else, with dignity and respect.

Chairman Whitehouse stated he hears Ms. Holloway's concerns and that the culture the Board of Trustees fosters or approves of. He explained that the Board will look into this and will do everything they can to resolve the issue and get back to her in a timely fashion.

Chairman Whitehouse welcomed Gina Bianchi to the Board of Trustees, stating Trustee Bianchi replaces Trustee Tim McCue's vacant Normal seat.

Trustee Bianchi thanked Chairman Whitehouse for the welcome, stated she has been a resident of Bloomington-Normal for 31 years and has a background in higher education. She stated she is excited to bring her perspectives to the Board and give back to the citizens.

E. CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. Approval of Regular Session Minutes for September 24, 2024
- b. Approval of Executive Session Minutes for September 24, 2024
- c. Approval of Financial Information for August 2024
- d. Approval of Financial Information for September 2024
- e. Approval of Financial Information for October 2024
- f. Corrected April 2024 – July 2024 Statistical Reports
- g. Monthly Statistical Reports for September 2024
- h. Monthly Statistical Reports for October 2024
- i. Cardinal Infrastructure; Federal Reports (October and November)
- j. Cornerstone; Illinois Weekly Update (October and November)

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

Vice Chair Hile motioned; seconded by Trustee Foster.

Discussion:

David Braun, Managing Director, stated the financial reports were not completed until August due to year end tasks.

Mr. Braun stated the August 2024 financials reflect a payment to Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District for \$35,000, which the Board approved for consortium of transit agencies to investigate an enterprise resource program. He stated Champaign-Urbana is the lead agency and we paid them our

portion. The same report shows a transfer of \$1m into the Illinois State Funds savings accounts so we can gain interest and use it as a new revenue source, which to date has earned us \$65,000.

Mr. Braun stated the September and October 2024 financials did not show anything significant and that we are on track for the first four months of FY25.

Mr. Braun explained that the Consent Agenda contained revised statistical reports for April 2024 – July 2024 due to a software upgrade not counting all Mobility passengers; it only counted the passengers and not their care attendants. The reports now include the correct numbers. The September 2024 Statistical Report reflects that fixed route ridership is down about 8% from the previous year, which he believes is due to reduction of frequency in peak times. September Mobility is also down a little, and we will do a deep dive into this to see why this is happening.

The November Cardinal Infrastructure report reflects the change in Administration may impact on what is happening locally and that we will be watching that.

The November Cornerstone report shows the legislative spring session key dates and deadlines.

Trustee Buchanan asked for clarification on Custodial Services reflected in the August and October 2024 financials, because they were both up.

Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director, explained that pest control is paid annually and had just recently been paid.

Trustee Buchanan noted that total ridership was up for FY24.

Rollcall Vote:

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

NAY: None

Consent Agenda was **approved**.

F. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Marketing and Communications Committee:

Trustee Buchanan and Mark Huffman, Marketing Manager, gave a brief update on screen, available as part of the Managing Director's Presentation on the website.

Vice Chair, Hile, thanked Mr. Huffman for his efforts, building relationships, and encouraged him to continue.

Trustee Foster encouraged Mr. Huffman to find out what we are doing well and what we need to improve on, so we can work on them and become a successful transit system for all users.

Vice Chair Hile asked when the Board will see his plans to de-mystify transit so they can support his efforts.

Mr. Huffman stated he is still meeting with stakeholders and partners to gather more information, and that Connect is planning to possibly change some services, so he doesn't know when he will have that plan yet. He stated his plans are to continue for now until we know our plans as a system.

Finance Committee:

No report.

Operations and Planning Committee:

No report.

G. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Recommendation for Award of Fuel Supplier Contract – Roll Call Vote

Chairman Whitehouse called for a motion to authorize the authorize the Managing Director to execute a firm fixed price contract with Ken's Oil Service for the purchase of diesel and gasoline fuels for a term of 18 months.

Trustee Rao motioned; seconded by Trustee Foster.

Discussion:

Brady Lange, Deputy Managing Director, explained that currently, Connect Transit has 23 buses that require gasoline, 32 buses that require diesel fuel, and four propane powered buses in our fleet. The average monthly fuel consumption is approximately 21,542 gallons of diesel and 8,100 gallons of unleaded gasoline. We asked bidders to provide pricing for renewable diesel, a highly refined biodiesel made from sustainable feedstock so we can consider piloting the fuel source in a few buses. Over the past three years, our average gallon cost was \$2.68 for diesel and \$2.92 for gasoline. Over the past ten years in the Midwest, the average cost of diesel fuel was \$3.24, and gasoline was \$2.72.

On September 26, 2024, Connect Transit released an Invitation for Bid (IFB) seeking bids for purchase and delivery of Clear #2 Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel and Unleaded 87 Octane Gasoline. In response to the IFB, Connect Transit received two bids.

Connect Transit is recommending this award be made to Ken's Oil Service based on the lowest bid received. We have contracted with Ken's Oil Service since fiscal year 2019 when they were awarded the fuel supplier's proposal for a five-year contract. Ken's Oil Service is located in Forrest, Illinois.

Connect Transit uses standard operating funds for fuel and expects an estimated 18-month expense of approximately \$1,250,000. This contract is being recommended contingent upon IDOT approval.

Chairman Whitehouse asked if the Trustees had any questions.

Trustees had no questions.

Rollcall Vote:

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

NAY: None

Motion to authorize the Managing Director to execute a firm fixed price contract with Ken's Oil Service for the purchase of diesel and gasoline fuels for a term of 18 months. Was **approved**.

b. Recommendation for Purchase of CAD/AVL Equipment – Roll Call Vote

Chairman Whitehouse called for a motion to execute a contract with GMV Syncromatics for the purchase of additional Computer Aided Dispatch and Automatic Vehicle Location (CAD/AVL) hardware for up to eight buses.

Trustee Hile motioned; seconded by Trustee Foster.

Discussion:

Brady Lange, Deputy Managing Director, explained GMV Syncromatics has been the CAD/AVL provider for Connect Transit for eight years. The equipment on board our vehicles provide important real-time GPS vehicle location, in-vehicle audible bus stop announcements, vehicle signage information, and important communication systems for automated passenger counters and fare data. The equipment being purchased by this contract is the latest equipment offered by GMV and is an upgrade over existing equipment.

This equipment is movable, which allows us with future bus purchases.

Since GMV Syncromatics provides hardware and software for our entire fixed route fleet, this purchase will be a sole source award. The hardware being purchased is proprietary to this vendor and is not able to be purchased elsewhere. The cost per vehicle of the new hardware has decreased by approximately 15% since the last time we purchased these units.

The total cost of this contract for eight buses will be \$88,630 and will be funded by operating funds.

Trustee Rao asked if we are replacing old equipment.

Mr. Lange stated we are replacing the old equipment.

Rollcall Vote:

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

NAY: None

Motion to execute a contract with GMV Syncromatics for the purchase of additional Computer Aided Dispatch and Automatic Vehicle Location (CAD/AVL) hardware for up to eight buses was **approved**.

H. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

No report.

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.)

Rural McLean County Transit Update:

- June 10, 2024: County resolves to withdraw from six-county IGA
- October 17, 2024: County resolves to assign funding to Connect Transit as required by IDOT budget process.
- December through February: IDOT sponsored planning study to recommend service levels and types of service that can be offered within the operating funds available.
- At conclusion of study: Results to be presented to Board of Trustees, City, Town, and County.
- Requirements to continue discussion:
 - Approval of IGA amendment between City and Town allowing service in McLean County
 - Agreement of Board of Trustees to expand mission to serve McLean County
- Key issues:
 - Governance
 - Operational organization
 - Vehicle requirements and availability
 - Staffing requirements
 - Budget
 - Separation of urban and rural funding
 - Percent allocation of shared resources

Downtown Transit Center Update:

- Kick-off – 9/19/24
- Bus Layout - 9/19/24
- Parking - 9/20/24
- Project Quality Management – 10/10/24
- Alternative Delivery - 10/10/24
- Safety and Security - 10/24/24
 - Follow-up Police Substation and Technology - 11/19/24
- Accessibility - 10/24/24
 - Attended by representatives of:
 - Area on Aging
 - LIFE CIL
 - County Health Department
 - East Central Illinois Area Agency on Ageing
 - Lifelong Access
- Website Design (bi-weekly, ongoing)
- Remaining Workshops:

- Aesthetics Workshop #1 – 12/6/24
- Market Analysis Workshop – 12/6/24
- Sustainability Workshop - 12/19/24
- Bus Routing Workshop - 12/19/24
- Constructability Workshop
- Stakeholder Meeting #2
- Stakeholder Committee Meeting #1
 - Held October 10, 2024
 - Attended by representatives of:
 - Economic Development Council
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - City of Bloomington
 - Fox & Hounds Day Spa
 - Herb Eaton Studio Gallery
 - Convention and Visitors Bureau
 - Home Sweet Home Ministries
 - The Center for Human Services
 - Heritage Enterprises
- Land Acquisition:
 - Sent to FTA for language and requirement concurrence
 - Draft purchase and sale agreement
 - To be presented to the Board after FTA concurrence is received and all parties agree to draft language
 - Lease Agreement
 - Establishes long-term maintenance and responsibilities between parties
 - To be presented to the Board after FTA concurrence is received and all parties agree to draft language

Community Outreach:

- ISU Off-site Campus Expo
- Heartland Community College WDC Ribbon Cutting
- Heartland Community College Job Fair
- WGLT Office Tour
- McLean County Chamber of Commerce Job Fair
- Tentac Trunk or Treat
- Colene Hoose Trunk or Treat
- McLean County Chamber of Commerce Non-Profit Showcase
- Stuff the Bus Kickoff at Donny B's
- Bloomington Bison Kickoff Event

Employee Morale:

- Bi-monthly Town Hall meetings
- October and November employee birthday and work anniversary celebrations
- October Fall Cookout

- Annual Thanksgiving Employee Potluck

Professional Development:

- 2024 APTA TRANSForm Conference
 - Anaheim, CA; 9/29/24 – 10/2/24
 - Attended by:
 - David Braun, Managing Director
 - Brady Lange, Deputy Managing Director
 - Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director
 - Alex Giantamidis, Transit Planner
- There was an emphasis on Cyber Security, and we will ensure our Cyber Insurance is sufficient.
- Considerable discussion about coalition building and building support for transit. Strategies include:
 - Simple messaging
 - Aligning transit with community goals
 - Inform and educate the public
 - Demonstrate benefits to supporting transit
 - Get help from APTA's Center for Transportation Excellence (CFTE)
- The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) will be studying local and regional funding mechanisms for public transportation. Pat Kuebrich signed up to be a volunteer to help with the study.
- There are changes in the Uniform Guidance for Federal Awards that we need to follow.
- Speakers from Italy, the UK, and Canada spoke about how they are handling similar challenges to what we are facing.

Recruiting:

- Positions Open:
 - Bus Operator (6)
 - Customer Service Representative (2)
 - Dispatcher (2)
 - Maintenance Supervisor (1)
 - Mechanic (1)
 - Microtransit Operator (1)
 - Microtransit Operator PT (1)
 - Scheduler (1)
 - Service Technician (1)
- Positions Filled:
 - Bus Operators (4)
 - Dispatcher (1)
 - Outreach Coordinator (1)
 - Safety & Training Coordinator (1)
 - Service Technician (2)
 - Technology Support Specialist (1)

Trustee Bianchi asked who determines the attendees for the transit center workshops.

Mr. Braun stated it is mostly an internal decision and that the Board is not typically invited due to the Open Meetings Act restrictions.

Chairman Whitehouse stated Trustee Bianchi is welcome to attend if she would like attend.

Trustee Buchanan stated she attended the Baby Fold's Festival of Trees and thanked Connect Transit for supporting the event.

Vice Chair Hile thanked Mr. Braun for his careful tracking of the Strategic Plan and asked that in 2025 we take into consideration any actions that have a two-year timeline and possibly refine them and force ourselves to assign priorities.

Chairman Whitehouse asked if the full Board should be involved in refining the actions and assigning priorities or if it the Personnel Committee could handle it.

Vice Chair Hile stated she would like to see the full Board involved because the act of assigning priorities goes beyond any one sub-committee's responsibilities.

Chairman Whitehouse stated it could be done as a workshop, not a regular session meeting.

Vice Chair Hile asked if the Board members can attend the summits so they can be further engaged.

City Manager Jurgens clarified that as long as Board members are not interacting at these meetings and only share comments with David at a later date, they are welcome to attend the meetings and workshops and would not be in violation of the Open Meetings Act.

Vice Chair Hile asked for the retention rate for our Bus Operators.

Stephanie Butler, HR Manager, explained we are at about 50% retention with each class.

Trustee Buchanan thanked Mr. Braun for including a status on the rural transit service in his report so the Board and the community are aware of the true status.

Reminders:

- Updated/New Board Photos
 - Please set up an appointment with the Board Clerk
- Open Meetings Act training reminders will be coming via email

J. TRUSTEE COMMENTS:

Chairman Whitehouse stated Trustee Comments would be held after Executive Session.

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.

Trustee Buchanan motioned; seconded by Trustee Bianchi.

Rollcall Vote:

A YE: Trustee Bianchi, Trustee Buchanan, Trustee Foster, Vice Chair Hile, Trustee Rao, Trustee Singer, Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None

Motion to execute adjourn Regular Session and move into Executive Session in the Administrative Conference Room was **approved at 5:23 p.m.**

REGULAR SESSION RE-OPENED:

Chairman Whitehouse called Regular Session back to order at 6:32 p.m. in the Board Room and Board Clerk, Janice Crago, took attendance via roll call.

Trustees Present: Trustee Gina Bianchi
Trustee Judy Buchanan
Trustee Linda Foster
Vice Chair Julie Hile
Trustee Mandava Rao
Chairman Ryan Whitehouse

Trustees Absent: Trustee Barbara Singer

City Managers Present: City Manager Jeff Jurgens

City Managers Absent: City Manager Pam Reece

Staff Present: David Braun, Managing Director
Janice Crago, Board Clerk
Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director
Steve Stockton, IT Manager

TRUSTEE COMMENTS:

Trustee Foster wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

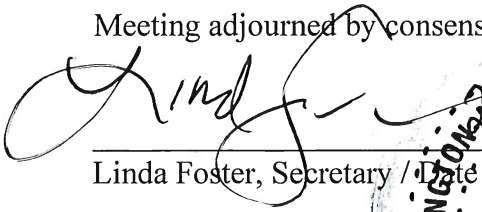
Chairman Whitehouse wished everyone Happy Holidays.

L. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Whitehouse called for a Motion to Adjourn.

Vice Chair Hile motioned; seconded by Trustee Rao.

Meeting adjourned by consensus at 6:34 p.m.


Linda Foster, Secretary / Date


Janice Crago, Board Clerk / Date



[SEAL]